

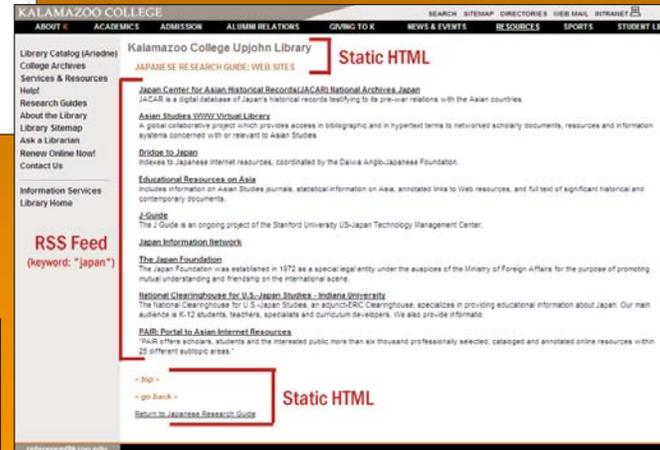
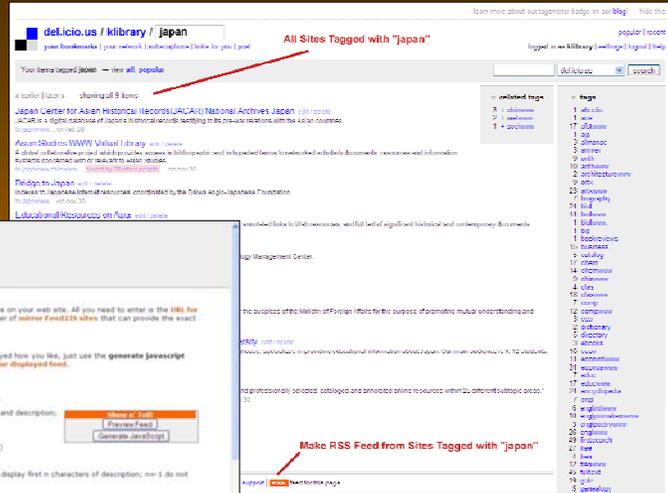
# Using Free Web Tools to Simplify Website Management

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## Needs:

1. The Kalamazoo College Library website Subject Guides contain links to websites that must be updated regularly.
2. Kalamazoo College Librarians were spending too much time adding the same resources to multiple Subject Guides.
3. Librarians had to manually add links to multiple Subject Guides.



## Advantages:

- Del.icio.us and Feed2JS are free!
- Multiple web pages can easily be updated at once
- Multiple staff members can add resources to del.icio.us
- Staff can add and change tags with simple editing, and the RSS feeds change accordingly
- All of this creates dynamic content that continually updates and refreshes the Library's website
- The links appear in the same consistent CSS format as the rest of the pages

## Challenges:

- The Library's web pages using del.icio.us and Feed2JS tools are dependent on their consistency; if one of them goes down, the RSS links won't work. Therefore, Librarians used these only on "secondary" pages, keeping static and reliable HTML pages for primary use.
- RSS links can sometimes be slow to load. This has not been a significant problem on campus, though off campus users may experience some delay.
- Librarians can't control the order of the links with the del.icio.us bookmarks. Del.icio.us delivers RSS links in the order they were bookmarked, which means that the most recently bookmarked links will show up at the top of a feed.
- Since the dynamically created RSS links appear as a bulleted list, Librarians can't add other links on the same line.

## Solution:

Utilize the social bookmarking site del.icio.us (<http://del.icio.us/>) to create RSS feeds, then import those feeds with Feed2JS (<http://www.feed2js.org/>) into regular HTML pages. In this way, del.icio.us acts as a database of links that are called into the appropriate places in the website.

## Procedure:

- Librarians created a general account on del.icio.us for multiple staff members to share
- Staff used del.icio.us to bookmark websites
- Websites were tagged with multiple keywords, such as "math," "literature," "news," and other descriptors that might come in handy when creating a feed
- Librarians created RSS feeds that selected out only the resources with certain tags. For example, all the databases tagged with "news" were assembled into one feed.
- Using a free tool called Feed2JS (<http://feed2js.org/>), developed by the Maricopa Community Colleges, librarians converted these del.icio.us RSS feeds into Javascript that was easily cut and pasted into standard HTML pages.

## Conclusion:

Though there are some minor drawbacks in using dynamically generated RSS feeds to create website content, the Librarians at the Kalamazoo College Library are happy with the results. Many web pages on the Kalamazoo College Library website contain elements of both static HTML and dynamically created links with Javascript and RSS, enabling the Librarians to maintain control of the most important content. With some quick and easy setup, using free web tools has saved the Librarians at Kalamazoo College many hours of website editing time.