NTU library

Keeping your research up to date

NOTTINGHAM
TRENT UNIVERSITY

Why do I need to keep up to date?

There are a number of reasons why it's important to keep up to date with developments in your research field. As well as staying ahead of the game, other considerations include:

Confirming your research is addressing a new area
Spotting opportunities for new research
Finding out what competitors are doing
Establishing useful links with potential collaborators
Ensuring you don't omit relevant studies from your literature review

How do I keep up to date?

This may feel overwhelming at first, but you can categorise your sources by two broad areas – formal and informal. If you want to keep on top of newly published and emerging research you'll need to set up systems (where possible) for the different sources you consider to be relevant.
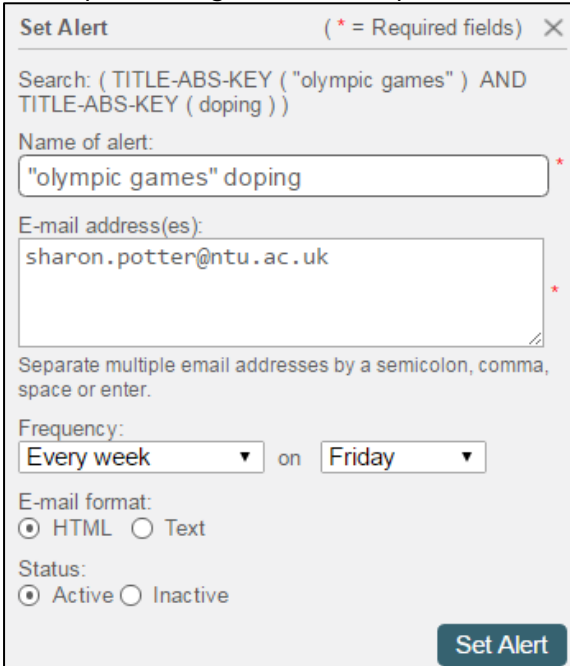
Once you've done this you'll find it's not the time-consuming task you may have initially thought.

Journal articles

The majority of databases (including Google Scholar) allow you to set up alerts for searches you have conducted. You'll need to create an account for each database, then set parameters determining how frequently you wish to be notified of new articles, the publication date range, and record format. You may be able to choose between email alerts or RSS feeds.

How to do this will vary with the different database providers, so check the help options.

Example settings for the Scopus database:

YouTube is good source of help if you prefer to learn by visual means.

Citation alerts

In addition to keeping track of new articles which have been published in your research field, you can also set up citation alerts. These alert you when a specific article has been cited by other articles. This is particularly useful for key studies, as it enables you to follow developments, arguments, emerging trends, and identify new authors in that area. You can also use this feature to find who is citing your own published work. Resources which have this option include Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar. Citation alerts are set up in a similar way to article alerts. Check the database help links for further details.

Tables of contents (TOCs)

Tables of contents, or TOCs, services alert you to the contents of your favourite journals as they are published, even if NTU Library doesn't subscribe to that particular journal. The main providers of these services are JournalTOCs and Zetoc. These cover the major publishers, but you'll need to create an account with each TOCs service provider.

Journal issues

A number of publishers provide free alerting services for new issues of journals, including the contents for many. They just require you to register on their websites. A selection of the major academic publishers includes:

> Cambridge University Press
> Elsevier (via ScienceDirect)
> IngentaConnect
> OUP
> Sage
> Springer
> Taylor and Francis
> Wiley

Some publishers offer additional services, e.g. Sage and Taylor and Francis also provide citation alerts.

Conference papers

Some databases include conference papers which have been published in conference proceedings. Web of Science, Scopus and Zetoc each have the option to limit your search to conference papers. Check the limiters and field options in other databases to find out if they include conference papers.

Papers presented by academics may be in the relevant university repositories. If you find the details of a paper in a database, the record will provide the author's affiliation. You can then check the repository for that university. The version in the repository may not be exactly as published in the conference proceedings as copyright may not permit the

published version to be made freely available. You can request the published paper through the 'Get My Journal Article' service.

It's useful to find out which conferences are coming up as this will alert you to new areas of research and may result in you identifying potential conferences at which to promote your own research. http://www.allconferences.com/ and CONAL (Conference Alerts) will keep you up to date in this area whilst wikiCFP is a calls-for-papers service.

Books

Books will be of more use in some research areas than others. A few databases include books but the best way to keep up to date is through the publishers' websites. The major academic publishers, as listed under 'Journal issues' above, offer this, but also check the websites of publishers who specialise in subject disciplines, e.g. Wildy for legal material.

Official publications

You can set up alerts from most government websites but the UKOP (UK Official Publications) website updates its list of official publications on a daily basis. NTU doesn't subscribe to the database but the publications list is freely available.

Patents

Some areas of research will require the checking of patents. Espacenet has worldwide coverage and is a free resource.

News

NTU Library subscribes to Nexis UK, which is an international news database updated on a daily basis. You can also subscribe to RSS feeds from the BBC News website.

Lists

There are a number of academic mailing lists which you can sign up for. JISCMail is the national mailing list directory for the UK Higher and Further Education communities. There's no limit to the number of lists you can sign up for, but a few have restricted membership.

Social bookmarking and networking

Social bookmarking and networking sites can be fruitful in providing details of new research. They also provide opportunities for networking, potential collaboration and a platform for promoting your own research. Some of the more established sites include:

Academia.edu
Linkedin
ResearchGate
ResearcherID

Other social media

Many researchers use social media to promote their research, to comment on papers and conferences, and as a means for networking. A selection of social media to try includes:

Twitter
Facebook groups
Subject-specific blogs
CiteULike and Mendeley (These are just two of the many freely available reference and document sharing sites)

Websites

There are a number of tools which monitor changes to your favourite websites:

Google Alerts
TrackEngine
Watch That Page
ChangeDetection.com

Professional bodies

You can find out about various professional bodies and learned societies by searching online directories, e.g.

Directory of the Professions
TotalProfessions.com
Learned societies (Academy of the Social Sciences)
Wikipedia lists professional bodies and learned societies

Research services

Don't forget to consult the websites for different research organisations, as a consolidated directory of research in progress in the UK doesn't exist at the time of writing. You may need to register to use some of these services. A selection includes:

BERA (British Educational Research Association)
ERC (European Research Council)

[Leverhulme](#)
[NatCen](#) (Natinal Centre for for Social Research)
[NFER](#) (National Foundation for Educational Research)
[NIHR Current Research](#) – NIHR-funded medical research
[RCUK](#) (Research Councils UK) – the partnership for the [seven UK research councils](#)
[Wellcome Trust](#)

RSS feeds

RSS feeds (Rich Site Summary or Really Simple Syndication) provide one way of keeping up to date with online resources. Before you can set up RSS feeds you'll need to register with one a feed reader or aggregator. There are several to choose from, including [Feedly](#), [Digg](#), and [Feedspot](#). Microsoft Outlook users can use the feed reader provided with the email account. A [list of feed readers](#) organised by platform is available online. To see which websites and resources provide RSS feeds look out for the orange symbol .

Is that it now?

Probably not. You will need to revisit and review your alerts from time to time, especially if you're conducting your research over several months, or even years, as your focus may change. You may need to set up new alerts to capture changes in the direction of your original research interest.

For further advice and support please contact the [Library Research Team](#).