AIRS

Advanced Information Research Skills

AIRS Module 5

Sustain

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Contents

Module 5: Sustain

KEEPING UP TO DATE

This module identifies techniques to ensure that you are informed of new literature and resources in your area of research as it is published. By the end of this module you will:

- create effective table of content and search alerts to keep you up to date.

5.1 Keep up to date

Introduction

New references on your topic will continue to be published as you are writing your thesis.

It is important that you can keep up to date with the latest research and automating your search strategies will save time, effort and assist you to stay up to date with research in your area of expertise.

This section will cover tools that can help you automate your search and retrieval by providing Table of Contents journal alerts and automated search results emailed to you periodically from particular databases or journals.

Table of Contents alert

Table of Contents (TOC) alerts send emails listing the contents of the latest issue of a Journal. This means you can read what you are interested in as soon as it is published. You can set up a journal alert via many databases, or directly from journal home pages. It may be necessary to register for a profile. Table of Contents alerts might also be called 'New Article' 'New Content' or 'Journal' alerts. Examples of databases that give you access to TOC alerts include:

Current Contents Connect is a database on Web of Science platform, one of the largest platforms of scholarly information and literature.

Science Direct is one of the largest databases in the sciences as well as for health and technology. It is hosted on Scopus.

EBSCOhost is large platform of multidisciplinary literature for the arts, architecture, business, nursing, justice, education, environmental sciences, medicine, psychology and social work.

You can also go directly to almost all journal home pages or publishers' websites, to select a particular journal you are interested in and sign up for a TOC alert.

Database search alerts

Search alerts send emails listing newly published literature according to a search statement. Use search alerts with your best search statements; those proven to find a high quality list of relevant results. It may be necessary to register for a profile. A search alert can be available from the database search results page. Alternatively, it might be necessary to save the search and view the saved search before setting the alert. Once an alert is set, the database will send an email with the latest results within your specified timeframe. The databases mentioned in the TOC section above also allow you to save search alerts. You can also set up a Google search alert.

Periodic searching

For databases that don't have an alerting service you will need to consider how best to monitor the literature. For example, you could maintain a search tracking spreadsheet, with a column for best relevant searches and the date you should next check the database. For those journals that don't have Table of Contents (TOC) alerts, set a note in your diary to check the latest issues for articles pertinent to your research.

By adopting an organised approach to searching, you reduce the possibility of missing important work, increase your efficiency and reduce research anxiety.

Search tracking example (XLSX, 13.1KB)

Summary

There are many tools you can use to automate your search and retrieval so you can keep up to date with the latest publications in your area of research.

5.2 Alerts

Introduction

This section will allow you to practice and begin instituting Table of Contents and Search alerts.

Alert activities

Activity – database search alert

1. Identify and log in to a large and/or subject specific databases highly relevant for your research.
2. Register to create a profile. This enables you to create alerts and have them sent to you.
3. Develop a comprehensive search statement. The results should be good enough for you to wish to receive via email.
4. Find the 'create alert' functionality and fill in your details.

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Activity – journal TOC alert

1. Identify and log in to a journal database highly relevant for your research.
2. Register to create a profile.
3. Find the browse / list journals location.
4. Locate a relevant journal by keyword, subject, or alphabetical browse.
5. Find the 'Table of Contents' or 'New Content' alert functionality and fill in your details.
6. Repeat the process for as many searches and journals from which you wish to be notified about new content.

Summary

This section has allowed to you commence receiving search and content alerts.
Automatically receiving rather than repeatedly seeking information will save you a lot of time.