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WEB STRATEGIST | SPEAKER | SOCIAL MEDIA EXPERT | ENTREPRENEUR

Creating Platform Independence For Email, Calendaring, Tasking, Etc.

V 1.0 – to be continued upon request

This document is a step by step guide to making **your email, calendaring, tasking, etc. platform independent**. The software mentioned herein can be used on Windows, Mac OSX, and most Linux distributions.

Furthermore, the setup featured will **leave your data** (at least a copy of it) on third-party servers – **totally synchronized 24/7**.

So if your computer crashes, gets stolen, or your whole infrastructure is destroyed you just buy a **new computer** (regardless the make), **hook it up to the internet**, follow the instructions in this guide **and you are operational again**.

Now for the best part: All applications mentioned herein are open-source and FREE!

Donations Welcome (click button below)



Lars Hilse
Eichstr. 10 B
DE-25767 Bunsöh
Germany

DE +49 (0)1801 5557775788
UK +44 (0)870 9749050
US +1 206 203 5212
<http://lars-hilse.de/contact>

SPK Westholstein (218 518 30)
Account: 85010263
IBAN: DE75218518300085010263
SWIFT(BIC): HSHNDEH1MLD

Registered in Bunsöh, Germany
and New York City, USA
Court: Meldorf, Germany
Tax ID: 86105724235 (DE)

WWW.LARS-HILSE.DE

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Those of you who are on Mac and PC, on Mac and Linux, or any other exciting constellation will definitely know the hassle of keeping data synchronized. Yet also the poor souls who regularly use more than one computer are aware of the hassle. For me, both apply and I have been trying to figure out a way to keep my data synchronized. And this is the term to generalize the problem... Making my email, calendar, tasking, twitter, documents, etc. available not only on multiple machines running several platforms, but also considering that I want to have most of my stuff available offline to be able to work in planes, trains, or where ever.

The solution(s) I implied:

- **Email** - This calls for [Gmail\(GO!\)](#) and its awesome and constantly increasing storage capacity. And of course the tremendous amount of nifty features involved like sending from other addresses you own. Using the IMAP protocol you can access your constantly synchronized email from every platform and even make it available offline when using a client like [Thunderbird\(GO!\)](#). (why Thunderbird? We'll get to that later)
- **Calendaring** - Google's [Calender \(GO!\)](#) app scores big time in this case... Multiple calendars, multiple permission settings on what who can read and where.
- **Tasking** - This is where it gets a bit hairy - since Google Calendar does not support task synchronization we have to find a workaround for that one. So we end up using the [free version of Remember The Milk\(GO!\)](#) which we will then integrate into Google Calender later on.
- **Twitter(GO!)** - Some will refer to it as a useless necessity... but I live there - Hey, be tolerant! ;) And this also calls for some integration obstacles. You can very well use the web based version from pretty much any platform and your cell phone to keep people up to date. But how boring is that please? We want the big boy's stuff! So we'll use [TwitterFox\(GO!\)](#) which integrates seamlessly into your Firefox browser.
- **Documents** - I pretty much have my famous brain farts all day long. Remembering my thoughts always presented a big challenge. Not that my brain capacity would be overrun - but it's just the mass of things. And of course the desire to make my letters, etc. available anywhere. Hey, who wants to run around with a laptop all day long? I don't.
So this is where we go to [Google Docs\(GO!\)](#) and use their great [Google Gears\(GO!\)](#) (which is by the way is also available to [Google Reader\(GO!\)](#))
- **IM** - Something no one really needs. But a great deal to stay in touch with Friends and business colleagues. Just make sure that you don't spread your handles too far as it can very well become a pain in the ass being available all day.
The problem with IMs though was that in the past - if you're running more than one system - you had more than one log stored in several places depending on the system or VM you were on.
The directions we want to go to solve this issue is [Meebo.com \(GO!\)](#) Meebo unifies all your IM accounts to a web based platform and stores logs with all conversation server sided. The consequence being that you have all the data available in one place.
- **RSS Feeds** - Who can live without them? But the more important question is, who has time to read them while online?
[Google Reader \(GO!\)](#) takes care of this issue in a very simple way, utilizing [Google Gears\(GO!\)](#), making the last 2000 articles in your favorite feeds available for offline reading.

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US +1 206 203 5212
<http://lars-hilse.de/contact>

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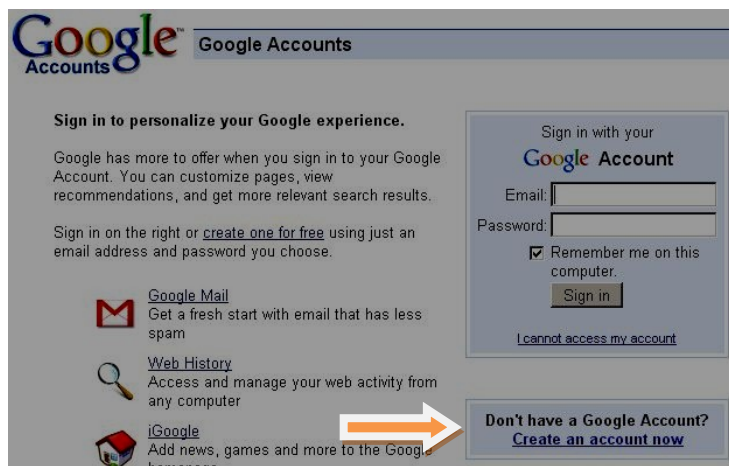
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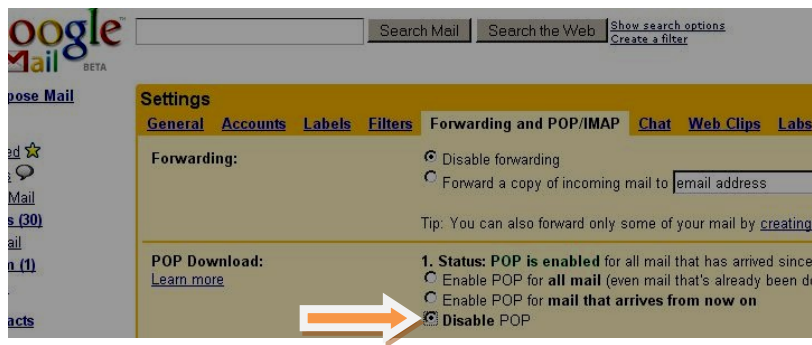
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Putting it all together...

1. Sign up for all the services pointed out above - or the ones you want to utilize. The simplest way to do is to go to <http://google.com/accounts> from where you can sign up for
 1. Google Mail
 2. Google Calendar
 3. And download Google Gears
 4. The Screen you get should look like this:



2. **NOTE:** once you have your GMail account set up, make sure to DEACTIVATE! POP3 protocols in the **settings tab** of your GMail home screen!



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Eichstr. 10 B
DE-25767 Bunsloh
Germany

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<http://lars-hilse.de/contact>

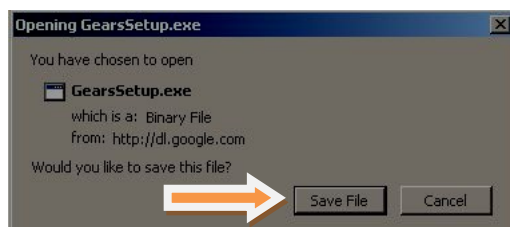
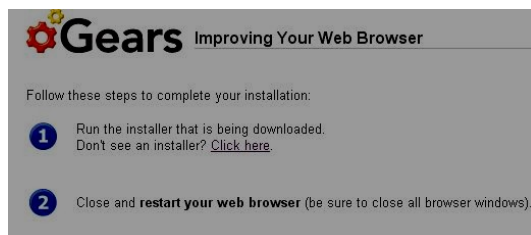
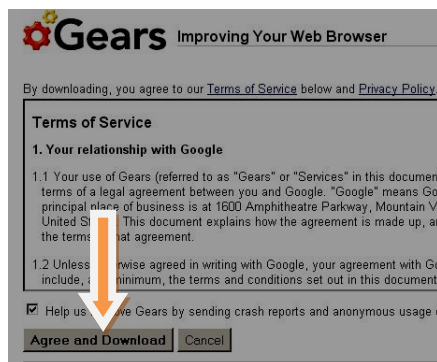
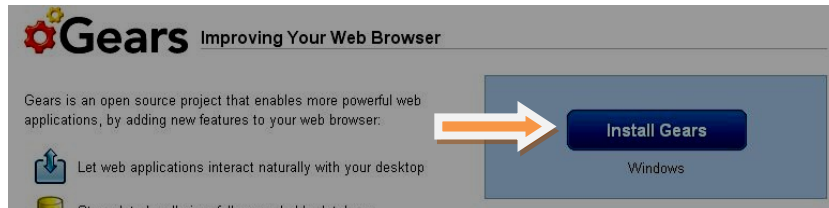
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3. Download and install [Mozilla Firefox\(GO!\)](#)
4. Download and install [Google Gears\(GO!\)](#) to your Firefox to make Google Docs and Google Reader available for offline usage



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Germany

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UK +44 (0)870 9749050
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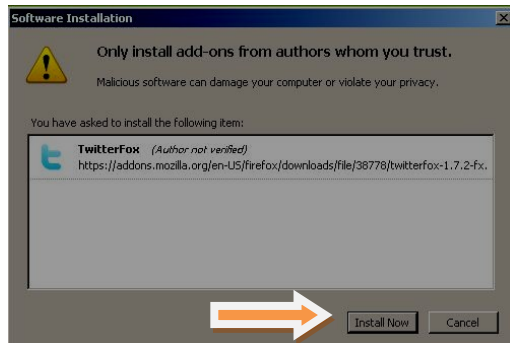
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5. For Twitter Users -> Download [TwitterFox\(GO!\)](#) and install it to your Firefox and have your tweets pushed to your computer(s) or device(s)



Then configure your TwitterFox



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DE-25767 Bunsöh
Germany

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Now we'll download, install, and setup [Mozilla's Thunderbird\(GO!\)](#) to keep your email in place

1. Open Thunderbird, and select **Tools > Account Settings**.
2. Click **Add Account**.
3. Select the **Email account** radio button and click **Next**. The Identity screen appears.
4. Enter your full name in the **Your Name** field. Enter your Gmail address (*username@gmail.com*) in the **Email Address** field, and click **Next**. Google Apps users, enter your full address in the format *username@your_domain.com*
5. Select **IMAP** as the type of incoming server you are using. Enter *imap.gmail.com* in the **Incoming Server** field.
6. Set the **Outgoing Server** to *smtp.gmail.com* and click **Next**.
7. Enter your full email address (including *@gmail.com @your_domain.com*) in the **Incoming User Name** and **Outgoing User Name** fields, and click **Next**.
8. Enter a name for your email account in the **Account Name** field, and click **Next**.
9. Verify your account information in the dialog box, and click **Finish**.
10. Select **Server Settings** from the folder list below your new account.
11. Update the **Port** value to *993*. In the **Security Settings** section, select **SSL** from the **Use secure connection** options.
12. Select the 'Check for messages at startup' checkbox and the 'Check for new messages every 10 minutes' checkbox.
13. Click **Outgoing Server (SMTP)** in the folder list.
14. Select the **smtp.gmail.com (Default)** entry from the list and click **Edit**. The **SMTP Server** page appears.
15. Enter *smtp.gmail.com* as the **Server Name** and set the **Port** to *587*.
16. Select **User name and password** and enter your full email address (including *@gmail.com* or *@your_domain.com*) in the **User Name** field.
17. Select **TLS** from the **Use secure connection** radio buttons and click **OK**.
18. Click **OK** to save your changes and exit the **Account Settings** dialog.
19. From the Tools menu, select **Account Settings** and highlight your Gmail address.
20. On the **Server Settings** tab
21. Check for new messages at startup > **checked**
Check for new messages every 10 minutes > **checked**
When I delete a message > **Mark it as deleted**
Clean up ("Expunge") Inbox on Exit > **do NOT check**
Empty Trash on Exit > **do NOT check**
22. On the **Copies & Folders** tab in the **When sending messages, automatically** section
23. Place a copy in > **do NOT check**
24. On the **Copies & Folders** tab in the **Drafts and Templates** section
25. Keep message drafts in > **Other**
Other > [Your Gmail address] > [Gmail] > **Drafts**
26. On the **Junk Settings** tab
27. Enable adaptive junk mail controls > **do NOT check**
28. Click **OK** to save and close your account settings.
29. If you'd like to further enhance your IMAP experience, please carefully follow these additional steps:
30. In the 'Tools' menu, open **Options**.
31. On the 'Advanced' tab, open the **General** section.
32. Click the **Config Editor** button.
33. In the 'Filter' box, type 'browser.cache.memory.capacity'
34. Double-click on the **browser.cache.memory.capacity** entry to edit its value.
35. Change the value to '30720' and click **OK**.
36. Delete the text in the 'Filter' box and type 'mail.server.default.fetch_by_chunks'
37. Double-click on the **mail.server.default.fetch_by_chunks** entry to set its value to **false**.
38. Close the 'about:config' window and then close 'Options' by clicking **OK**.

Lars Hilse
Eichstr. 10 B
DE-25767 Bunsoh
Germany

DE +49 (0)1801 5557775788
UK +44 (0)870 9749050
US +1 206 203 5212
<http://lars-hilse.de/contact>

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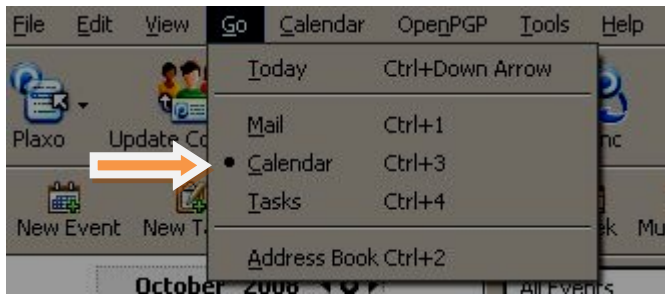
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6. For the secure folks: download [enigmail\(GO!\)](#) to sign or encrypt your mail on a PGP basis (requires [GnuPG\(GO!\)](#) for Windows - Is included and pre-installed in most Linux installations)

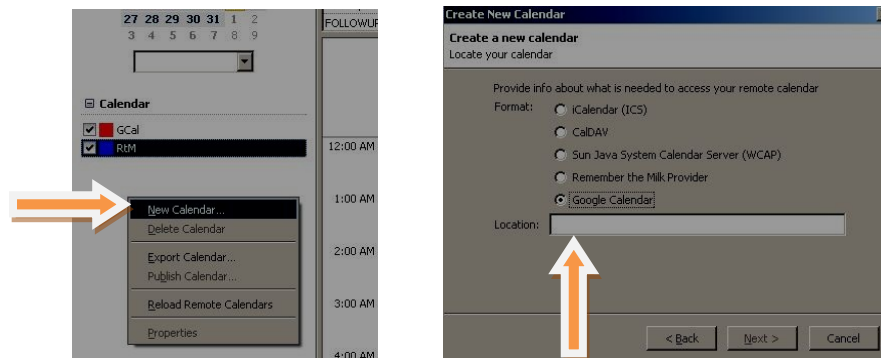
There is an excellent, 16 page documentation available [here\(GO!\)](#) on how to get enigmail running.

7. Download and install [Lightning for Thunderbird\(GO!\)](#) which will enable calendar usage inside Thunderbird
8. Download and install the [Google Calender Plugin\(GO!\)](#) for Thunderbird to enable 2way sync
9. Go to the Thunderbird Calendar tab:



Then import the Google Calendar's iCal stream

Right Click on the Calendar Pane > New Calendar > From Network > Next > Google Calendar



Lars Hilse
Eichstr. 10 B
DE-25767 Bunsloh
Germany

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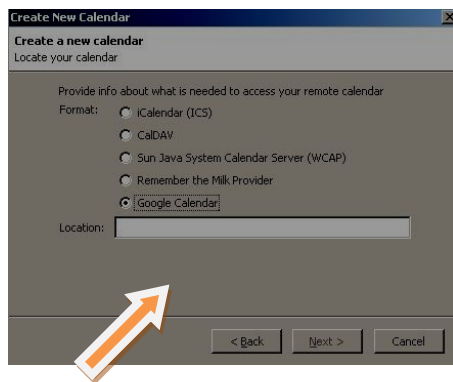
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On the **Google Calendar Home** click > **Settings** > **Calendars** > **"Your Calendar"** >
Then scroll down to the very bottom to RIGHT CLICK! The ICAL Button > Copy Link Location



Post the URI you have just copied into the field of the Thunderbird Prompt



Then click next and wait for the prompt for your Google Account access code

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Eichstr. 10 B
DE-25767 Bunsöh
Germany

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UK +44 (0)870 9749050
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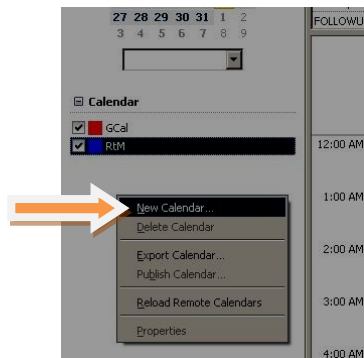
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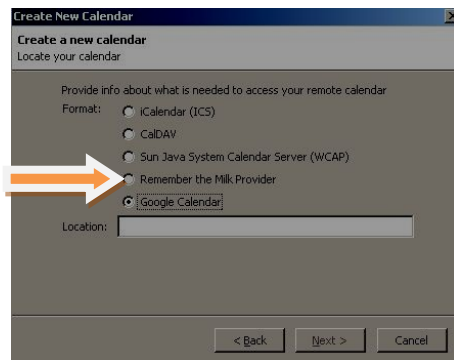
10. Notice that we do not have the tasks yet... [so import the remember the milk calender also\(GO!\)](#)
11. Since Remember The Milk is also based on the iCal format (which is one way synchronization) we need to download and install [this Plugin](#) to Thunderbird to enable two-way synchronization...

[**NOTE:** since it's in development you need to register to download – but it works]

Once installed and configured **Right click** on the calendar Tab, select **New Calendar**



select the "Remember The Milk Provider"



Then we go to [Remember The Milk](#) (RtM) (and login with our user ID and password)

On RtM, we go to **Settings** (top right) > **Info** > select **iCalendar Service (All Lists)**

Copy that link and then you're set to go.

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Germany

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UK +44 (0)870 9749050
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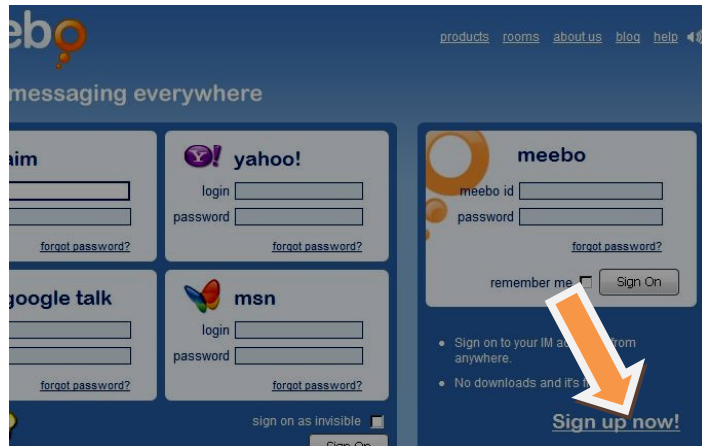
Instant Messaging

Although widely conceived as pesky, instant messaging has proven to be a good way to stay in touch with close friends and trusted business partners.

A great feature of IM is that chats are logged. But if you use multiple computers you will soon have past discussions flying around everywhere.

Meebo unites pretty much all chat services including ICQ, MSN, Yahoo!, Jabber, GTalk, etc. And the best thing is: you can turn logging on and Meebo will store all your conversations.

1 Go to meebo.com



2 Sign up for the Meebo Account

3 Once you have done so, select the service you want to use

4 off you go to a united chat adventure – regardless if you are on Mac OS, Windows, or Linux.

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Documents

[Google Documents](#) offers you full-featured spreadsheet, word processor (including spellchecking for several languages), and presentation capabilities in an on- and offline (using Google Gears) environment. All in your browser.

Offline functionality includes document editing and synchronization upon gaining your online connection back.

Definitely mentionable is the collaboration feature, referring to the fact that you can share documents with other Google Document users. For instance other members in your organization.

The most interesting fact is that you can export your created documents to pretty much every format like Open Office-, Microsoft compatible formats, RTF, HTML, PDF, etc.

But since we're talking about having synced data: regardless of the system you are working on (Windows, Mac, Linux) you always have access to all your documents in a familiar environment.

All you need to do is sign up using your probably existing Google Account and you can get started.

Lars Hilse
Eichstr. 10 B
DE-25767 Bunsöh
Germany

DE +49 (0)1801 5557775788
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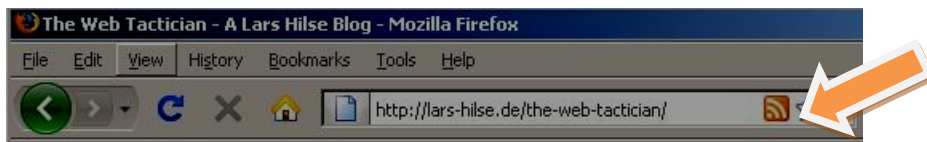
RSS Feeds

Keeping track of information through RSS feeds is something which has not spread too far. But it is the information source of the future. Every good site offers you the possibility of staying on track subscribing to its RSS feed, signaled by an orange symbol, looking somewhat like your WiFi connection.

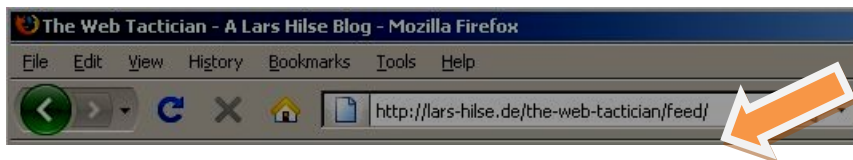
Since most people have many feeds to keep track of, so called RSS readers have developed. Some of the offline, most of them online.

Google Reader offers you the possibility to utilize both on- and offline usage, using Google Gears (see previous chapter).

1. Sign up for Google Reader using your Google Account
2. Once you have done so, you can start subscribing to RSS feeds
3. Whenever your Firefox shows you an orange symbol in the address bar, **click it**



4. You will then see the RSS layout of the page



5. Copy that URL (address) that is now shown in your address bar and paste it into the field on Google Reader and **click "add"**



6. The feed will appear on your list. And every time it is updated, you will be notified by an indicator **(1)** beside the feed's name.

Need help? Just send me an email to lars.hilse@gmail.com and I will see how I can assist you.

[Please consider a donation if you think this document was helpful to you \(CLICK HERE\)](#)

Lars Hilse
Eichstr. 10 B
DE-25767 Bunsöh
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UK +44 (0)870 9749050
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