

## Using Social Media to Monitor Online Conversations

The following tools can help you monitor the many conversations happening all around the Internet. Some comments may involve your community, station, productions or colleagues. You may not want or need to respond. But knowing what people are saying is vital.

Listening for online “chatter” is also an easy and important way to familiarize yourself with the world of social media. Later on you may want to use these same techniques in marketing, branding, communication and customer service efforts.

### Hints:

- Most of these tools let you save your searches. Some send results to your e-mail, your iGoogle page or any RSS reader [Yahoo360, Netvibes, Bloglines, etc.]
- Be sure to “listen” not only for your institution or firm’s full name, but for its nickname, short name, common misspellings, etc. Don’t forget about the names of key people.

### Listening tools

The following tools are listed in approximate order of value. Most of them are free to use but some require fees. Start with Google Alerts, and see which others turn up content you’d otherwise miss. Social media experts have other tools they may find superior. Think of this as a “starter set.”

**Google Alerts** The most basic way to monitor what’s being published on important topics and events. If nothing else, set Google Alerts for key names and words and have results delivered to your e-mail box. <http://www.google.com/alerts>

**Filtrbox** Can dig deeper and help you analyze content that turns up. Monthly fee for high-level use. For some, it may be worth it. <http://www.filtrbox.com/>

**BlogPulse** A Nielsen service, it scours blog content <http://www.blogpulse.com/>

**Omgili** or **Twing** Both of these monitor the “deep web”—message boards where most search engines don’t prowl <http://www.omgili.com> or <http://www.twing.com>

**Twitter Search** To listen in on what’s being said on this oddly compelling platform <http://search.twitter.com/>

**TweetBeep** is like Google Alerts for Twitter. They’ll email hourly or daily with Twitter posts that match the keywords you enter. <http://tweetbeep.com>

**Topix** Aggregates local news better than most. A good way to see what your local press is reporting without having to visit their sites <http://www.topix.com/>