

SAVE TIME - SAVE SEARCHES [...and get alerts]

'It goes to the library – you go to the pub'

[Motto of PubCrawler – a service used to search PubMed]

Most bibliographic databases allow you to save searches which have given you good results. You can have the system run them automatically, at intervals chosen by you, sending you the results by e-mail or via an RSS feed [or re-run them yourself when you choose]

This is not only an excellent way to save repeating actions, but is also a memory-jogger. It is an easy way of keeping up to date and hopefully ensuring you pick up recent research, but using this method you are of course only retrieving references recently added.

IMPORTANT - You should never rely entirely on automatically-run searches.

EVEN MORE IMPORTANT – Don't set up a saved search and then just leave it, assuming it is going to give you exactly what you need – Finding the 'ideal' search terms on a first attempt is unlikely. *You'll need to refine and tweak over time*, or you could be missing out on important research.

You might also try setting up saved searches and alerts as a way to compare bibliographic databases, to help determine which is/are best at retrieving references most relevant for your subjects of interest. I did that for something as simple and unambiguous as the postcode for the Dept, and was astonished/horrified at the different references retrieved.

Here's how to set up saved searches on some of the major databases:

Web of Science - <http://apps.webofknowledge.com/>

- First register with Web of Science, and give yourself a password; Raven login will not work. Log in before you try to save a search
- *NB - If you search in the default 'All databases' you can't save a search.* Make sure you have chosen 'Web of Science Core Collection' before searching [tab is top left]
- Your most recent search appears at the top of the left-hand column
- When you have a good combination of terms, click on 'Create alert' under that display

The screenshot shows the Web of Science search results interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'Back to Search', 'My Tools', 'Search History', and 'Marked List'. Below the tabs, the search results are displayed. On the left, there is a sidebar with 'Results: 17 (from Web of Science Core Collection)', 'You searched for: AUTHOR: (ferguson) AND TOPIC: (nutrigenomics) ...More', and 'Refine Results' section. The main content area shows two search results. The first result is 'Nutrigenetics, nutrigenomics and inflammatory bowel diseases' by Ferguson, Lynnette R. The second result is 'Research in nutrigenomics and potential applications to practice' by Ferguson, Lynnette R.; Barnett, Matthew P. G. The interface includes options to 'Select Page', 'Save to EndNote online', 'Add to Marked List', and 'Create Alert'.

- You are asked to give the search a meaningful name, and check terms used
- The default is for an **RSS feed**, but check the 'e-mail alerts' box is un-ticked
- To receive **e-mail alerts**, you should tick the box and choose the frequency required. Your e-mail address should be filled in, since you have already logged in
- If an earlier search gave better results, click on the 'search history' link [top right]

- You'll see a table displaying recent searches. Delete all except the one you want, or the combination you want
- Click on the 'Save history/Create alert' button - The process is then similar to that outlined above
- *Remember to click on the 'Save' button!*
- If you don't want to receive alerts but instead **run saved searches yourself**, save as above, leaving 'send me e-mail alerts' unchecked. Go into the 'my saved searches' table, choose the search you want and click on the 'open' button in the table. You'll see another page with a 'run' button to click, leading to *another* page allowing you some limiting options. Click on 'continue' and you'll go back to a table, with just a number for 'results'. Click on that number to see them
- You can set up as many alerts as you like, by author or key words
- You can check what searches you've saved, and alerts you've set up, by clicking on 'search history' under the tabs, then choosing 'Open saved history' from the buttons underneath OR by clicking on 'Saved searches' in the log-in panel at top
- If the search needs modifying later, go to 'Saved searches' and make changes. Delete any searches that aren't working, or jamming your inbox with junk

SciVerse-Scopus - <http://www.scopus.com/>

- You'll need to register for a personal username and password
- Log-in and then run searches until you've found a good combination of terms

- For automatic **e-mail alerts**, click on 'Set alert' in grey bar above results
- Give the search a meaningful name, choose frequency, down to 'daily'
- *Remember to click on 'Create' button*
- For an **RSS feed** click on the RSS logo or 'set feed' and you'll be taken through the steps, plus given a url to cut and paste into your reader
- To **re-run the search yourself** later on, click on 'Save' [below the tabs].
- A saved search is now available to re-run by choosing 'My settings' [below logo] – choose to search for relevant items loaded since the last search or re-run completely
- Your alerts are also registered in the SciVerse 'partner' database, ScienceDirect, but as this has more limited coverage than Scopus, it would seem to be irrelevant

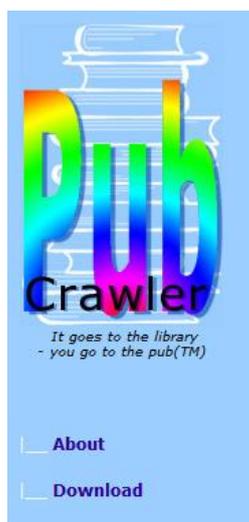
PubMed via MyNCBI - <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/account/>

- Register with MyNCBI on the link above, or 'sign in to NCBI' link is at top right of PubMed search page to get registration page
- MyNCBI gives you a personal page showing your saved searches, etc. A simple search box is embedded in the page also. If you have saved refs in 'My bibliography' they will display here too

- Once you've run a successful search, click on the 'save search' link below [or do that first and you'll be prompted to log in to MyNCBI]
- For **e-mail updates** : Give the search a meaningful title. The default is just to save, so click on 'yes, please' for e-mail updates
- To **re-run a search yourself**, click on the 'what's new' button on your 'manage searches' page
- To set up an **RSS feed**, click on the RSS button under the search box for the code

PubMed via PubCrawler - <http://pubcrawler.gen.tcd.ie/>

- Work out your search on PubMed before you do anything on PubCrawler
- Go to <http://pubcrawler.gen.tcd.ie/> and register
- You will then get a personal overview page



PubCrawler -
an Update Alerting Service for PubMed and GenBank

Overview for user 'weaslette' (log in as different user)

Results:
The latest results contain 0 new hits.
They were generated on Mon Sep 22 15:00:03 2014 (Eire). [Show results!](#) [Start queries!](#)

Queries:
2 queries are defined. Last modified on Mon Sep 22 14:57:41 2014 (Eire). [Change queries!](#)

Schedule:
Queries are carried out on Sundays. [Change schedule!](#)

- To create a new query, click on the 'Change queries!' button [everything has !]
- Enter your query terms in the guided boxes and save
- PubCrawler runs searches automatically and sends you an e-mail with new results
- Or you can go into PubCrawler and instruct it to send you results found in the last 180 days. Log in, then on your personal profile page click on 'Start queries!' It will **e-mail you** the results
- This feels older and clunkier than other services [but it does have a good name!]

Google Scholar - <http://scholar.google.co.uk/>

- Google Scholar is not the best service for alerts, because it is harder to 'control' and thus tends to pull up lots of 'hits', many of which are not relevant. You will get better results if you work with 'Advanced search' [drop down from the single search box]
- Create an **e-mail alert** - Once you've run a search that gives you reasonable results, scroll to the bottom of the page & you'll see a small 'create alert' link. It may also appear in the left-hand column. Click on it
- Knowing Google as we do, it will no doubt have filled in your e-mail address. The default name will be your search terms, but you can amend this. Hit 'Create alert'
- Once created you can cancel alerts by clicking on the 'Alerts' button on the search page or 'List alerts' from results pages - but not amend them. For this, you'll have to create a new alert, so this is a bit more awkward than some other alert services
- A 'fault' of Google Scholar alerts can however be used to advantage - because it tends to retrieve references to papers where the citations at the end contain the terms you have searched for, you can use this for citation alerts [*see later*]

Zetoc - <http://zetoc.mimas.ac.uk/>

Since Zetoc is basically just a database of the tables of contents of the journals received by the British Library, you can either use it for [fairly unsophisticated] subject searches, or for ToC alerts - *see next section*. Wider coverage than the likes of WoS, PubMed etc, including less scholarly, and niche interest, titles

- Zetoc now requires institution identification and Raven log-in. This is so you can link to the papers [including via alerts] if we have access : this is the default setting
- Provide your e-mail address for **e-mail alerts**, which arrive daily, and represent titles received & scanned in the previous 24 hours
- To save a subject search & create alert, click on 'Zetoc Alert - Access'
- First you have to set up a [blank] search with a meaningful name
- Run search until satisfied and click 'add to list'
- Now it *appears* as if you have to choose journals to search in - which you can do via subject lists, keywords, or alphabetical lists. But you don't have to : It searches in all [newly received] journals if you don't specify any

The image shows two side-by-side screenshots of the Zetoc website interface. The left screenshot is titled "Zetoc Alert - Display List Contents" and shows a search for "London Radicalism" with no results. The right screenshot is titled "Zetoc Alert - Add Journals" and shows a list of journals related to "History & Geography" with "Add" buttons for each.

Journal Selection Options
Next Page >>
Page: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
Add 0291-3798 17 TO 18
Add 0898-9675 A B -LAWRENCE-
Add 0065-101X ACTA ARCHAEOLOGICA -KOBENHAVN-
Add 0800-3831 ACTA BOREALIA -OSLO-
Add 0375-5444 ACTA GEOGRAPHICA SINICA -CHINESE EDITION-

- **RSS feeds** can be set up via the RSS button in the top tabs
- How-to videos at <http://zetoc.mimas.ac.uk/videos.html>

Most publishers' websites, or even individual journals, will allow you to set up alerts by author or subject. Or you might consider.....

ToC [Table of Contents] alerts

As well as running saved searches, another very useful memory-jogger is to have the tables of contents of useful journals sent automatically as an e-mail or feed. No need to remember to check every week/month [or feel guilty about not checking!] You get the contents, you scan to see if anything is of interest, and put that issue aside if there isn't! Most journals allow you to request ToC alerts – sometimes even if the journal itself is only available as a paper copy. Usually there's a button or a box somewhere on journal's main web page.

JournalTOCs - <http://www.journaltoCs.ac.uk/>

This is a free service run by Heriot-Watt University, to which the major publishers contribute; has wide coverage like Zetoc, but with probably more overseas titles and less 'fringe' content. You can run subject searches and thus retrieve information on individual papers, but not set up subject alerts : So you can use JournalTOCs to find suitable papers by subject, but would always have to run a manual search for subject updates. Alerts are for contents pages *only*. Note that the contents of only the most recent issue of any title are stored, so this can never be used for comprehensive searches

- To set up an **e-mail alert**, first register and log in
- Choose and tick the journals you are interested in. You can do this by browsing titles from a broad subject area, by key-word, or by running a subject search
- Once you have chosen some, a list appears, with a blank tick-box initially saying 'E-mail alerts is off' Tick this and it will change to 'e-mail alerts is on'
- **RSS feeds** are set up via the usual symbol above the contents page for an individual journal

Citation alerts

Most bibliographic databases allow you to set up an alert for when a useful paper is cited by another. Usually when you have clicked on the title and found the page with further details, there will be a link on the page [usually in the right-hand column] that says something like 'Create citation alert' [WoS] or 'Inform me when this paper is cited' [Scopus]. Click on it, follow the instructions, and that's one less thing to try to remember!

As mentioned above, one of the annoying things about Google Scholar is that it picks up papers where your search terms actually appear in the references at the end : but that means you could possibly use it as a citation alert.

Author alerts

Sometimes it is useful to know when a particular person has a paper published. You set these up in bibliographic databases in the same way as citation alerts.

Problems could arise when different versions of a name are used. Often a full first name is not used in author listings, but there may be one or two initials. One way of overcoming this problem is to enter only the surname and first initial in the 'Author' box for the search, and then limit this by a second search box for 'Address'. You can use words or even postcode/zip code.

There are various systems of author ID also, ie there isn't one universal system. These are set up by the authors themselves, and usually require them to undertake continued

checking and weeding. ORCID [Open Researcher & Contributor ID, established 2012] is currently the most viable independent system. There are also ID systems unique to databases, predating ORCID, and these will be easier to use at the moment.

Web of Science uses ResearcherID <http://www.researcherid.com/> and it is easy to check if 'your' author has registered

Scopus uses a different Author Identifier scheme – but it also currently has the easiest method of getting author alerts. Run a search and find what looks like a paper by that person. Click on the paper title, to get the details page. If the paper is indeed by that person, click on their name and you'll see an 'Author profile page'. Not only will you find a list of their papers [in publications covered by Scopus of course, though likely to be pretty complete] but on the right-hand side is a button 'Follow this author'. Scopus also provides a link into ORCID.

PubMed hasn't properly implemented its proposed Author ID system, although authors can create a bibliography of their works in 'MyNCBI' and set it for others to view. So you would need to set up an author alert as a citation alert.

Top papers?

Publisher websites also often provide feeds for what they consider to be their top papers. A source such as ScienceDirect ['Top 25 Hottest papers!'], Web of Science [Science Watch] or Nature might be worth considering for relatively painless keeping up to date in a general sense, and help you not to feel too channelled in a narrow specialisation.

Twitter or blogs?

Publishers are increasingly using Twitter to alert the world to upcoming papers they wish to promote. Some academics do use this as a way of 'keeping up' even though it is difficult to confine feeds to their specialisation.

There are also useful blogs alerting you to recent developments. Science 2.0 for example [<http://www.science20.com/>] produces a general blog, or can be narrowed down to life sciences, or even further to eg genetics or ecology.

FINALLY : Don't put all your trust in the database – and don't drown in 'information overload'

- Don't set up too many alerts, or you'll stop paying proper attention to them
- On the other hand, it is definitely worth setting up alerts in some different databases, as a way of checking which works best for your subject – you will probably be surprised at the differences in the references they retrieve, unless your search terms are very precise indeed
- You should refine your searches over time. Even if your subject focus doesn't change, you will almost certainly be able to define your requirements better over time
- Adjust your terms if you don't seem to be getting much, or if what you are getting isn't right – You can almost certainly get a better 'fit' if you refine your terms
- If you are not getting anything – check again which terms to use for that database!
- Be ruthless about deleting all underperforming/over-retrieving searches