

Why and How to Set Up a Google Alert

Google Alerts are a useful tool if you're building links or seeking interview or speaker spots. You can use them to let you know about open calls for speakers, mentions of your name or your products, mentions of your competitors, or other opportunities.

- HOW TO SET UP A GOOGLE ALERT -

1. Sign into your Google account. The email associated with this account is where the alerts will be sent, so make sure it's an email you check frequently.
2. Visit <https://www.google.com/alerts>.
3. Choose your search term. The first alert to set up is for your name. This will let you know any time a web page is crawled that mentions your name.
4. Click the "Show Options" link. Choose:
 - a. How often to receive alerts. Once per day is recommended.
 - b. Which sources to receive alerts from. Automatic is recommended.
 - c. The language. Choose English unless you have a specific need for another language.
 - d. How many alerts to receive. All results is recommended, but be aware that you may receive a lot of irrelevant links. If so, go back and change this setting to "Only the best results."
 - e. Deliver to will be your email address.
5. Click the blue, "Create Alert" button.

- WHICH ALERTS TO CREATE -

You'll find a lot of uses for Google Alerts, but some basics to start with include:

- Your name.** Be sure to include any variations, such as with and without your middle initial, your maiden name, any nicknames, etc. Use Google's search syntax to search on multiple terms, like this: "Cindy Bidar" OR "cindybidar" OR "Cynthia Bidar"
- Your competitors' names.** Searching on your competitors will let you see where they are getting interviewed and mentioned, so you can add those publications to your wishlist.
- Your product names.** This is useful for building links, since sometimes bloggers or others will mention your products without a link to your website. When you find them, it's a good reason to reach out and request a link.
- "Call for speakers" and variations.** Event hosts sometimes post pages with

The Visibility Toolkit Google Alert Checklist

headlines that feature some version of “call for speakers.” Try setting alerts for “speaker application” or “speakers wanted” and any other variations you can think of. Do be sure to put quotes around each phrase, otherwise you’ll get alerts about stereo speakers instead.

- “Write for us” and “guest authors”.** Similar to “call for speakers” above, use this search term to find guest blogging opportunities. Consider pairing this search (and the one above) with a keyword to filter the noise. For example, rather than setting an alert like this:

“write for us” OR “guest writer application”

Use this:

“write for us” OR “guest writer application” AND “dog training”

This will limit your results to only those pages that include both the call for writers and dog training, whereas the first search query would have included everything from asbestos removal to zookeepers.

- Your primary keywords.** If you’re focusing on building links, then setting Google Alerts for your primary keywords is a great way to find appropriate content.