

Twitter: It's Not Just for Tweeting

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Part of what makes good research is using the latest, up-to-date information. In today's fast-paced information environment, publications and reports that are even a year old can be outdated, especially if they are discussing legislation.

How do you keep up with new publications on topics that interest you? It turns out that a variety of tools are available. Some people [customize their Google News page](#), while others monitor blogs or RSS feeds. If you're a Twitter user, have you ever thought to build a Twitter list to monitor new developments?

Creating Twitter lists is a great way to distill your Twitter feed into useful, subject-oriented feeds. Viewing a list on Twitter shows you only the tweets of the Twitter users included on that list, and can be helpful if you follow a wide variety of people or organizations.

Instructions for building a Twitter list are [here](#). You do not have to organize everyone you follow into a list, and you can create as many or as few lists as you like. At no point do you lose the ability to view your normal feed, which shows you the tweets of everyone you follow.

Here's an example of a list we built for our own use at the library. After the end of the 83rd Regular Session, we wanted to make sure we didn't miss any of the session wrap-ups that state agencies, boards and commissions often publish to summarize legislation in their area. Not all of these entities are on Twitter, but many are, and they are pretty good about tweeting new information related to their agency. We located their Twitter accounts, and organized them into a Twitter list named "State agencies." Being able to monitor state agency updates in a smaller, concentrated feed was an effective strategy for catching session wrap-ups as they were released.

The state agencies list is just one of the Twitter lists we have built for our use here at the library. We also use Twitter lists to monitor various research organizations, as well as keep up with the legal world in Texas. One of our most heavily-used lists brings together the tweets of all current Texas legislators who are on Twitter. A screenshot of the TXLegislators list on Twitter is below, and you can also view the list on our website at [Texas Legislators on Twitter](#).