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Keeping Current Using Internet Services and Sites

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A. How Would You Like That Served?

The question today about news and current awareness on the Internet is not can you find what you need; but, rather, how do you prefer to access the information you seek. News of all kinds is definitely available on the Web. And now your means of getting to the news you need or want can be tailored exactly to meet your schedule, your energy level, and your filtering and organizing ability.

You can visit discreet sites on the Web that offer news. They exist in abundance. At these sites, you can access current news from almost every corner of the world, and nearly every county in every state throughout the Union. You can keep abreast of developments in virtually every field of human interest and endeavor. With this method, you pick the sites you want, the time of your visit, the length of your stay, and the depth of your investigation. I'm sure everyone at this session does some of this news retrieval. I, for one, browse the local Athens paper and the Atlanta Journal Constitution online every morning before I leave the house. Later in this paper, I'll offer an annotated list of several sites featuring legal and business news and a few directories that link to scores of general news sites.

Alternatively, you can sign up and receive updates by email. Email alert services are generally either once a day alerts or breaking news alerts. The daily alert services offer the top headlines from the site with a short synopsis of each associated story, links to the full stories and to the complete online offering of the source. Major news sources like the New York Times, the Washington Post, and CNN offer breaking news alerts, limited to what each considers "major" stories. The Government Printing Office (GPO) and FirstGOV offer similar current

awareness alerts from selected federal agencies and for a few publications such

as the Federal Register. I receive daily alerts by email from several information

sources: the New York Times, the VirtualChase (a site offering news, articles, and

tips on conducting business and research on the web), and Educause (the site of

an organization that promotes the intelligent use of information technology in

higher education), for example. A wonderful array of news and information sites

offer these alerts. Again, I will offer an annotated list of some of these services

later in this paper.

Several email news alert services now allow you to limit by keyword the

topics on which you receive alert notices. In some services, these limits may be

set only with a single word or phrase (for example, "asbestos", or "limited liability

corporation") . However, others have more sophisticated limiting capabilities

that allow you to require a word or phrase and also exclude a word or phrase.

The New York Times, CNN, MSNBC, Yahoo! News, and Google News are just a

few of the sites offering alert services that can be limited.

Then again, you can rely on RSS news feeds and an aggregator to receive

headlines from scores of different sites in a single program on your computer.

RSS is the acronym for Rich Site Summary. It's a technology that allows content

providers to offer a continuous summary of the updates to their sites. On a news

or information site running RSS, each time a story or entry is added to the site,

RSS prepares a summary of that entry with a "headline" and feeds the headline

and summary to programs that have opened a channel to the site.

The receiving programs are called aggregators and they allow you to select

channels by entering a specially coded URL for each site from which you wish to

receive feeds. Right now most aggregators are programs that you must download onto your computer. They open separately from either your browser or your email client. Many of these aggregators are free and reasonably easy to download, install, and use. The three I see mentioned most frequently are AmphetaDesk (http://www.disobey.com/amphetadesk) , NewzCrawler (http://www.newzcrawler.com) , and RadioUserland (http://radio.userland.com) (This program is both an RSS package and an aggregator. It's available for a free trial but currently $39.99 a year to have for keeps.)

There are also a few aggregator services (server-based aggregators) now available that enable you to register, customize your channel selections, and view your feeds at the service's site through your browser without downloading a separate program. These services include Bloglines (http://www.bloglines.com) ; NewsIsFree (http://www.newsisfree.com) ; and two services specializing in law related feeds, Dailywhirl (http://www.dailywhirl.com) ; and MyDetod (http://my.detod.com) .

Your next question, of course, is who is providing news feeds? The answer is overwhelming. NewsIsFree lists over 8000 sources; Bloglines currently shows 72,631. Even the law specific aggregators have too much to offer. Both MyDetod and DailyWhirl offer more than 100 sources. Major news sources are beginning to provide RSS feeds. Currently, these include the New York Times, the Christian Science Monitor, BBC : World News, CNN, Associated Press, and Fox News. Still, on all four of these sites, most of the sources listed are blogs. (Blog is new-speak for Web Log; and web logs are species taking up most of the continuum between diaries and a ninety minute class with your smartest, free associating professor.)

Many (most?) of these blogs are worth skipping; however, the very best may contain invaluable information or commentary. I'll offer a short list, with annotations, later.

B. Legal News Sites

Law News Network - http://www.law.com/

Law.com has pretty much consolidated the daily legal news publishing business. American Lawyer Media and Law Journal Extra have both been swallowed into the Law News Network. Online, what this means is that access to selected stories of the day from virtually all of the country's daily legal newspaper is available at a single site. The *National Law Journal, American Lawyer,* and the *Daily Report* are among the papers represented. Each paper's page usually features two or three stories from that day's paper. The law.com home page highlights a few stories of national interest, drawn from a variety of the company's publications.

Findlaw - http://news.findlaw.com/

This legal meta index offers selected stories of national or broad interest. It divides its reporting into topics such as "Top Headlines", "US Law" (which lately features mostly election related stories), "Special Coverage" (which offers an archive of stories on huge topics like the election, terrorism, WorldCom, Enron, and Iran aftermath), "Sports", "Entertainment" and "International". Although much of Findlaw's news content is simply drawn from wire services, Findlaw also

offers links to documents in the news which often makes the site more valuable to legal researchers than less specialized news sources.

Jurist - http://www.jurist.law.pitt.edu/

Pittsburgh's Law School hosts this site, which was begun by a member of its faculty. Its focus is the legal academic community; but the news stories it features are usually of more general interest. Its news is divided into three sections: "The Paper Chase" (news of the day) ; "Hot Topics" (continuously updated coverage of legal topics recently in the news) ; and "Full Coverage" (continuing coverage of important legal issues) . This site also offers reviews of books on legal topics, links to electronic legal journals, and forums for discussion of evolving legal issues.

LexisONE - http://www.lexisone.com

LexisONE calls its news feature "Headline Legal News", and it prominently features leading headlines from sources like the New York Times and the Associated Press. A drop down box on the headline news page offers links to news stories on specialized topics including "Business and Bankruptcy", "Estates, Trusts and Tax", and "Intellectual Property".

C. Business News Sites

CNN Financial Network - http://money.cnnfn.com/

If you are familiar with the CNNfn broadcast network and/or Money magazine, you have a good idea of what this site has to offer. Content for the site comes directly from the CNNfn newsroom and Money magazine, and is regularly updated throughout the day. World business news and financial markets are

featured, with major corporate news stories, live market data, and personal finance tips.

Bloomberg - http://www.bloomberg.com/

This site offers selected market data and news from the giant financial publisher. Much of the content summarizes analysts' reports about specific companies or industries; but many news stories are offered as well. The news segment of the site is divided into "Financial" , "World" , and "Market" news pages. The site is updated once daily.

The Economist - http://www.economist.com

The weekly U.K. based magazine offers selected content from its print publication on the Web. Global business and political news is featured along with stories focusing on topics such as "Science and Technology", "Emerging Market Indicators", and regional business and industry trends. From the Web, users may also search an archives of stories from the magazine; however, viewing the full text of archived stories requires payment.

Financial Times - http://www.ft.com

Another U.K. publication, Financial Times offers selected stories from its daily newspaper on the Web. Its emphasis is news, analysis, and commentary of the global business environment, focusing on Western Europe. The Web site also provides "Country Briefs", with commentary, analysis, and data about individual countries and links to online discussions.

The Industry Standard - http://www.thestandard.com

This free, weekly online journal calls itself "the single source for critical, timely information about the Internet economy". It offers both news and commentary on the trends, companies, business models, and individuals shaping the digital economy.

Wall Street Journal - **http://www.wsj.com**

Although this Web site does not offer any significant free content, no list of business news sources is complete without it. A free two-week trial subscription is available. Subscribers may access most articles and features from the print publication.

D. General News Directories

Today, virtually all major (and many small, local) newspapers, news broadcasters, news magazines, and wire services have a Web presence. Most sites offer selected stories from the current edition of the traditional source. Archived stories may be available, but almost all sources charge for full text of archived material. Finding your favorite news source online is probably as simple as using a search engine or directory to find the source's URL. There are a number of specialized directories and search services that can help you find news sources.

CEO Express - **http://www.ceoexpress.com**

This site offers a huge and varied index or directory of links to news sources. It includes links to major newspaper, news magazines, business news sources, wire services, and broadcasters. It is a helpful intermediate step to access news sources whose URL you can not remember.

ABYZ News Links - http://www.abyznewslinks.com/

ABYZ News Links is a portal to online news sources from around the world. It is primarily composed of newspapers but also includes many broadcast stations, Internet services, magazines, and press agencies. From the home page you can choose news sources by region of the world (Africa, Asia, Americas, Europe, Oceania) or by country.

Newsconnect.net - http://www.newsconnect.net/

This colorful site bills itself as your instant news connection to world, national, and local news. It uses color masthead like buttons to showcase the sources to which it links (the mastheads are also the links) . More than 200 newspapers, and broadcast news sources are linked to. Two thirds or more offer U.S. national and local coverage, but the remaining sources are from around the globe.

1st Headlines - News - http://www.1stheadlines.com

This site compiles headlines from a huge number of news sources and allow browsing by subject, region, or source. Only the headlines appear, with a link to the text of articles, which remains at the original source. 1stHeadlines is divided into 6 categories: U.S. & World, Business, Health, Lifestyles, Sports and Technology.

E. News and Current Awareness Alert Services

Many, if not most, large news sources online offer email alert services. The New York Times, the Washington Post, CNN, the Christian Science Monitor, and the International Herald Tribune are just a few examples.

GPOListserv - http://listserv.access.gpo.gov/

The Government Printing Office manages listservs that supply email alerts to members with a variety of federal government and agency content. The most generally interesting lists offer the table of contents of the Federal Register, and new public and private laws.

FCC Daily Digest - http://www.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Digest/subscribe .html

The Federal Communications Commission will email the Daily Digest to subscribers. It gives a synopsis of orders, news releases, speeches, and public notices from the Commission each business day

E. BLAWGS (law related web logs)

You can visit BLAWGS individually, so I have included Web addresses for each. To put a blawg (or any other) channel into your aggregator, you don't use the URL, though. If you use a server-based aggregator, most channels you want will simply be listed, and you can add them by simply selecting. If you have downloaded your own aggregator, or you wish to add an unlisted source to your server-based aggregator, you must visit the source itself, right click the button (often marked "XML", or "RSS") offering the feed address and copy the shortcut. I have made the shortest of lists. Visit a couple of these blawgs. Most of them include a list of their author's favorite blawgs. You should fish around for one's you enjoy or can put to good use.

Ernie the Attorney -

http://radio.weblogs.com/0104634

This blawg, created by a New Orleans attorney, is very popular. It's author, Ernest Svenson, writes about law and technology, law practice generally, and new software and technology gadgets.

How Appealing - http://appellateblog.blogspot.com

Howard Bashman, chair of the Appellate group at Buchanan Ingersoll in Philadelphia, tracks appellate litigation throughout the country.

Inter Alia - http://www.inter-alia.net

This blawg is a companion to the newsletter, Internet Legal Research Weekly. It's author, Texas attorney Tom Mighell offers technology and research tips.

OpenLaw - http://eon.law.harvard.edu/openlaw

This blawg is sponsored by the Berkman Center at Harvard. This is how the Center's staff describes OpenLaw: "Openlaw is an experiment in crafting legal argument in an open forum. With your assistance, we will develop arguments, draft pleadings, and edit briefs in public, online. Non-lawyers and lawyers alike are invited to join the process by adding thoughts to the "brainstorm" outlines, drafting and commenting on drafts in progress, and suggesting reference sources."