

All the News That's Fit for You

We all love the printed word—
you're holding a copy of *Quilter's*

BY JULIE R. FILATOFF FOR JIRAF STUDIO LLC

World, right?—but in the last few years there's been an explosion of new media. Consider the blog (short for “Web log” or online journal). If someone has a story to tell and the technical ability, they can write a blog just like they can create a quilt.

As a blog reader, you can benefit in many ways. First, in the “blogosphere” (the world of blogging) there's even more to learn than in your guild or hometown. Second, it's a great way to really get to know the quilting stars that you admire, both professionally and personally. You may nod sympathetically as one famous blogger serializes the challenge of making a quilt for her son's wedding, or sigh as another

tells of creating tiny dresses for her first granddaughter. You can get a behind-the-scenes look at the International Quilt Festival or quilt cruises. Newsy blogs keep you up to date with events (regional, national or international), new product information or book reviews. Many bloggers hold contests that enable you to win patterns, tools or books. And blogs are a great, low-stress way to learn quilting techniques through tutorials and online classes (often free, but sometimes fee-based).

Why do people blog at all? There are many reasons: to generously share their tips and techniques; to recount their journeys as quilters (both quilt-show-award happiness and seam-ripper heartaches); to promote their patterns, books, DVDs, tools, workshops or retreats; and to expose their beautiful quilts to a wider audience than that of a real-world quilt show.

Although experts suggest that bloggers create five new posts per week, many bloggers write less often. Blogs appear in reverse chronological order—the newest post is the first one you'll see. Scroll down to find earlier posts, or click on an area that reads “Blog Archive” or “Older Posts.” Another great feature: You can type a keyword or phrase like “appliqué” or “quilt-sleeve tutorial” into a search box (usually white with a button labeled “Search”) to find a post on that topic by that specific blogger.

The sidebar, Quilt Blogs to Read, is a great place to start if you are unsure how to go about finding a blog you like.

Subscribing to a Blog

OK, you've found a few blogs you like, and you want to be sure to see every new post. You could just check each one of your favor-



ite blogs every day, but the blogger may not have posted something new. Better yet, you can **subscribe** to blogs. Then you can either read them online in an **aggregator** (a Web page that collects your favorites) or through **RSS feeds** that come into your e-mail program very much like e-mail messages.

Aggregators include Google Reader, Bloglines and My Yahoo (which is convenient if you already use Yahoo as your e-mail program). You can set the aggregator as your home page; then every time you start your Web browser, you'll see new posts from all your favorite quilt bloggers. Let's look at the step-by-step process for adding RSS feeds to your aggregator—in this case, My Yahoo, using Microsoft Internet Explorer.

Step 1. Type in <http://www.my.yahoo.com> and log in, or create an account if you don't have one (Figure 1).

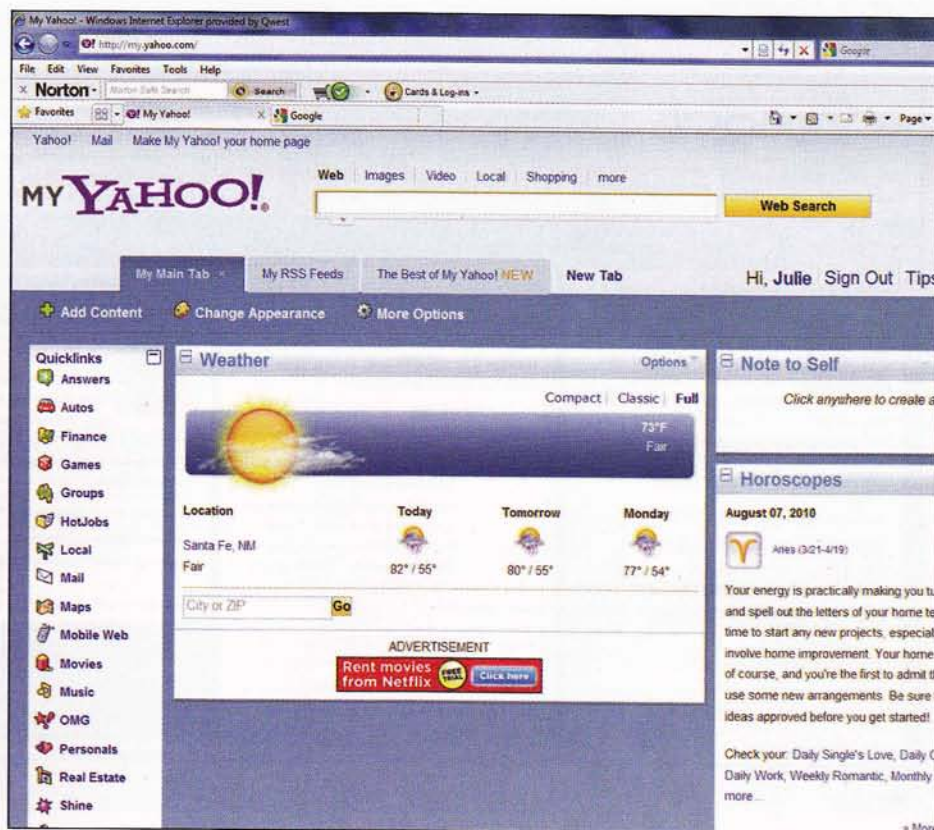


Figure 1

Blogs to Read

If you type the term "quilt blog" into a search engine like Google, you'll find more than four million results. Let's try to narrow that field a bit so you can begin reading, learning and enjoying.

Here's a great place to start: Each month, *Quilter's World* Editor Elisa Sims Albury shares a list of blogs she frequently reads. This list is included in the Web Connections section on page 10 of the magazine.

Several designers featured in *Quilter's World* have blogs too, including:

- Rochelle Martin of Cottage Quilt Designs: cottagequiltdesigns.info/blog/

- Chloe Anderson and Colleen Reale of Toadusew: toadusew.com/blog/
- Kevin Kosbab: feeddog.blogspot.com/
- Phyllis Dobbs: phyllisdobbs.info
- Wendy Sheppard: ivoryspring.wordpress.com
- Julie Filatoff of JiRaF Studio LLC: jirafstudio.blogspot.com

Michelle Foster's Quilting Gallery (quiltinggallery.com/quilting-bloggers/) lists more than 4,000 quilt blogs. While that's still a bunch, Michelle enables her visitors to narrow the search by country, American state, or Canadian

province. You can follow a quilter in your hometown or somewhere you've always wanted to visit.

If art quilts are your thing, check out Quiltart's links page (www.quiltart.com/links.html) to find many blogs written by creative contemporary fiber artists.

Often, blogs are thought to be the story of an individual, but many companies (like fabric manufacturers) post on the Web too. Simply type the name of the company and blog in a search engine to find these. Many have free patterns and lots of great information.

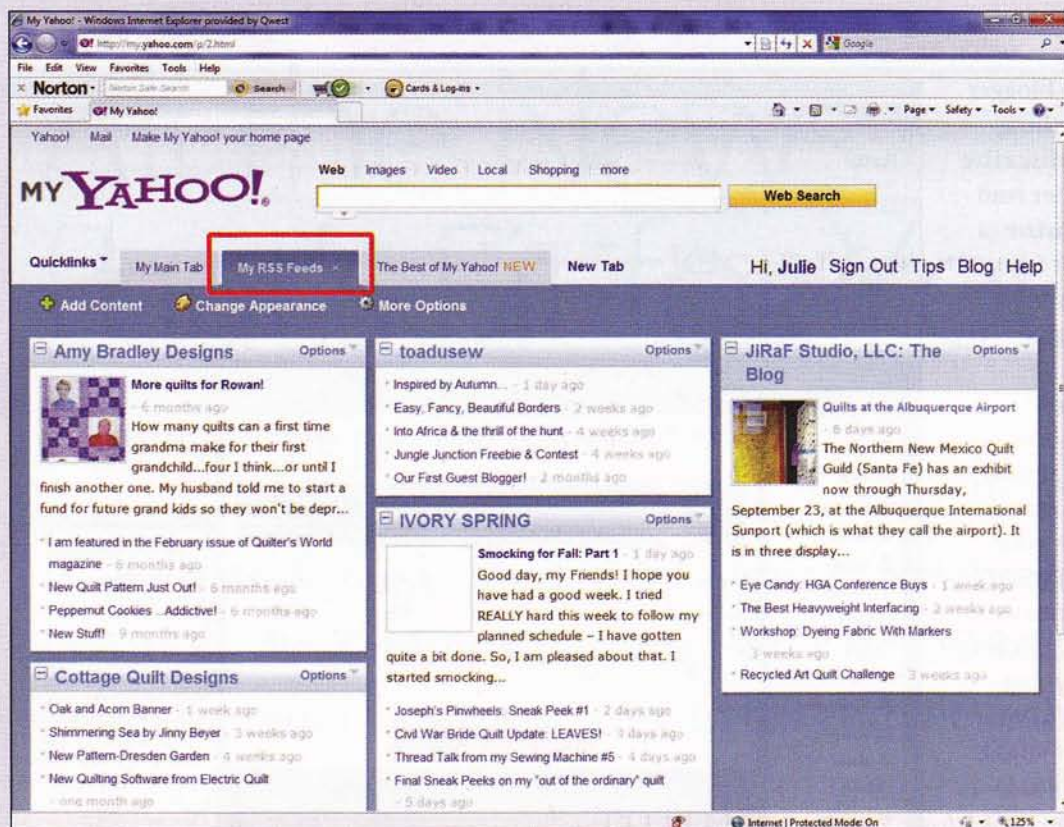


Figure 2

Step 2. Click on the “My RSS Feeds” tab (Figure 2). **Note:** If this is the first time you have set up an RSS Feed, proceed to Step 3. The next time you want to subscribe to a blog, start with Step 2 and you’ll see the “My RSS Feeds” tab like that shown in Figure 2.



Figure 3

Step 3. Open another tab (or open another Internet Explorer window) and type in the address of the blog to which you want to subscribe (Figure 3). **Note:** I’ve used Toadusew’s blog as my example (www.toadusew.com). The content you’ll see on Toadusew’s webpage won’t look exactly the same but the steps will still apply.

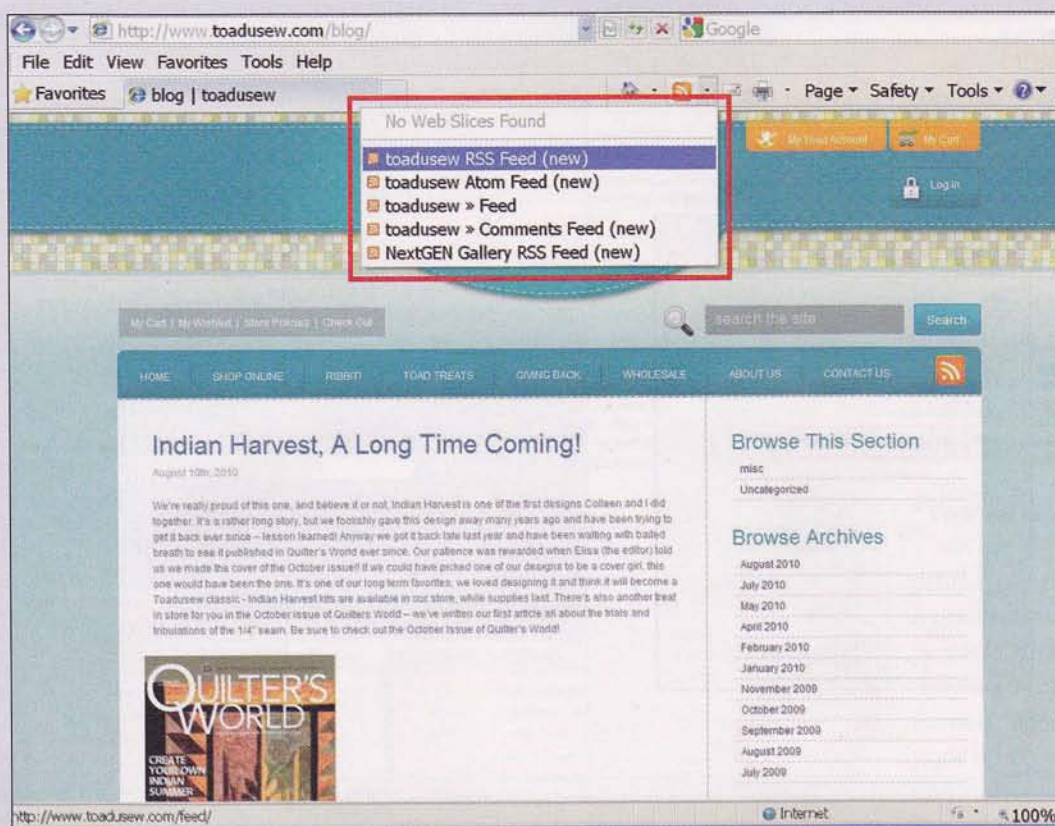


Figure 4

Step 4. Click on the arrow next to the bright orange “RSS Feed” logo in Internet Explorer. (Can’t see it? In Internet Explorer, click on View > Toolbars > Command Bar to put a check mark next to it.) There may be one item on the drop-down menu or several; choose one that reads “[name of blog] RSS Feed” (Figure 4).

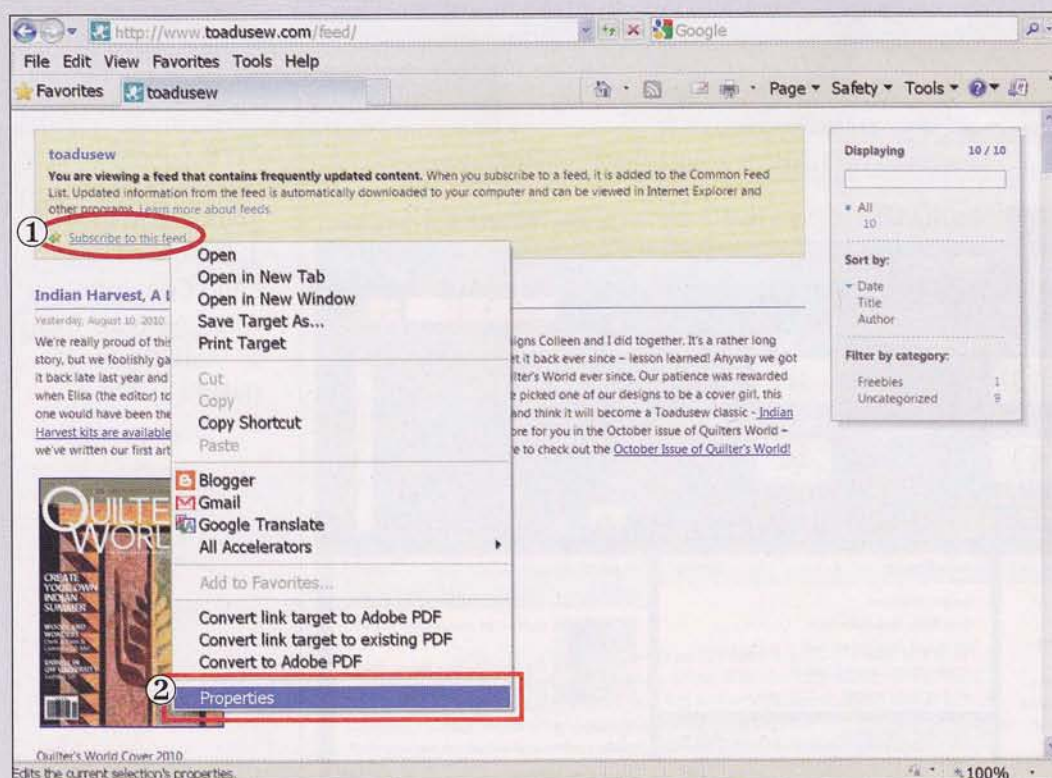


Figure 5

Step 5. Now you’ll see a screen like the one shown in Figure 5 with a yellow section at the top of the page and text that reads: Toadusew “You are viewing a page...” ① right-click on the words “Subscribe to this feed,” then ② left-click on “Properties” (all the way at the bottom).

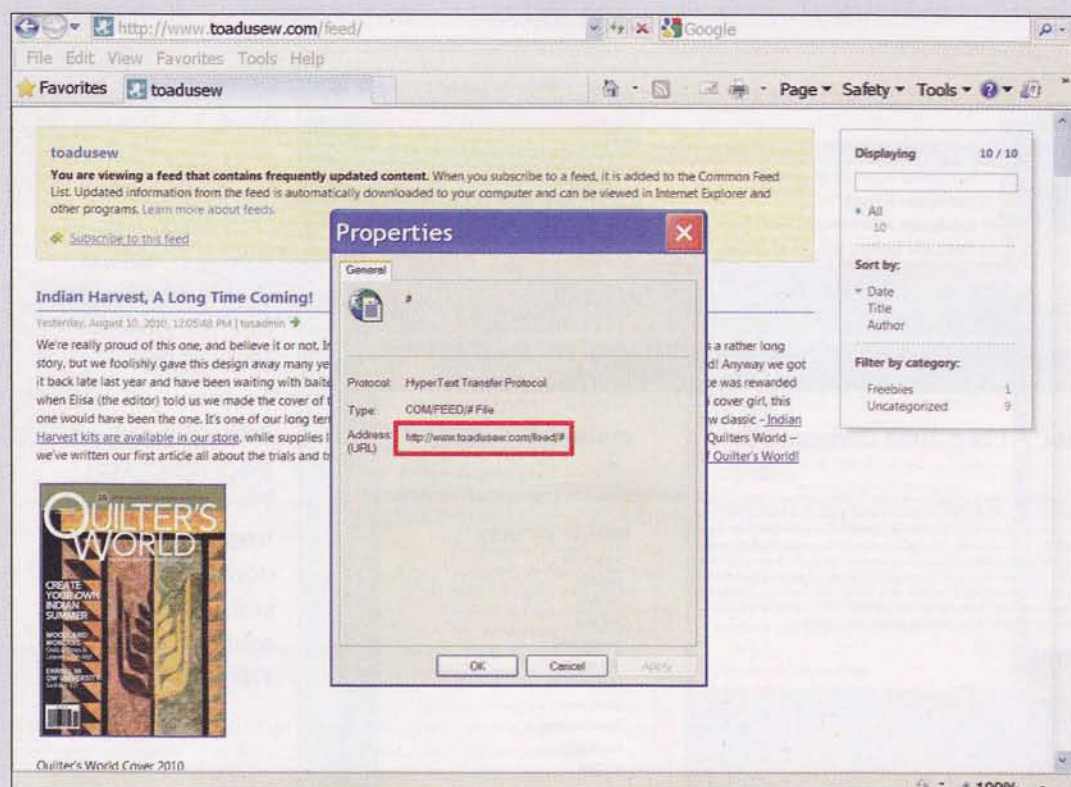


Figure 6

Step 6. A gray dialog box will open. Highlight (click and drag with your mouse) the text that starts with `http://` (Figure 6); then right-click on the text and left-click on "Copy." Now click "Cancel" in the dialog box.



Figure 7

Step 7. Click on the My Yahoo tab you opened in Step 1. ① Now click on "Add Content/+ Add Content," then ② "Add RSS Feed" (Figure 7).



Figure 8

Step 8. Click in the white box and press Ctrl + V to paste the RSS feed into the box. Then click on "Add" (Figure 8).

You can rearrange your blog feed boxes as you wish by clicking on the title bar and dragging them to where you want. If you wish to see more of the blog, just click on the blog's title bar.

Other aggregators (like Google Reader or Bloglines) add content in a similar manner. If you use a program other than Internet Explorer, that might be a bit different too.

"You've Got Mail"

What if you'd like new blog posts to come right into your e-mail inbox? That's almost possible. Once you've signed up, they'll go into a special folder named "RSS Feeds" just below your inbox. Let's use Microsoft Outlook as an example.

Step 1. Follow Steps 3 through 6 above to copy the RSS feed.

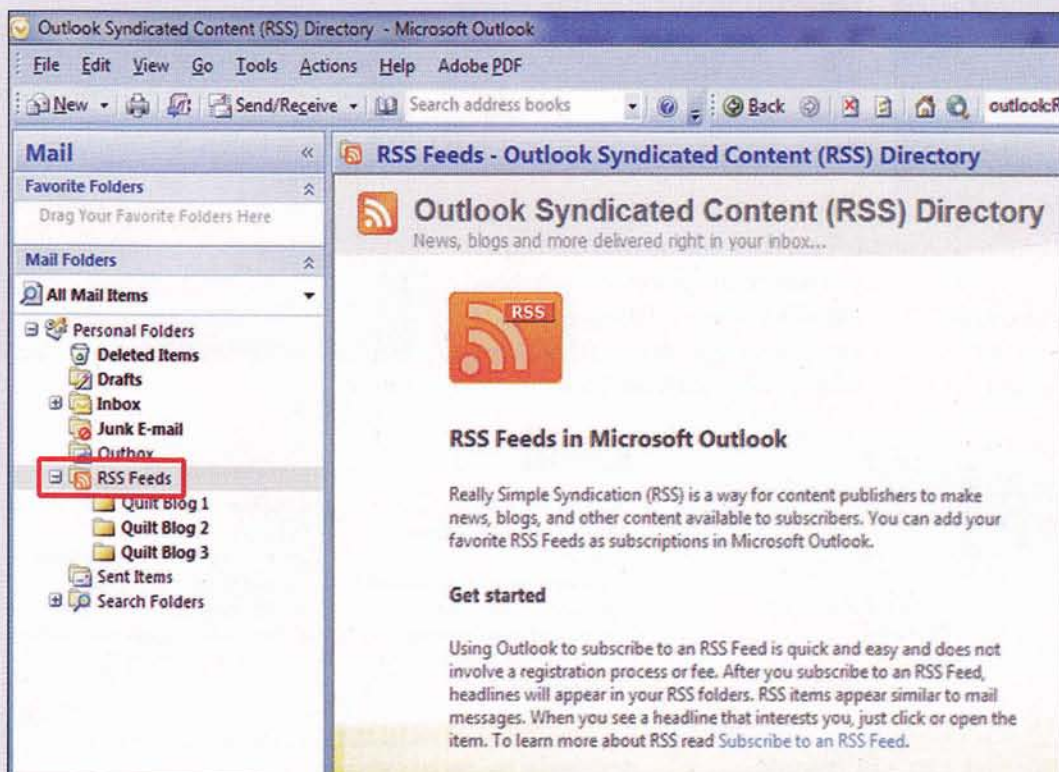


Figure 9

Step 2. Open MS Outlook. Look in your "Mail Folders" bar. Under "Personal Folders," find that bright orange RSS Feed icon and right-click on it (Figure 9). Can't see the icon? Click on the plus (+) sign to the left of the words "Personal Folders."

Continued on page 92