



# Tip of the Week:

Napa Valley College - McCarthy Library



Tip #11

September, 2012

Watch Clay Shirky's informative video at: <http://bit.ly/mRM3Or>

### Tags

[climate change](#) [coast](#) [delta](#) [restoration](#)

[dinosaurs](#) **earthquake**

[energy](#) **evolution** [glaciology](#)

[human evolution](#) **natural**

**hazards** [ocean](#)

**drilling** [paleontol-](#)

[ogy](#) [planetary science](#) **seis-**

**mology** [tsunami](#)

Reminder: Past Tips of the Week can be found on the library page at:

<http://www.napavalley.edu/Library/Pages/TipoftheWeek.aspx>

## Brought to you by Librarians @ McCarthy Library

### Too much information coming at you? Feeling overwhelmed?

▶ [Clay Shirky](#) argues that it's not information overload, but filter failure that is a problem today. He explains that information abundance has been around since the invention of the Gutenberg Press when more books were printed than people could read (the "first" instance of information overload!). Today, so much information is coming our way we really need more effective information "filters" to find content that is relevant, valuable and helpful.

▶ Librarians can help by pointing patrons to the most accurate information in print and online. Finding, filtering and republishing online content, known as "content curation" is one of the things librarians do to make information more accessible. The creation of library guides to point students to the best sites for discipline-specific information is one example which brings both print and online sources together. Be sure to check out the [McCarthy Library's Library Guides!](#)

▶ If you'd like to keep on top of various topics of interest in your discipline, but don't have the time to sift through thousands of web pages, you may be interested in creating your own information filter.

### How can you set up your own information filter?

▶ Using an aggregated content reader like [Google Reader](#), it is possible to filter your searches. **Google Reader** allows you to read incoming RSS feeds from websites and news sites which you pre-select. New content comes to your Google Reader when it is posted so you don't need to visit individual sites. It then makes it very easy to scan for the latest developments of interest to you. Reader also keeps track of the items you've read, so you only see unread items when you come back.

▶ You can search Google Reader by **categories**, **keywords**, **tags** and **individuals**. **Categories** represent ideas sharing some common characteristics. For example, if you have an interest in Earth Science, you can search for feeds related to Earth Science.

**Keywords** represent ideas containing words representing a subject of interest (e.g. weather patterns, climate, earthquakes, volcanoes, ocean floor).

**Tags** are similar to keywords, but use tag metadata.

**(hint:** to find a list of tags, use search term "tag cloud for \_\_\_\_\_" in a search engine like Google).

**Individuals** refers to the people who work in an area of interest (e.g. Tanya Atwater).

▶ When doing background research, you may find that a keyword search is not as effective as following a particular source, author, or even another curator's content.

▶ You can also take a variety of RSS feeds and aggregate them into Google Reader. For example, check out [Science Daily](#) which offers the latest news on a wide variety of science topics.

After running it through its paces, perhaps Google Reader will become your filter of choice!

