Keeping up-to-date with scientific developments of interest published on subject topics, by certain authors, or in various journals is an important ongoing activity for veterinarians and other biomedical professionals.

In addition to performing comprehensive retrospective searches and finding specific citations, PubMed MEDLINE is also an excellent resource for current awareness purposes. Unlike some commercially produced current awareness products, PubMed MEDLINE is freely available on the World Wide Web at:

(or enter the alias: pubmed.gov)

Current awareness can be performed in PubMed MEDLINE from two approaches:

1) Enter and conduct searches at timed intervals and limit the searches according to certain date ranges.

2) Save search strategies in the Cubby and run the searches at timed intervals to automatically get new citations since the last time searched.

Using either approach, current awareness searches can include subject keywords, authors, journals or a combination.

Some suggestions for doing current awareness using both approaches are given below.

1. **Entering and conducting searches limited to date ranges at various timed intervals**

Just like you would do a retrospective search, the same searches can be used for current awareness to find only the latest citations and exclude older articles that you may have already seen.
1) Enter the search strategy in the search box. (Examples of searches by type are given below).

2) Click **Limits** on the main function bar and choose any of the following time periods either as a category or specific date ranges. Choose one:

   **By category**
   
   - **Entrez Date** pull-down (highlight one)
     - 30 days [citations added in the last 30 days from today’s date]
     - 60 days [citations added in the last 60 days from today’s date]
     - 90 days [citations added in the last 90 days from today’s date]
     - 180 days [citations added in the last 180 days from today’s date]

   **By specific date range**
   
   - **Publication date / Entrez date** pull-down
     Choose one; then enter an exact date range from yyyy/mm/dd to yyyy/mm/dd
     You can enter years only, years and months, or year, month, days

   Ex. 2000 2001
   2001/03 2001/04
   2002/03/15 2002/04/14

There is a difference between Entrez Date and Publication Date.

   - **Entrez Date** is the date that citations are entered into the PubMed MEDLINE database. It may or may NOT coincide with the publication date. This is a rolling period depending upon the date you enter your search.

   - **Publication Date** is the date the article was published as noted on the cover or issue of the journal. If a journal is published in March, 2002 and entered into the database in April, 2002, the Publication Date is 2002/03 and the Entrez Date is 2002/04.

2) Click **Go** or press **Enter** to run the search. It should only give citations entered into the database according to the date limits utilized.

Determine the best update schedule for your mode of operation and needs. Current awareness updates are most effective if they are done at regular intervals. It also may be helpful to write down the search strategy and keep a list of the dates you ran the searches for future reference. Some possible schedules might be:

a) Mark your calendar for a convenient or set day of the month, every other month, or other time that meets your needs for the next six months or...
more in advance. Then, when those days arrive, run the search on the dates using a category (e.g., 30 days or 60 days).

b) Mark the date you run the search on a calendar. Then, the next time you run the search again on whatever date, check the calendar and limit the search to specific Entrez dates so you get the exact interval of days.

Here are a couple of examples of possible update search strategies by type.

**Subject Updates**

Ex. *brucellosis OR brucella OR neurobrucellosis OR brucella vaccine*

[This generates a list of recent articles published on any one or all of these subjects.]

*trichinella OR trichinellosis*

*(leptospirosis OR leptospira OR lyme OR borreliosis) AND (vaccine OR vaccinations OR immunization OR immunity) AND dogs*

*(johne’s disease OR paratuberculosis) AND (prevention OR control OR transmission)*

[You can use AND, OR, and parenthesis as needed for logical processing.]

**Author Updates**

Ex. *scarlett jm OR houpt ka OR flanders ja OR erb hn OR appel lj*

[This will produce a list of new papers written by any one or more of these individuals.]

**Journal / Table of Contents Updates**

When searching journals, enter either the full title or the MEDLINE abbreviation. Use the *Journal Browser* on the left side bar to find full titles and abbreviations.

Ex. *j am vet med assoc OR am j vet res OR j small anim pract OR aust vet j OR j vet intern med OR vet clin north am small anim pract*

[This will produce a “table-of-contents”-like display of new citations to all recently published articles in these journals on any subject.]

**Combination Updates**

You can enter update searches that combine subject terms, author’s names and journals if desired. In general, although your searches can be fairly complicated, it might be best to separate searches into manageable and meaningful units.

Ex. *gleed rd OR ludders jw OR moon-massat pf OR ((anesthetics OR anesthesia) AND (dogs OR cats OR horses))"
simpson kw OR helicobacter
   [This search yields all articles by the author as well as all papers on helicobacter written by anyone.]

neoplasms AND (page rl OR rassnick jm OR mcentee mc)
   [This searches for articles on any type of neoplasm if written by any one of the three authors.)

aguirre gd OR acland gm OR macleod jm OR burton-wurster n OR parrish cr OR antczak df OR (baker AND institute AND cornell)
   [In addition to the authors, this will limit searches to those written by individuals from Cornell’s Baker Institute.]

2. Using the “Cubby” to Save Searches and Run Updates
The Cubby function enables you to reserve space on a server at the National Library of Medicine for saving PubMed search strategies that can be re-run at a later date.

The Cubby link is found on the left sidebar of PubMed MEDLINE pages under “PubMed Services”.

Registration
It is necessary to register the first time you set up a Cubby and choose a user name (3-10 characters) and password (6-8 characters). Click I Want to Register for Cubby. Record your user name and password in a safe place. Then, enter only a user name and password each time thereafter. If you forget your password, follow the directions after clicking Forgot Your Password? to have a new one assigned by the computer that you can then change back to something more recognizable.
(Note: Your computer must accept “Cookies” in order to use this Cubby feature.)

Number and Usage of Cubbys
There is no limit as to the number of separate Cubbys each individual can set up. Once established, you can open a Cubby and re-run the saved searches at anytime as well as limit the searches to articles that have been added to the database since the last time you used the search strategy. This saves time in having to re-enter the same search at various intervals as noted in the first approach described above.

Log Out
A Cubby session remains open (and vulnerable to security lapses) for 12 hours if there is no keyboard or mouse activity. Thus, it is important to remember to close or logout of the Cubby when you’re finished. The Log Out button is located at the bottom of the left side bar on the Cubby screen. Failing to do so will hold open server space on the network. This may thus compromise confidentiality of your searches and your ability to get back into the Cubby later.
Saving Searches in a Cubby

If you have not used the Cubby feature before, you must first register, and choose a user name and password.

1) Open PubMed MEDLINE and enter your search terms into the search box near the top of the web page.

   **NOTE:**
   Do not limit your search by date or date range. By not setting date limits, it will enable PubMed to search on a continuing basis for recently published, relevant articles.

   Do not save searches that include search History set numbers (e.g., #3). These set numbers are erased when you exit PubMed and thus will not work in a saved search strategy.

2) Run the search by clicking the **Go** button (or press **Enter**) at the right end of the search box.

3) Click on the Cubby link located under “PubMed Services” on the blue sidebar at the left side of the web page. Enter your user name and password when prompted.

4) Your search strategy terms will have been transferred from the PubMed search box and appear in the box in the middle of the Cubby web page. It may be very long depending upon how complicated your search was.

5) Next, re-name or give the search a shorter name, such as a few significant words to identify the search again. Then, click **Store in Cubby**. Your search will be saved under this shortened name.

6) Scroll down the page. Your saved search(s) are listed, including the date and time of the last run. Searches are numbered and listed in descending order according to the date and time they were originally saved. Hence, your newest searches will appear on the top of the list.

   Note: You can save up to 100 searches per Cubby or User Name.

   **To view the complete search strategy**, click on the shortened search name link. (It appears as a blue hypertext link).

   **To re-run a search on the full MEDLINE database**, click on the shortened search name link, then click the **Search** box. You can then take this one step further and apply a date period limit by clicking **Limits** and making a choice.

   **To delete a search**, check the box to the left of a chosen search, click the **Delete Selected Searches** button.
To edit search strategies, delete the search and save a new revised search. It is not possible to edit saved searches once they are in the Cubby.

**Checking for Updates:**
This function checks for new citations entered into the database since the last time you did the search.

1) Access PubMed MEDLINE. Go directly to the Cubby and enter your user name and password. (If you forget your password, click the **Forgot your Password?** link to the right.)

2) Select the desired search by checking the box at the left. (Click the **Select/Deselect All** button to execute all searches at once.)

3) Click on the gray button **What’s New for Selected?**. This will produce a list of citations to articles that were added to the MEDLINE database after the month and day the search was previously searched through to today’s date (e.g., Entrez date).

   If there are no new citations since the last time run, you will see a note “0 New”.

4) Click # new. This links to a display of the new citations and updates the stored search in the Cubby so a new Date and Time appears. If you do not click # new, the search date and time are not updated and will affect future postings.

5) When finished, click **Log Out** to end the session.

**Note:** You must LOGOUT at the end of each session when you are finished using your “Cubby.” (The **Log Out** link is at the bottom of the left-hand blue sidebar.) Failing to do so will hold open server space for 12 hours, and may thus compromise your ability to do further searches in PubMed, or get back into your “Cubby.”

**Additional Assistance**

1. Click **Help** on the Cubby page for more information about using the Cubby function.

2. Take the online **Tutorial** that is available on the left side bar to find out more about searching PubMed MEDLINE.
   

4. Further questions? Need more information? Contact the Flower-Sprecher Veterinary Library Reference Services at vetref@cornell.edu, call 607-253-4357, or fax 607-253-3080.

5. Contact NLM Customer Service 1-888-346-3656 or pubmed@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov