

TECHNIQUES FOR KEEPING UP WITH THE VETERINARY LITERATURE: PART 1

Keeping up with the literature of your discipline has always been a task either anticipated with relish or delayed with dread. In an era of increasing specialization, there is a new challenge: How do you keep up with both your specialty literature and that of your broader area of study?

In the era of print journals, it was a time-honored tradition for people to visit libraries on a regular basis to look at the tables of contents of journals to keep up-to-date. Those with the means also would subscribe to weekly or monthly services and publications that brought together the tables of contents of journals about a subject for them. Working in an academic library, I could rely on seeing faculty members during their regular visits to the library to look at the new journal issues and peruse the tables of contents.

Hasn't the online era made this easier? Yes. And no.

The online era provides so many choices for identifying and following topics of interest that it can become



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distracting and overwhelming in an instant. With a bit of thought and a strategy, it can be streamlined and manageable.

A recurring theme in this column is that comfortable information management is an individualized task. What follows is a framework for you to modify to suit your information style; it is not prescriptive.

Consider the topic you want to monitor and then the methods/technologies you are comfortable with or willing to

explore. Finally, think about how frequently you want updates.

When considering the topic, consider what you know about it. Is there a specific article that caught your eye or one you frequently refer to? A practitioner or author who specializes in the topic or inspired your interest? A journal with the focus? An association or society with the focus? The good news is that it is a continuum; you can move fluidly among these levels of specificity.

The flow chart below illustrates the process.

In the August issue, part two of this column will discuss specific techniques for keeping up with veterinary literature.

Thank you to Ashley Tucker for inspiring this topic and to L.M. Rey for consulting about the content and creating the graphic. [TV](#)

Texas veterinarians may contact the Medical Sciences Library at Texas A&M University for assistance at no cost for reference service, literature searching and copies of articles, chapters and conference papers from our collection. Details can be found at <http://tamu.libguides.com/tvetalium>.

