

How to Make the Most of Google Alerts

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As a freelancer, your business revolves around the online world. From working with online companies to keeping up with the latest trends, you would likely be lost without the assistance of online searches. However, while you may depend on internet searches to remain a successful freelancer,

you may not be using searches in the best or most efficient manner.

Specifically if you haven't yet harnessed the power of Google Alerts, you're missing out on many benefits such as better results and reduced search time. The following are five ways Google Alerts can benefit your freelance business and why you should begin using them today.

#1: Generate Fresh Writing Topics

Although you may love being a freelance writer, you will undoubtedly encounter days when it's nearly impossible to think of fresh writing topics. Rather than struggle alone to generate new topics, allow Google Alerts to do the work for you.

By registering for daily alerts in your niche market, you can begin creating an article idea bank and remain up to date on the hottest online trends. Additionally, by allowing Google Alerts to conduct the searches for you and deliver the results to your inbox or through an RSS Feed, you won't be spending time each day browsing the search engines. These steady updates can also help you earn expert status on a niche topic sooner.

#2: Find Future Gigs

A successful freelance business depends on continuous leads for potential new gigs. Without searching for new clients and sending out your information, your job leads will drop off and your bank account will dry up. As such, use Google Alerts to register for updates on freelance writing gigs or on companies expanding to hiring telework employees.

A major benefit of using Google Alerts to **find new clients** is the reduction in time you will spend browsing online job boards. While you'll still need to follow up on leads to determine if a potential gig is appropriate for your niche and send out your information, the alerts will at least simplify this often mundane process.

#3: Follow the Pros

The best way to hone your freelancing skills is to learn from the experts. While you may already subscribe to the blogs or e-mail newsletters of your favorite authors, you may not be catching all of their online content.

To remain current with all online happenings regarding your favorite authors, create Google Alerts for their names or other unique identifiers. By doing this, you won't need to continually search for their information but can receive it effortlessly to your inbox or through an RSS Feed.

#4: Track Your Writing

As a writer, it's important to know your writing is reaching its intended audience and that you aren't sending your materials into a dark abyss. While tracking the success of your online writing can be complicated, you can at least know when Google finds your articles by registering for relevant alerts.

For example, by registering for a Google Alert with a unique string of text for a recent article, you will know exactly when it's found and listed by Google. This information can be essential for making SEO changes to future projects and for gauging the true success of your online content.

Follow Your Fans

Just as it's important to know when or if your articles are picked up by Google, you are also likely interested in reading any comments your work produces from others online. The fastest way to find the buzz generated by your work is to create specific Google Alerts for either your personal name, business name, or other unique identifiers that would appear in fan comments.

If your schedule allows, offer comments for any forum posts you find regarding your online work. This

will impress your followers and increase your online exposure. Following online comments can also be a great method for tracking an increase in your online popularity over time.

#5: Stop Plagiarism

A major problem with working primarily online is trusting that your content will remain safe. Plagiarism of freelance content is a major problem and is often a freelancer's arch nemesis. Whether you're concerned about your high quality content being reformulated by spammers or think a previous client who turned down your work may now be using it without permission, you can use Google Alerts as a tracking system for these things.

Simply create a Google Alert with unique text in your articles and receive updates when it appears in new online outlets. This is an easy and stress-free method of tracking down plagiarism and can help keep your original content safe.

As a freelancer, your success depends on finding the most efficient way to generate new topics and track your online followers. By harnessing the power of Google Alerts, you can achieve these goals sooner with less effort and greatly enhance your online success.

Your Turn

Have you found a way to use Google Alerts in your freelancing business? If so, please share it in the comments so that we can all learn from each other.

Image by [Yodel Anecdotal/Yahoo! Inc.](#)



About the author: Sonia Mansfield is the content editor for PsPrint and editor of PsPrint Design Blog. She likes to write, do yoga and make nerdy "Star Wars" and "Simpsons" references. PsPrint is an online commercial printing company specializing in [brochure printing](#). You can follow PsPrint on Twitter [@PsPrint](#).

Media Contact Name: Sonia Mansfield

Media Web Address: <http://freelancefolder.com/how-to-make-the-most-of-google-alerts/>

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About the author:

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