Automated E-Journal Table of Contents Alert Service in Health Sciences

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Abstract

Purpose

Journal Table of Contents (ToC) alert service is one of the current awareness services offered by libraries. Conventionally, the alert service is delivered in the form of contents pages of journals compiled into a bulletin. With the proliferation of electronic journals, users have the provision of subscribing to e-mail based ToC alerts of individual journals. However, subscribing to ToC alerts of individual journals can be time-consuming and arduous task for users. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate a novel method of delivering journal table of contents (ToC) alert service.



Methodology

The method proposed in this paper uses two online services, namely, JournalToCs and Google Groups, in such a way as to automate the process of delivering the table of contents of select journals in an automated manner. Top journals in Health Care Sciences and Services indexed in Web of Science (WoS) and having Journal Impact Factor 2021 have been considered for demonstration. Health Care Sciences and Services journals have been chosen because of the rapidity of scholarly communication and publication pattern in the field.

Key Findings

Journal ToCs, combined with Google Groups, can be used to set up and deliver table of contents alerts of journals without frequent intervention of the library staff. For this, registration on JournalToCs website is done using Google Groups mail address instead of individual e-mail address. This enables automatic receiving of journal ToC alerts to the Google Group.

Limitations

Presently, Journal ToCs offers subscribing to table of contents alerts of maximum of 20 journals. Therefore, the alerts may be limited to 20 journals. However, using the method demonstrated in this paper, library staff may subscribe to RSS alerts of any number of journals.

Implications

The method demonstrated in this paper is novel. It combines the features of JournalToCs and Google Groups in delivering automated journal ToC alerts. Registra tion to Journal TOCs website or any other RSS fee based on Google Groups mail address and Google Group post settings modification are the critical steps in the automating the delivery of alerts.



Value to the field

The proposed method offers great level of convenience to both users and library staff. Users need not individually subscribe to journal ToC alerts. Once the alerts are set up using this method, no intervention of library staff is needed unless there is modification in the subscription. This method uplifts the spirit of the Fourth Law of Library Science "save the time of the reader" and its corollary, "save the time of the staff".

Keywords : *Current Awareness Service, Selective Dissemination of Information, JournalToCs, Google Groups, JournalToC Alert, Web of Science.*

1. Introduction

Information and communication technology (ICT) has transformed many functions of libraries and has enhanced the efficiency in the delivery of information services. It has also resulted in new modes of delivering information in a personalized manner to the members of the user community. Several applications which have been originally developed for a different purpose have been used by library and information professionals in delivering information more efficiently. Ever since the concept of Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) was developed (Luhn, 1958, 1961), libraries and information centres have been experimenting the design and delivery of SDI alerts using various technological applications.

One of the popular methods of delivering SDI service is by using e-mail alerts of table of contents (ToC) of journals. With the proliferation of electronic journals, it is possible for an individual user to subscribe to ToC alerts of journals. However, the process of subscribing to ToC alerts of



individual journals may be time consuming and arduous task for users. In the spirit of the Fourth Law of Library Science, viz., "Save the time of the user", library staff can use technological tools to set up journal ToC alerts for the users. In this paper, we demonstrate a novel method of setting up group based journal ToC alerts using two services, viz., JournalToCs(Journal ToCs, n.d.)and Google Groups (*Google Groups*, n.d.). The unique feature of this method is that once it is set up, the delivery of ToC alerts is automatic and requires minimal intervention. Further, this method makes use of existing services and requires no software installation and complex configuration.

2. Journal ToCs

Journal TOCs is a Current Awareness Service (CAS) where one can discover the newest papers coming directly from the publishers. It is for researchers, librarians, students and anyone who's looking for the latest or most current papers published in the scholarly literature with international coverage. Journal TOCs is the biggest searchable collection of scholarly journal Tables of Contents (TOCs). It contains articles' metadata of TOCs for over 31,594 journals including 15,181 selected Open Access journals and 11,820 hybrid journals directly collected from over 3333 publishers (*JournalTOCs*, n.d.).

3. Google Groups

Google Groups is a service provided by the Google which allows any user to freely create group mailing list or discussion forums through web interface or e-mail. Google Groups is a service from Google that provides discussion groups for people sharing common interests. The Groups service also provides a gateway to Usenet newsgroups via a shared user interface(*Google Groups*, n.d.).



4. Present Study

This study combines the use of two services, JournalTOCs and Google Groups, to deliver journal table of contents alert service to user groups having a specific subject as common interest. The delivery process is automatic and does not require the intervention of library staff, once the service is setup. For the purpose of demonstration, journals in the field of health care sciences and services indexed in Web of Science (WoS) database have been chosen considering the rapidity of scholarly communication and publication pattern in the field. The following section demonstrates the setting up of automated journal ToC alerts.

5. Method

The setting up of automated journal ToC alert service involves the following steps:

- Selection of journals
- Creating a Google Group
- Modifying permissions in Google Group
- Signing up on journal ToCs
- Subscribing to ToC alerts of selected journals
- Inviting users to join the Google Group

6. Selection of Journals

The journals for which the ToC alert is to be set up may be chosen by consulting the users with common subject interest. In the present study,17 journals in Health Care Sciences and Services indexed in Web of Science and have Journal Impact Factor 2021 have been considered. Web of Science Master Journal List(Web of Science Group, 2022) was consulted to find out WoS indexed journals in health care sciences and services.



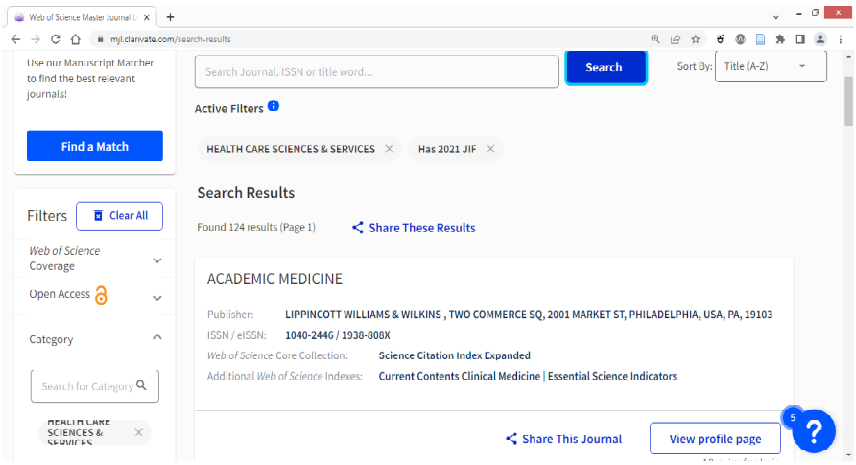


Figure No. 1. Web of Science Master Journal List

7. Creating a Google Group

Setting up a group-based ToC alert service needs creation of a new Google Group. Therefore, a new group was created by defining group name and description in Google Groups.

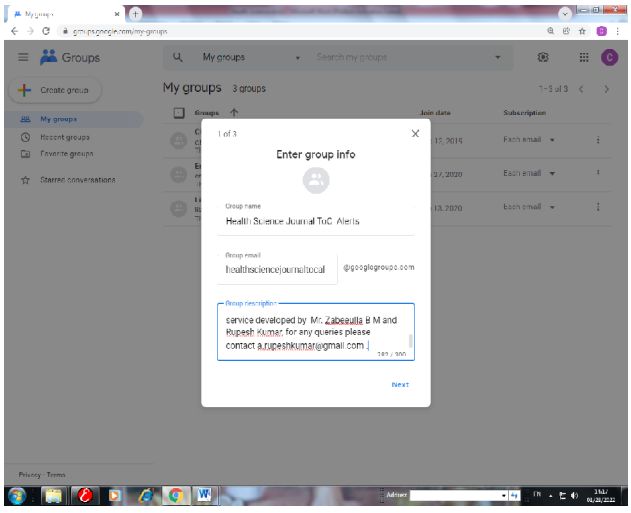


Figure No. 2.Creating a new Google Group



8. Modifying permissions in Google Group

Google Groups provides for setting/modifying certain permissions such as group visibility, viewing topics, posting messages and joining the group. Under the present study, the delivery of journal ToC alerts is automated essentially by subscribing to JournalTOCs with Google Group e-mail address. Therefore, the posting permission has to be modified to allow "anyone on the web" to post a message on the group. This is done to allow JournalTOCs to send e-mail alerts to the Google Group.

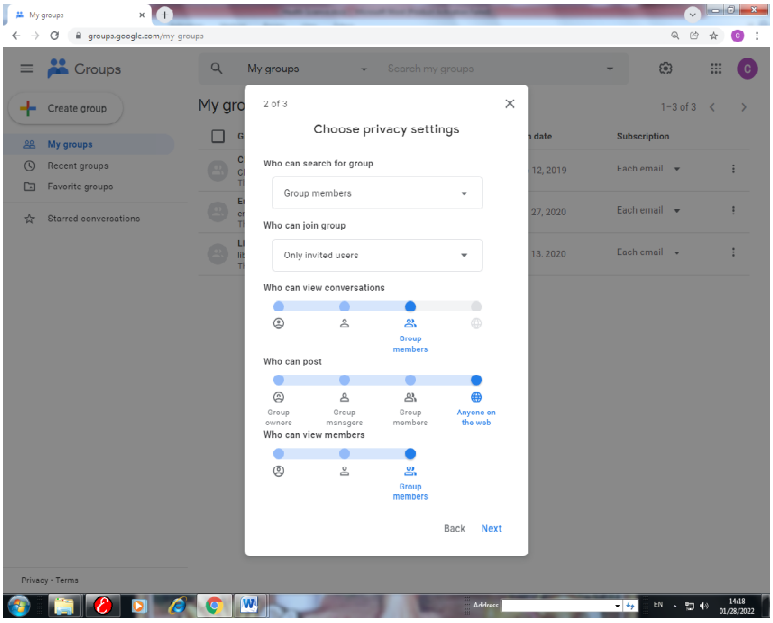


Figure No. 3. Modifying *Who can post*setting in Google Groups

9. Signing up on Journal TOCs using Google Group mail address

Signing up on JournalTOCs website involves registration. Here, we register using Google Groups mail address instead of individual e-mail address.



By doing so, we are allowing Journal TOCs service to direct the table of contents alert email to the Google Group. Upon signing up, a verification e-mail is sent to Google Group e-mail address. The verification is completed when the link contained in the e-mail received from JournalTOCs is clicked. The Google Group e-mail address is successfully registered with JournalTOCs. This means that whichever journal alerts are subscribed using Google Group email address, will be delivered to the group. Every member of the group will automatically receive the alert.

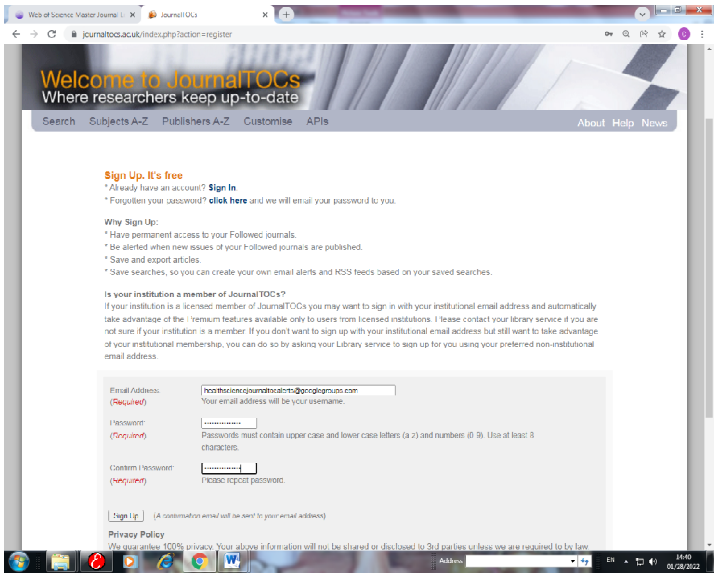


Figure No. 4. Journal TOCs sign up

10. Subscribing to ToC alerts of selected journals

After successful registration, the journals chosen by users can be subscribed for ToC alerts by following the journals. To follow journals, a user has to sign in to Journal TOCs, browse journals by subject and place a tick mark in the check box corresponding to the journal names or user can directly



search in the search box of Journal ToCs website through title or ISSN number and place a tick mark in the check box to follow them. To receive alerts,e-mail alert button should be activated by clicking on the last check button. With this check box, all followed journals alert can be enabled or disabled in one click.



Figure No. 5. Subscribing to ToCs alerts

11. Inviting users to join the Google Group

Once the alert has been set up, users can be invited to join the Google Group. This can be done by using*add members* option and by sending an invitation to users to join Google Groups. Once users accept the invitation, they become members of the Google Group and start receiving automated journal ToC alerts.

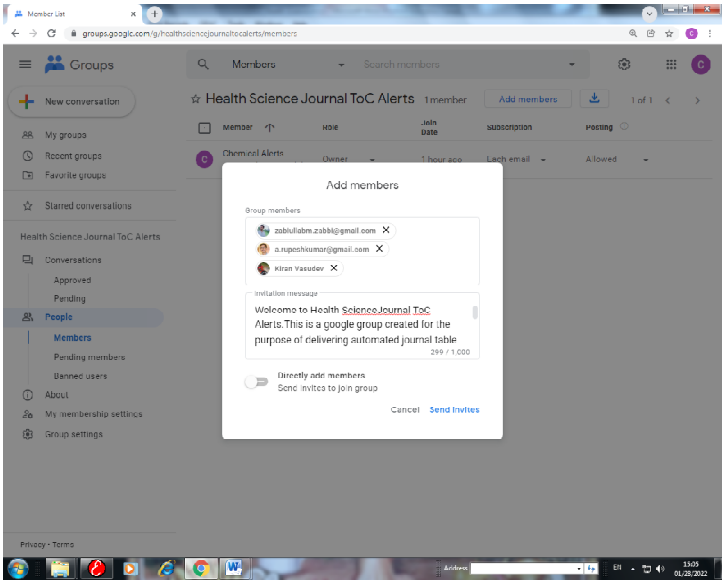


Figure No. 6. Inviting users to join Google Group

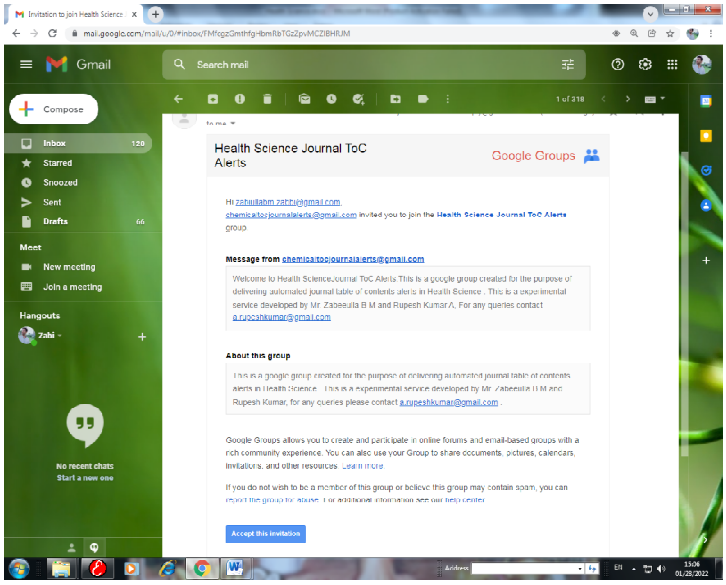


Figure No. 7. Google Group invitation e-mail

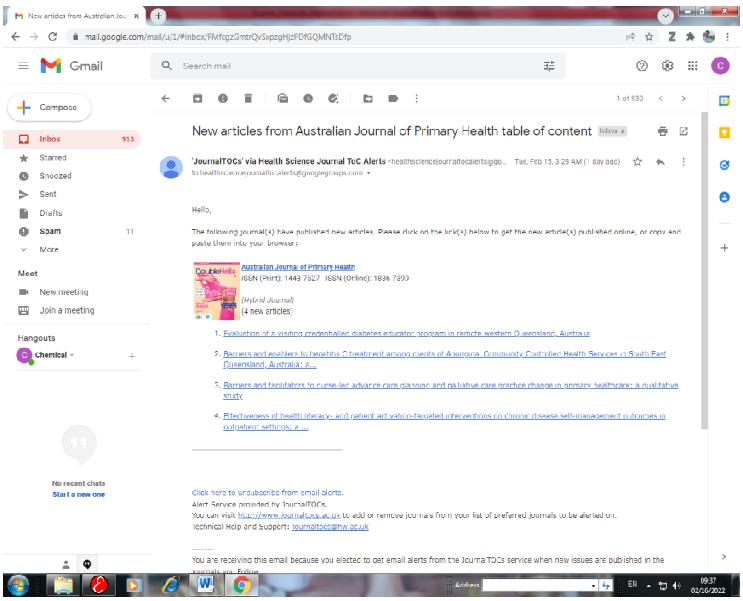


Figure No. 8.Journal ToCs email alert received by a user in a mail Box

This completes the setting up automated e-journal table of contents alert service in health sciences**.** Using this method, alerts can be subscribed using Google Group email address, instead of an individual email address. The alert service can be modified by modifying the subscription (follow) preferences on JournalTOCs.

12. Conclusion

In the present study, we have demonstrated a novel method of setting up and delivering journal ToC alerts using Journal TOCs and Google Groups. Librarians can utilize this method to provide journal ToC alert service or any other alert services in an automated way to the target user groups with



minimum intervention. It saves the time of the user as well as of the library staff.

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