

The researcher's toolkit

We all have our favourite tools for the job. If you want to find reliable information quickly and easily, your research toolkit needs to include alerting tools, a range of search engines, value added information providers and some desktop tools for storing and finding your favourite sites.

Alerting services for staying up to date

Beyond reading your daily newspaper, make sure your toolkit includes some good sources to keep you up to date with news and issues affecting your business practices, industry, clients, suppliers or competitors in your market place.

There isn't one recommended tool for this job – you may prefer reading hard copy industry magazines, scanning RSS feeds from blogs and industry sources, or subscribing to email updates from trusted commentators.

Google and friends

Apart from the big players - Google, Yahoo, and MSN live.com, try some other search engines, such as:

- www.mse360.com neatly presents results from blogs, websites, plus images on one page, and searches can be restricted to Countries
- www.radial.com.au narrows searches to either AU, UK or US.
- www.tripleme.com searches across Google, Yahoo and MSN Live. Searches can be restricted to Australia or Global, and duplicate results can be removed.

Value added information providers

Your specialist field will dictate which value added sources you need to have in your toolkit. As a starting guide, LexisNexis, Factiva and Dialog have extensive coverage of business and industry information from tens of thousands authoritative sources from around the world.

Desktop tools

The essential desktop tools for managing your online sources include a search engine toolbar and a good blog reader. My Yahoo! is a very good all in one tool that combines a blog reader and online bookmarking, where you can make notes about your favourite websites.