Feedly.com: A Replacement for Google Reader, and a Tool for Curated Content

Over the years, Google has introduced many new products and services to the public. When some didn't work or didn't gain broad acceptance, or cost too much to maintain, Google shut them down. **Google Reader** is one example, though it still had many, many fans when it was discontinued on the 1st of July. The functionality that Google Reader provided is still quite valuable; it mitigates the need for any individual to regularly go from blog to blog, or website to website, checking for changes or updates.

Luckily, many replacement options exist, and they're very much worth pursuing. Why would you want to use a news aggregator like Reader, or its replacement? The simplest reason is because it creates a completely customized, unique collection of news, data, and updates that reflects your personal interests from around the web, with very little effort. So if you find a blog of interest to you and you want to be notified when content is added to it, an aggregator will do that for you. Many people use the aggregator as their homepage, so when they open their web browser in the morning, they see a customized page of news and information that's directly relevant to them.

Several products have made dramatic changes in an effort to absorb Google Reader's now-Reader*less* users. The underlying systems are basically the same: you create an account, identify the blogs, RSS feeds, and other news sources that you want to follow, and then view the end result. When a new blog post or RSS feed is made available, it (or a link to it) appears on your customized results page.

Feedly (http://feedly.com) leads the post-Google Reader pack. Others are out there as well, but in the interest of space, I'll prov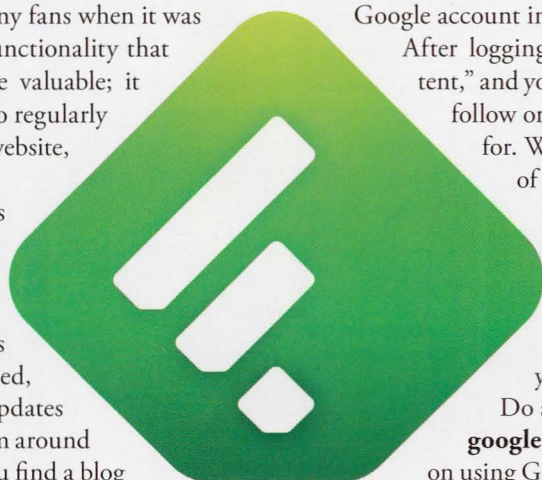ide an overview of how to get the most from Feedly. You do need to have a Google account to use Feedly, and you log in to Feedly using your Google account information. Initially, Feedly was basically a layer on top of Google Reader, making Reader prettier and more effective. In any case, Feedly still relies on the Google account information for account setup.

After logging in at feedly.com, click on "add content," and you can add the URL of a blog you want to follow or type in some terms you'd like to search for. When you do the latter, you'll see a range of results that you might select to add to your Feedly page. Click on the plus sign to the right of any source, and its content will be added to your page. You can tag feeds to keep them organized, if you want. In addition to web pages, you can add news search results, too. Do a search on **Google News** (**http://news.google.com**; also, see *Sea History* 132 for more on using Google News for maritime history) for the terms you'd like to use, then find the RSS link at the bottom left of the page. Right-click it, paste that URL into Feedly, and new search results for that term will appear on your Feedly page.

You can customize how the page appears, and make many other changes as well. Feedly offers web browser extensions, too, which have tools that make it very easy to add a web page's feed to your Feedly profile. Mobile apps give you access to your Feedly content from anywhere, and there are extensive social-sharing tools built into the service. With just a bit of setup, Feedly can deliver the day's news, selected just for you, right to your computer.

Suggestions for other sites worth mentioning are welcome at **peter@shipindex.org**. See **http://shipindex.org** for a free compilation of over 140,000 ship names from indexes to dozens of books and journals. ⚓