

iPod Touch Review: ByLine â?? An Excellent RSS Reader

bylineicon OK, so I now have to retract part of what I said in my last article about RSS readers. There is an excellent RSS reader on AppStore called Byline that so far, does exactly what I want in a news reader for my iPod Touch.

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Byline is like many RSS readers, but this one really does understand how to be effective on an iPod Touch. For example, my iPod Touch is is not always connected online. I purposely turn off networking when Iâ??m not in range to extend my battery. How many online applications have you launched that display an error message telling you that the network is not available? Well, duh, I turned it off. Why tell me something I already know? Byline elegantly ghosts the sync icon when youâ??re offline and makes it active when connected. Itâ??s just done right.

And now, the great part: Byline optionally caches images for offline use! No longer do I feel cheated by not having always-on connectivity. Yes, it does take some to download all the images, but with multiple news feeds each having dozens and dozens of articles, itâ??s actually pretty quick.

The formatting is typical, and the inclusion if the images really rounds it out. Probably the only down side to this is that it requires setting up the feeds in Google Reader. At first, I was somewhat hesitant to go down this path, because this means that there is really no way to just add an ad-hoc feed, but realistically, I rarely want to do this anyway, so itâ??s not really an issue. Bylineâ??s settings are located in the iPod Touchâ??s main Settings page, so you have to exit the application to get to it. I wish applications would be consistent with this. But once you set the settings, you rarely need to revisit them.

So the bottom line is that Byline provides an excellent news reading experience online or offline. It caches and displays images very nicely, so you donâ??t feel cheated by not being connected. So wherever I am, I always have something to read to kill some time.

Highly recommended!

Pros: Solid interface, ability to cache images for offline viewing, no annoying errors when not online, logical interface, very customizable.

Cons: Byline requires setting up your feeds in Google Reader. This is not really negative overall, it does eliminates the ability to add an ad-hoc RSS feed on the fly.

Tip: Your RSS feeds must reside in a folder. While you can put multiple RSS feeds in the same folder, if your article is not in any folder, it ill not display in ByLine.

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