

## **CALS Librarians**

**For help with current awareness or any other information need, please contact:**

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# Current Awareness

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All electronic indexes can be used for current awareness. Simply limit your search to the current X months. Electronic indexes are available via the Articles/Databases link in the FIND section of the University Libraries web site <http://www.lib.vt.edu>.

A few key resources for current awareness for VAES & CALS faculty are:

## **Ingenta**

Strengths: once set up it alerts you automatically; interdisciplinary in scope

Weaknesses: does not have a controlled vocabulary – uses author selected keywords; does not include every relevant journal for any given subject area.

## **CABDirect**

Strengths: covers the world agricultural, applied life sciences, and public health literature; updated weekly; uses controlled vocabulary to enhance result relevance and completeness.

Weaknesses: you must initiate the retrieval process each time and limit your result set to the current XX months or weeks; articles published in developing nations are often difficult to obtain.

## **Medline (pubmed)**

Strengths: covers the biomedical literature in depth; PubMed version updated frequently; uses controlled vocabulary (MeSH) to enhance result relevance and completeness.

Weaknesses: you must initiate the retrieval process each time and limit your result set to the current XX months or weeks; PubMed is not the easiest of search interfaces.

## **Science Citation Index (Web of Science)**

Strengths: uses citation indexing, therefore articles indexed are relevant to research; updated frequently

Weaknesses: you must initiate the retrieval process each time and limit your result set to the current XX months or weeks; covers approximately 5900 journals across all fields of science, therefore many relevant journals will not be included; does not use controlled vocabulary—uses author keywords; search interface is not conducive to retrieval of highly specific results.

## **Biological Abstracts**

Strengths: covers the world's basic research in the life sciences; uses controlled vocabulary to enhance result relevance and completeness

Weaknesses: you must initiate the retrieval process each time and limit your result set to the current XX months or weeks; updated monthly;

There are many other relevant indexes that can be used. Contact Margaret Merrill ([mmerrill@vt.edu](mailto:mmerrill@vt.edu), 231-9670) or Caryl Gray ([cegray@vt.edu](mailto:cegray@vt.edu), 231-9229) for help with any current awareness tool or need.