



## Use SharePoint and Silverlight to Display a Summary of Blogs Posts

Rod Stagg, Allyis, Inc.

### Overview:

We have been investigating ways on our intranet at Allyis to surface information via a more automatic and less manual process through various features and also to implement multiple ways for discovering data/information across the site. One area in particular we have been looking for improvement has been to increase the discoverability of our leadership blogs and encourage employees throughout our organization to blog as a way to increase collaboration and information sharing.

As a way to address these efforts we recently developed and deployed a suite of web-parts (one of which we call the Blog Rollup web-part) which displays details on the most recent post made to any of our SharePoint blogs. The web-part can be added to any site page, configured to point to a specific blog, and uploaded into the web-part gallery for others to use as well.

Single Post Version	Multi-Post Version
	
<p><b>Features:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Displays blog title as a hyperlink to the original full post.</li> <li>• Displays the first 215 characters of the post body as an excerpt.</li> <li>• Displays an image for the blogger or blog.</li> <li>• Displays the post's category as a hyperlink to view all similar posts.</li> <li>• Displays the number of comments as a hyperlink to the comments page.</li> <li>• Displays an alert icon hyperlinked to the blog's alert page.</li> <li>• Highlights background on mouse over.</li> <li>• Users can configure the web-part settings.</li> <li>• Can be deployed across site collections.</li> </ul>	<p><b>SharePoint and Silverlight-Accessing Share...</b></p> <p>Overview Recently I had a client request an animated carousel or filmstrip like player for displaying both images and embedded .wmv videos on their SharePoint intranet. The idea is to display many images and vide...</p> <p><b>Category: Category 2</b> Posted By Administrator on 5/5/2009 Comments (0)</p> <p><b>Windows Live Writer is Great for SharePoin...</b></p> <p>Windows Live Writer from Windows Live is not only a great way to post to your SharePoint blog but it's also free. What is Windows Live Writer?Excerpt from Wikipedia: Currently compatible with Windows Live Spaces...</p> <p><b>Category: Category 2</b> Posted By Administrator on 5/4/2009 Comments (1)</p>

## Technical Approach:

- The user-interface was designed and developed entirely using Microsoft Expression Blend, Silverlight, and Visual Studio 2008.
- Custom SharePoint web-part to host the Silverlight application which allow users to configure which blog, blogger image, and alerts link from the web-part properties pane directly.
- The Silverlight application code uses the initParams provided from the web part or HTML test page and the URL protocol to access the blog's post list directly.
- The web-part can be configured once and easily exported from and imported to the webpart gallery and added to any site page on any site collection.
- The Silverlight application was deployed into a SharePoint document library for ease of future updates.

Advantages of using Silverlight over a DataView Web-Part for instance include more portability, more rich user experience, and able to migrate to new sites/hardware easily.

- Can be added to any site page on any site collection easily by the user without a developer or SharePoint Designer involved.
- Can be easily deployed on our customer's SharePoint sites and do not require a substantial effort to migrate to new hardware.
- A richer UI is possible using Silverlight and development is simplified using Visual Studio and C#.
- The project files (.xap) developed in Silverlight are stored in standard SharePoint libraries and can be updated without the need for IT to be involved.

## Deployment Methods:

Deployment using only a document library and a content editor web-part without the need to install server-side code and as such administrative access typically not required.

1. Download the Visual Studio solution .zip and extract the files. Download BlogRollUp.zip
2. Create a folder named ClientBin in a SharePoint document library to store the Silverlight application.
3. Locate the BlogRollUp\_Web\ClientBin\BlogRollUp.xap file and copy into your new ClientBin folder
4. Locate the BlogRollUpTestPage.html, update the initParams to use the settings for your particular blog including siteurl, imagepath, listid, and alerturl.
5. Copy the updated BlogRollUpTestPage.html file to the root of your new document library.
6. On a site page add a content editor web-part and reference the BlogRollUpTestPage.html file inside an iframe.
7. Export the now pre-configured web-part to your desktop and upload back into the webpart gallery with an appropriate name identifying the BlogRollUp webpart so other users can add to their site pages without having to configure themselves.

Deployment using the custom web-part where server-side code is installed via the .wsp solution file for the webpart and typically requiring administrative access

1. Download the Visual Studio solution .zip and extract the files. Download BlogRollUp.zip
2. Create a folder named ClientBin in a SharePoint document library to store the Silverlight application.
3. Locate the BlogRollUp\_Web\ClientBin\BlogRollUp.xap file and copy into your new ClientBin folder.
4. Download the .wsp solution file Download BlogRollUpWP.wsp
5. Install the provided .wsp solution file via stsadm -addsolution
6. Activate the solution from SharePoint Central Administration or stsadm -activatefeature
7. Upload the provided webpart .dwp file into your web-part gallery via site setting, web parts.
8. Add the web-part to a site page, update the Silverlight web-part settings section with the appropriate .XAP fullpath, siteurl, imagepath, listid, and alerturl for your particular blog
9. Export the now pre-configured web-part to your desktop and upload back into the webpart gallery with an appropriate name identifying the blogrollup webpart so other users can add to thier site pages without having to configure themselves.

#### **Summary:**

This is just one way of displaying some pertinent details on recent posts from the blogs dispersed throughout the intranet while also making it easy for users to add to any site page. Using Silverlight allows .NET developers to develop rich UI in Expression and Visual Studio and store the .xap files in SharePoint document libraries for future updates.