

Guide to integrating UBCevents Calendar with your site

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As an UBCevents calendaring partner or user, you may want to display events from UBCevents on your website. There are two ways that this can be achieved.

The first is using standard RSS feeds to transmit the data. Users could be given an RSS link that points them to a customized feed. RSS feeds can also be used by your website to retrieve data in a standardized way. This solution requires that you be able to retrieve and transform an RSS feed.

A second way uses JavaScript to insert HTML into a client's page. This may involve much less work on your website depending on your requirements. A small amount of JavaScript is embedded in a page, and the script is run client side, inserting the event HTML as the page loads. This HTML can have CSS applied to it, so the presentation style is quite customizable.

The following describes the implementation details of these two approaches.

Approach 1 - Consuming an RSS feed

Although you may simply present your audience with an RSS feed and let them load it with whichever method they handle RSS feeds, it may work better to consume the RSS feed and display the information on your page. This will require parsing to translate the data into HTML, using whichever technology you choose.

An RSS feed is retrieved from the calendar by retrieving the contents of a location like this:

```
http://services.calendar.events.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/rssCache.pl ?days=14&mode=rss
```

Instructions for customizing the feed are given in the parameters section. Remember that you must not set the parameter mode to anything but 'rss' to retrieve an RSS feed. You can also leave it out. Follow the instructions in the parameters section for more information on this.

You can either put the link on your site for a visitor to use, or you can use a back end process to retrieve the data and transform it.

Approach 2 - Inserting HTML via Javascript

There are two modes that insert HTML into a page. The first (mode=list) returns a list of events and descriptions. The second (mode=month) displays a calendar grid for an entire month.

This approach requires very little effort to implement. First of all, look at the Parameters section and build the customized URL you will use to retrieve content. The customization will be the same as for an RSS feed, but remember to add a variable mode=list or mode=month. When you specify this, the events calendar will return JavaScript that inserts HTML into your page. You place the JavaScript script where you want the HTML to be placed.

Here is the JavaScript to insert into your page:

```
<script language="JavaScript" src="[URL]" type="text/JavaScript"></script>
```

Change [URL] to the URL with your chosen parameters, for example:

```
<script language="JavaScript" src="http://services.calendar.events.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/rssCache.pl?days=5&mode=list&filterName=tag_concerts" type="text/JavaScript"></script>
```

This will return a script that looks something like this:

```
document.write('<div id="bedeworkfeed">');
document.write('<div class="bwmaintitle"><a href="http://calendar.events.ubc.ca/cal"
  class="bwlink">UBC Events Calendar</a></div>');
document.write('<div class="bwitem"><div class="bwtitle"><a href="
  http://calendar.events.ubc.ca/cal/event/eventView.do?subid=710&calPath=%2Fpublic%
  2FArts%2FConcerts&guid=CAL-09d2f390-1b143ae6-011b-143c8066-
  00000003ubcevent@interchange.ubc.ca&recurrenceId=" class="bwitemlink"
  target="new">Halloween Party </a></div><div class="bwdescription">Tue, July 15, 2008
  3:00 PM - 5:00 PM In a Swarm of Flappity Bats. Come join us for a night of trick or treating
  </div></div>');
document.write('</div>');
```

When this is inserted into your page, it will cause properly formatted HTML to be inserted into the client's page as it loads. Here is a sample of what it may insert:

```
<div id="bedeworkfeed">
  <div class="bwmaintitle">
    <a class="bwlink" href=" http://calendar.events.ubc.ca/cal ">UBCevents Calendar</a>
  </div>
  <div class="bwitem">
    <div class="bwtitle">
      <a class="bwitemlink" href=" http://calendar.events.ubc.ca/cal/event/eventView.do?
      subid=710&calPath=%2Fpublic%2FArts%2FConcerts&guid=CAL-09d2f390-1a7e037a-011a-985087b7-
      00000010ubcevent@interchange.ubc.ca&recurrenceId=">Soccer in the Sub
      </a>
    </div>
    <div class="bwdescription">Wed, June 18, 2008 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM Student Union Building. Free. Blue
    Chip vs Pie R Squared Pizza
    </div>
  </div>
</div>
```

The content can be styled by applying CSS. For example,

```
#bedeworkfeed {padding:10px;background-color:#DFCC9A;}
#bedeworkfeed div.bwitem {margin-top:5px;}
#bedeworkfeed div.bwmaintitle a:link { etc... }
```

RSS Feed Parameters

To consume customized data, you may specify these parameters:

Parameter	Description	Example	Is it optional?
days	The numbers of days including today that you wish to fetch events for. Do not use this if you want to use <i>start</i> and <i>end</i> instead!	days=3 days=7	Yes – defaults to 7 if <i>days</i> , <i>start</i> and <i>end</i> are all left off.
start	The first day you want to retrieve events for. Must be used in conjunction with <i>end</i> , and <i>days</i> must not be specified. Must use the form: yyyy-MM-dd. Inclusive - events for the day you specify will be included in the range.	start=2008-07-01 (first of July this year) start=2008-07-21 (21 st of July this year)	No – uses <i>days</i> instead.
end	The last day you want to retrieve events for. Must be used in conjunction with <i>start</i> , and <i>days</i> must not be specified. Must use the form: yyyy-MM-dd. Exclusive – events which happen in the end date will not show up in the result.	end=2008-07-01 (first of July this year) end=2008-07-21 (21 st of July this year)	Yes – uses <i>days</i> instead.
month	This is an alternate way to choose the period of time you want to view events from.	Absolute: month=August month=January	Yes – defaults to using <i>start</i> and <i>end</i> , or <i>days</i>

	<p>NOTE: this will override start and end parameters!</p> <p>You can use relative or absolute months. Absolute months are specified by name while relative months are specified using 'current' and an offset (see examples).</p>	<p>Relative:</p> <p>month=current (this month)</p> <p>month=current+1 (next month)</p> <p>month=current-3 (three months ago)</p> <p>month=current-36 (this same month three years ago)</p>	
year	<p>This goes with the month parameter. If you are using a relative month parameter, do not use the year parameter (it will be ignored). Only use the year parameter if you want to specify an absolute month in a different year.</p>	<p>year=2008</p> <p>year=2012</p> <p>year=1998</p>	<p>Yes – defaults to using the current year</p>
calPath	<p>The calendar you wish to receive events from. Note that you can specify multiple calendars to receive events from all of them. The complete path must be specified in the correct form (see the section 'how to format a calPath parameter' for more details)</p>	<p>For AMS Women's Centre: calPath=%2Fpublic%2FEvents+Calendar%2FAMS+Womyn%27s+Centre</p> <p>Alma Mater Society: calPath=%2Fpublic%2FEvents+Calendar%2FAlma+Mater+Society</p> <p>To get multiple calendars (e.g both Women's Centre and Alma Mater Society): calPath=%2Fpublic%2FEvents+Calendar%2FAMS+Womyn%27s+Centre&calPath=%2Fpublic%2FEvents+Calendar%2FAlma+Mater+Society</p>	<p>Yes – but it defaults to all calendars, which is probably undesirable!</p>

catTag	A category you wish to filter on. See the category section below for more details.	catTag=Type – Exhibit catTag=Type - Exhibit&catTag=Subject - Entertainment - Arts	Yes – if not given, no filtering on categories is performed
filterName	Filters are not currently supported in, in the version of Bedework calendar software used by UBCevents	filterName=tag_concerts	Yes – defaults to not using a filter
mode	Three options: “rss”, “list”, and “month”. rss: returns an RSS feed. list: returns an ordered HTML listing of events month: returns a calendar grid for an entire month.	mode=rss mode=list mode=month	Yes – defaults to sending an RSS feed

These parameters can be added to the URL you call when retrieving data as in the following example:

<http://services.calendar.events.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/rssCache.pl?days=5&mode=month&month=current>

The UBCevents source location for RSS is:

<http://services.calendar.events.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/rssCache.pl>

Here is an example illustrating an RSS which draws content from two calendars and displays a month grid for September:

<http://services.calendar.events.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/rssCache.pl?calPath=%2Fpublic%2FEvents+Calendar%2FUBC+Library&calPath=%2Fpublic%2FEvents+Calendar%2FDepartment+of+Health+Safety+and+the+Environment&month=September&mode=month>

How to format the calPath parameter

The calPath formatting must be adhered to very rigidly. If a calPath value cannot be understood, the system will disregard it and return all events. Do not try to write the calPath attribute by yourself! It is very simple to find the one you want, because this parameter is used elsewhere in the UBCevents calendaring system.

- 1) Click 'available calendars' under the date
- 2) Find the calendar you want to receive events from
- 3) Right click the RSS icon and select 'copy link location' (in Firefox) or 'copy shortcut' (Internet Explorer)
- 4) Paste this link into any text editor. It should appear like this:

[http://services.calendar.events.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/rssCache.pl?calPath=**%2Fpublic%2FEvents+Calendar%2FAIESEC+UBC**&days=14](http://services.calendar.events.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/rssCache.pl?calPath=%2Fpublic%2FEvents+Calendar%2FAIESEC+UBC&days=14)

- 5) Copy the calPath parameter (bolded above).

Filtering on categories

It may be useful to you that only results in a certain category are returned. This can be done by using the catTag parameter. For example,
...catTag=Type - Exhibit&catTag=Subject - Entertainment – Arts

This would filter out any events that are in neither of these categories. You can use any number of catTag parameters.

Keep in mind that this is a subtractive process. If you specify a calendar and a category, then only events in that calendar and in that category will be returned.

If you specify no calendars, then bedework looks through all events to filter your request. This is costly and should be avoided if possible.

Displaying days in the past

If you use the parameter days, you will see events happening only in the future, and going forward that number of days. Another option is to use the month parameter to request an entire month's worth of events. This is quite flexible (see the parameters section above). To explicitly request a date range, use the start and end parameters. Date ranges can partly or entirely in the future or past. These parameters must be formatted like so:

start=2008-07-01

Remember to make sure you include the 0's if you construct this programmatically – do not use this:

start=2008-7-1

Currently, periods of more than one month are not allowed. Nothing is returned if the period exceeds one month. An exact full month is allowed. For example, this returns every event in July:

```
... &start=2008-07-01&end=2008-08-01
```

This, however, will return nothing:

```
... &start=2008-07-01&end=2008-08-10
```

Another small consideration is that the RSS feed that is returned will falsely display the dates when start and end are used. If the start date is in the past, the RSS feed will report the start date as the current day. The end date will be shown as the date on which the last returned event takes place instead of the end of the period you specified. Because of this behaviour, if you specify dates with start and end you should display these same dates, instead of retrieving the dates from the returned RSS feed.

Caching

The perl script that serves up event data caches for up to twenty minutes. If you do not see changes you make applied immediately, this may be the reason.

Technical Support

Contact the UBCevents team for details on setting up a calendar for testing and support – info.events@ubc.ca