

# HWZ Forum's Requirement Spec for Auto-posting a Daily Deal Site's RSS feed

## 1. About this document

This document defines the specification of requirements by for any daily deal site (you) who is looking forward to automatically post their deals to hardwarezone.com Forums (us).

**Intended Readers:** Developers from daily deal sites.

## 2. Summary

Hardwarezone.com Forums runs the Vbulletin forums software (henceforth also referred to as "VB"). You are required to create a RSS feed which features daily deals. Each daily deal is one item in the RSS feed. This URL is to be fed into VB's RSS auto poster robot (done by us). The robot will look up the feed at certain time intervals and will post each deal as a new post.

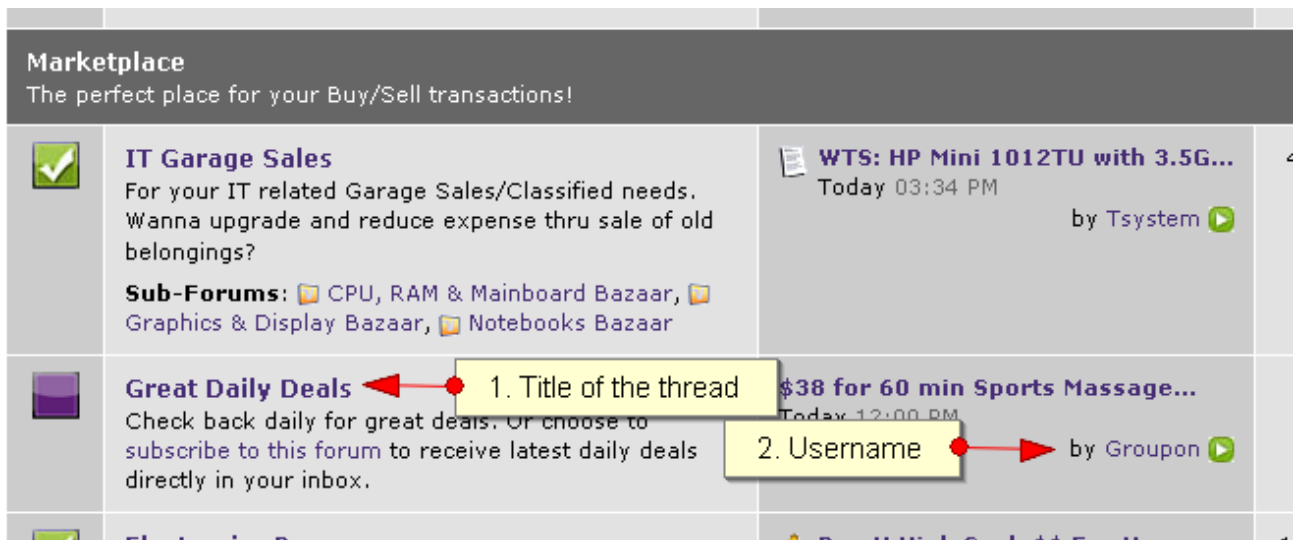
### Links for reference

**RSS:** [http://www.hardwarezone.com.sg/rss/groupon/groupon\\_sample.php](http://www.hardwarezone.com.sg/rss/groupon/groupon_sample.php)

**Thread:** <http://forums.hardwarezone.com.sg/forumdisplay.php?f=324>

## 3. What you need to give us

1. Title of the thread. (Eg, "Great Daily Deals") Your VB forum user type will be "Partner".
2. Username to be appeared as author. (Eg, Groupon)
3. Website URL (Eg, <http://www.groupon.sg>)
4. Email address (Eg, [support@groupon.sg](mailto:support@groupon.sg))
5. Avatar (120 x 120px) PNG/JPG/GIF. (Eg, your website logo)
6. At what time of day new deals are upload.



Forum Index Page


## \$15 for \$30 Worth of Vietnamese Cuisine at Madam Saigon

Post Reply

Thread Tools Search this Thread R

Today, 12:00 PM 2. Username

**Groupon**  
Partner



Join Date: Feb 2011  
Posts: 9


5. Avatar

**\$15 for \$30 Worth of Vietnamese Cuisine at Madam Saigon**

**Today's deal: \$15 for \$30 Worth of Vietnamese Cuisine at Madam Saigon**

**Buy Now!**

<b>Amount: S\$15</b>	
Discount 50 %	You save S\$15
Valid till: 24/03/2011 12:00 pm	



**Highlights**

- Cosy restaurant with a rustic f
- Extensive menu of signature \ dishes
- Groupon includes drinks and
- Perfect for friends and family g

Forum Post

View Profile: Groupon

**Groupon**   
Partner



Las

Add Groupon to Your Buddy List   Add Groupon to Your Ignore List   User Options

Forum Info   Contact Info

Join Date: **17-02-2011**

3. Website URL

Home Page:  
<http://www.groupon.sg>

**View Profile Page**

## 4. The Feed

### 4.1. Overview

- All links to your site must include tracking code for us  
Links could be on the picture and buy now or view button.
- Once a deal (an <item>) "appears" in the feed it must not be changed again. It applies to all tags - title, pubdate, link and description.  
The reason is VB's RSS auto poster robot is sensitive to the smallest change in the feed. It treats each change as a new item, resulting a new post for every "edition" of the deal. To prevent this from happening, you CANNOT make changes to an daily deal in your RSS feed.
- There are options to check the feed in 10, 20, 30, 60mins, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 hrs in interval.  
You cannot specify the exact time to check the feed, but we can specify the first time to check the feed.  
For instance, if your site is updated at noon everyday, we can start the robot at 12:10 and set the interval to 12 hrs (max).  
However, it's not very precise as each cycle is called only when it's schedule is due AND when someone browses the website.

### 4.2. Document Header/Structure

Document type must be RSS 2.0 and encoding must be UTF-8.  
Doesn't necessarily need to be exactly like this but it's proven to work.

```
<?php
header("Content-type: application/rss+xml");
echo "<?xml version='1.0' encoding='UTF-8'?>";
// Do your queries here
?>
<rss xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/" version="2.0">
<channel>
<title>Your title here</title>
<language>en</language>
  <item> ... </item>
</channel>
</rss>
```

### 4.3. Document Body

```
<item>
  <title>Title of the deal</title> The will become title of the thread. Long titles are clipped at a certain length.
  <pubdate>2011-12-20 13:00:00</pubdate> Date format "Y-m-d H:i:s" works. Should be the same time a deal is
  posted on your site. Please make sure it's Singapore time.
  <link>http://www.yoursite.com/dealpage?trackingcode</link> URL to the deal + tracking code for us
  <description>
    <style type="text/css">
      // Inline CSS here
    </style>
    <div>
      // HTML for the content
    </div>
  </description>
</item>
```

### 4.4. No Line Break

Do not include line breaks within XML code because VB will replace them with HTML `<br>` causing unnecessary `<br>` tags in the code.

This applies to everything after `<language>en</language>` tag.

Wrong

```
?><item>
  <title><?php
```

Right

```
?><item><?php
  ?><title><?php
```

Wrong

```
$code .= "<item>
  <title>";
```

Right

```
$code .= "<item>";
$code .= " <title>";
```

Not tested but might not work

```
ob_start(); ?>
  <item>
  <title>
<?php $code = ob_get_clean();
```

### 4.5. No Named Entities

RSS is sensitive to named entities, even an `&nbsp;` causes an error.

Here's what we do to both title and description (html).

```
$code = htmlspecialchars($code ,ENT_QUOTES, 'UTF-8' ); // htmlspecialchars is PHP's native function
echo html_convert_entities($code);
```

See `html_convert_entities()` function in appendix A.

### 4.6. CSS Details

Your HTML will be placed on background color `#E2E2E2`.

Available width is 594px. View the site in 1024 mode other than 100% mode.

Please clear properly if you float.

You can use absolute web paths for images and background images in embedded and inline style sheet used in your feed.

Images should be hosted on your site.

Test and debug your feed with IE. It is sensitive to errors and can point exactly to one.

## 5. Contact

Moe

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New Media - SPHM.  
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Email: moeam@sphm-newmedia.biz

## Appendix A

```
/* html_convert_entities($string) -- convert named HTML entities to
 * XML-compatible numeric entities.
 */
function html_convert_entities($string) {
    return preg_replace_callback('/&([a-zA-Z][a-zA-Z0-9]+)/',
        'convert_entity', $string);
}
```

```
/* Swap HTML named entity with its numeric equivalent. If the entity
 * isn't in the lookup table, this function returns a blank, which
 * destroys the character in the output - this is probably the
 * desired behaviour when producing XML. */
```

```
function convert_entity($matches) {
    static $table = array('quot' => '&#34;',
        'amp' => '&#38;',
        'lt' => '&#60;',
        'gt' => '&#62;',
        'OElig' => '&#338;',
        'oelig' => '&#339;',
        'Scaron' => '&#352;',
        'scaron' => '&#353;',
        'Yuml' => '&#376;',
        'circ' => '&#710;',
        'tilde' => '&#732;',
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        'rsaquo' => '&#8250;',
        'euro' => '&#8364;',
        'fnof' => '&#402;',
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        'Beta' => '&#914;',
        'Gamma' => '&#915;',
        'Delta' => '&#916;',
        'Epsilon' => '&#917;',
        'Zeta' => '&#918;',
        'Eta' => '&#919;',
        'Theta' => '&#920;',
```

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 'Nu' => '&#925;',  
 'Xi' => '&#926;',  
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 'Pi' => '&#928;',  
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 'spades' => '♠',  
 'clubs' => '♣',  
 'hearts' => '♥',  
 'diams' => '♦',  
 'nbsp' => ' ',  
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 'pound' => '£',  
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 'uml' => '¨',

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'aring' => '&#229;';  
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```
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'acute' => '&#233;',  
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'uml' => '&#252;',  
'acute' => '&#253;',  
'thorn' => '&#254;',  
'uml' => '&#255;'
```

```
);
```

```
// Entity not found? Destroy it.
```

```
return isset($table[$matches[1]]) ? $table[$matches[1]] : '';
```

```
}
```