

AIRS

Advanced Information Research Skills

AIRS Module 5

Search alerts



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Module 5: Search alerts

[Workshop presentation \(YouTube, 15m01s\)](#)

Learning objectives

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.

Applying the content to your resource log

As you progress through this module, consider, and refer to the requirements of the resource log and apply your learning to each question.

Resource Log

Search alerts (6 marks)

Set up either **one** journal Table of Contents alert **or** one keyword search alert and,

- a) provide the name of the journal, or provide the search alert statement, and,
- b) an explanation of why you chose this *particular* journal or search alert [See [Module 5](#)].

5.1 Keep up to date

New references on your topic will continue to be published as you are writing your thesis. Keeping up to date with the latest research is essential. Automating this process by setting up alerts will save time, effort and assist you to stay up to date with research in your area of expertise. An alert is an easy and effective way to get recent articles in your research area.

Most databases allow for various types of alerts – find out when:

- a new journal issue is published – a table of contents alert
- an author publishes a new work –author alert
- an article is cited – citation alert
- new articles are published that match a saved search – search result alert.

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 resources that give you access to TOC alerts include:

- [Current Contents Connect](#) - a database on [Web of Science](#) platform, one of the largest platforms of scholarly information and literature.
- [Science Direct](#) - one of the largest databases in the sciences as well as for health and technology. It is hosted on [Scopus](#).
- [EBSCOhost](#) - a large platform of multidisciplinary literature for the arts, architecture, business, nursing, justice, education, environmental sciences, medicine, psychology and social work.
- [JournalTOCs](#) - the largest, free collection of scholarly journal Tables of Contents (TOCs).

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.

Citation alerts

Create a citation alert for your own publications so you're alerted when someone cites your work, or create an alert for an author you would like to follow. When a new citation becomes available in the database, you'll receive an alert. See instructions for [Google Scholar Citations](#).

To set an alert in [Scopus](#) – register or sign in.

To be notified when an author or matched authors are cited in Scopus, on the Author details page click the "Set Alert" link in the Citations row.

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 (see example below), 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 \(XLSX, 13.1KB\)](#)

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.
5. Take a screen shot and include this in your Resource Log and identify why you chose this database

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.
7. Record this information in your Resource Log