

# OPTIMIZING PUBMED USING MY NCBI: PART 1

**T**he theme for this issue of the *Texas Veterinarian* is continuing education. Keeping up with published literature is a vital component of CE. Some of the most frequent questions I am asked are about customizing PubMed by using a My NCBI account.

Why is it a My NCBI account instead of a My PubMed account? PubMed is one of databases produced by, and available from, the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), which is part of the National Library of Medicine. NCBI provides more than a hundred databases and other tools covering biomedicine and genetics available at [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov). You can customize other NCBI databases with My NCBI, but this column only covers PubMed.

To create or sign into a My NCBI account, click "Sign into My NCBI" in the upper right corner of PubMed at <http://pubmed.gov>. From the next screen, either sign in or click "Register for an NCBI" account.

An NCBI account itself does not confer any access to full-text. Register using the email address at which you want to receive records from PubMed. PubMed includes links to some free full-text. Links that require a subscription will require a login, such as a Texas A&M University NetID.

After registering and anytime you are signed in, you will see your login name, My NCBI and sign out in the upper right of the PubMed screen.

It is worth staying signed in to your My NCBI account on your personal computers and devices for several situations because simply being signed in saves your recent searches.

- If your PubMed searching is interrupted, your searches will have been automatically saved in the Recent Activity section of your account. You have the option of clearing this or turning it off, but it is, in general,



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worth keeping on.

- For those who search using more than one computer or device, My NCBI synchronizes your searching among devices.

To customize your account, click My NCBI at the top of the screen. The first set of customizations enhances viewing your results.

- Click the NCBI Site Preferences link near the top of the screen.
- On the right, look for Common Preferences.
- Click Highlighting.
- Choose a bright color.
- Save.

Next time you view results in PubMed, your search terms will be highlighted in the chosen color, helping you to identify them and skim results for relevant items more quickly.

Next, if you are faculty, staff or a student with a university login that provides access to journals:

- Choose the Outside Tool link under PubMed Preferences.
- Choose the university for which you have login access. For example, current faculty, students and staff at Texas A&M would choose Texas A&M University – SFX from the list.

After enabling this, when you click on



an article from the results list, the icon for your institution will display in addition to the publisher's icon.

Also under PubMed Preferences, click Filters and Icons. Your PubMed results already display a standard set of filters on the left side of your screen. These include publication dates and types of article. This My NCBI feature provides the opportunity to choose additional results filters that will display on the right side of your screen.

Two popular filters are the English filter, which limits results to articles published in English, and the Free Full Text filter, which limits results to those articles for which PubMed has a link to free full-text.

Return to PubMed, run a search and look at the customizations you've made so far.

In the next issue, this column will cover saving searches, creating alerts and creating custom filters. [TV](#)

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