



ZEPHYR
MARKETING

How to Create a Custom Listening Station on iGoogle

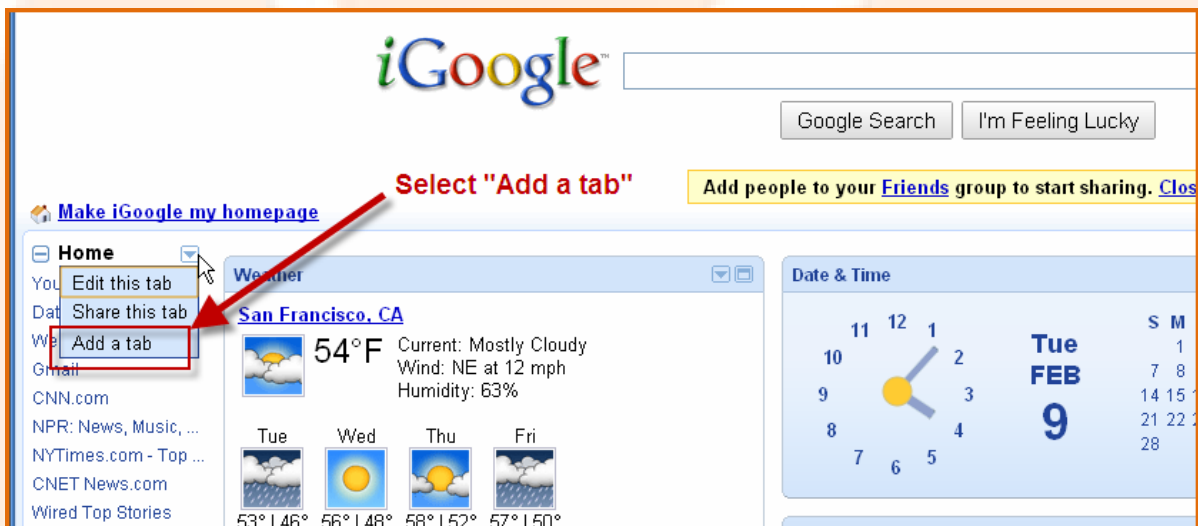
A Step-by-Step Guide
By Greg Elwell

Sections

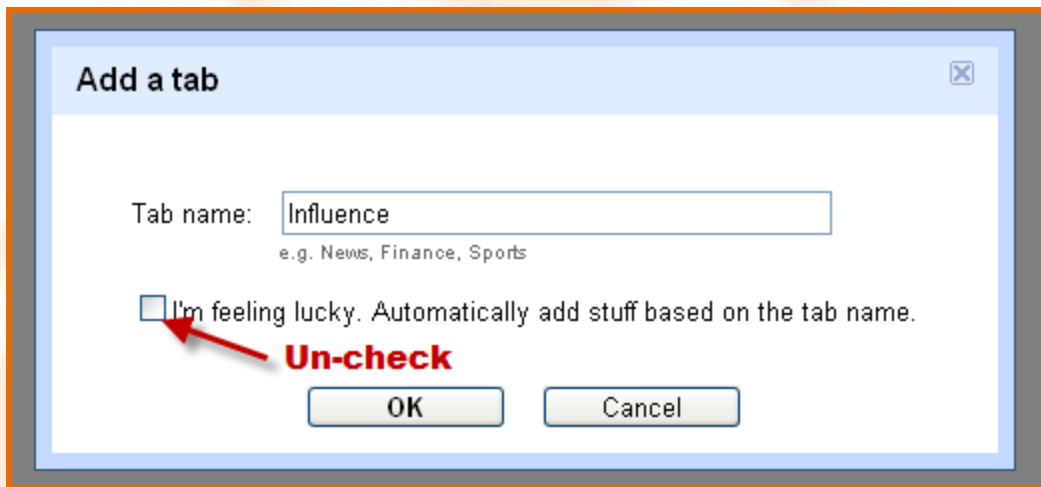
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Listening Station Setup

1. Create or sign in to your Google Account.
2. Go to the iGoogle page from your Google Account Settings, or go to <http://www.google.com/ig>.
3. Click the drop down arrow next to the “Home” tab and select the “Add a tab” link. (see below)



4. Name this tab whatever relates to what you're going to be monitoring: Brand, Product, Personnel, Competition, Industry Keywords, et cetera. You could have a separate tab for each one of your monitoring categories ([see how on page 18](#)). Or, you could also give the tab a general name to combine multiple types of information and sources. For example, in the following steps I'm going to create a tab called, "Influence." And, I'm going to combine information or sources on the Internet that influence my own marketing activities in 3 categories: Keywords, Blogs and Twitter.



Add a tab: Enter the name for your tab and deselect the check box before clicking OK.



There are **two types of information** sources you're going to add to your listening station tab: those without a RSS Feed and those with an RSS Feed. There is a **separate process for each case**.

Without RSS Feed: You'll use Google Alerts to create a custom RSS Feed and then add that to your iGoogle, listening station tab. These include information such as your keyword phrases, industry terms, brand or personal names.

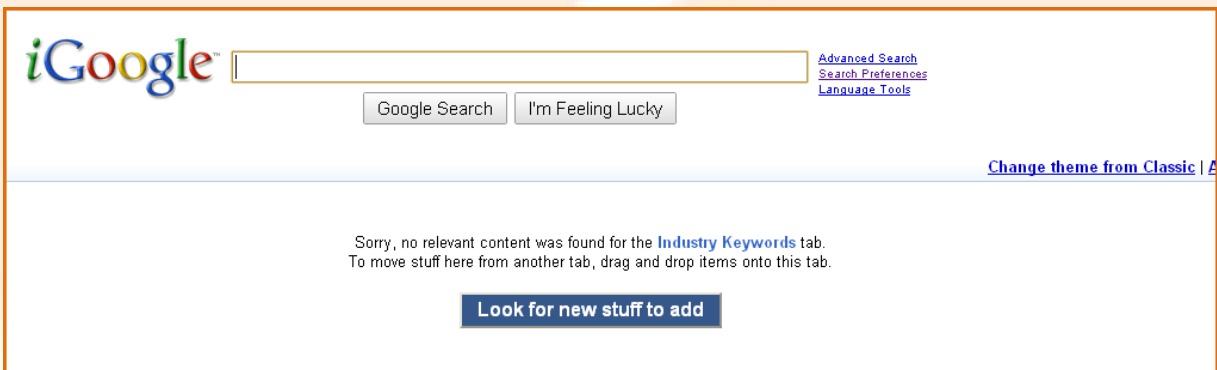


With RSS Feed: You'll subscribe to the feed and choose Google, or your "Google Home Page" as your tool to view the content in. These include such resources as blogs, Twitter search queries or hashtags (#keywordname), basically anything on the Web with an RSS Feed subscription.

Adding Content Via

First, I'm going to detail how to create a custom RSS Feed via Google Alerts and then deliver the alert's content to your iGoogle listening station tab you've just setup. Following this I'll show you how to subscribe to an RSS Feed for blogs and Twitter (or any other RSS Feed enabled content) and deliver it to your listening station.

1. From the previous section on "Listening Station Setup" you should have your iGoogle page with the tab you've just created up on your computer. The screen will look like the one below.



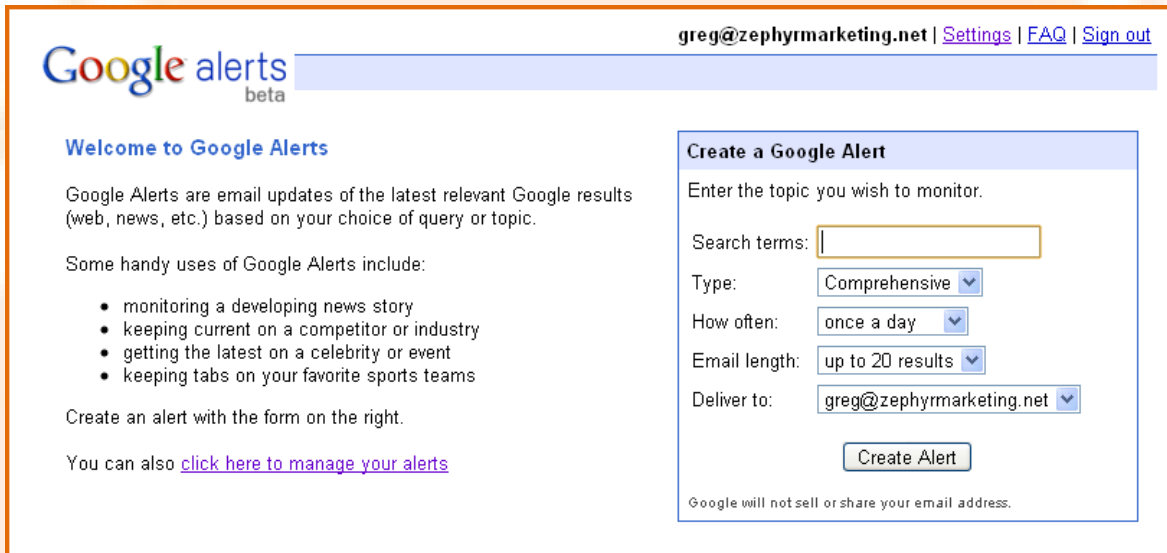
2. Ignore this page for now and open up a new tab in your browser and go to <http://www.google.com/alerts>.



I am using the Google Chrome browser for illustrations and the steps in this process.

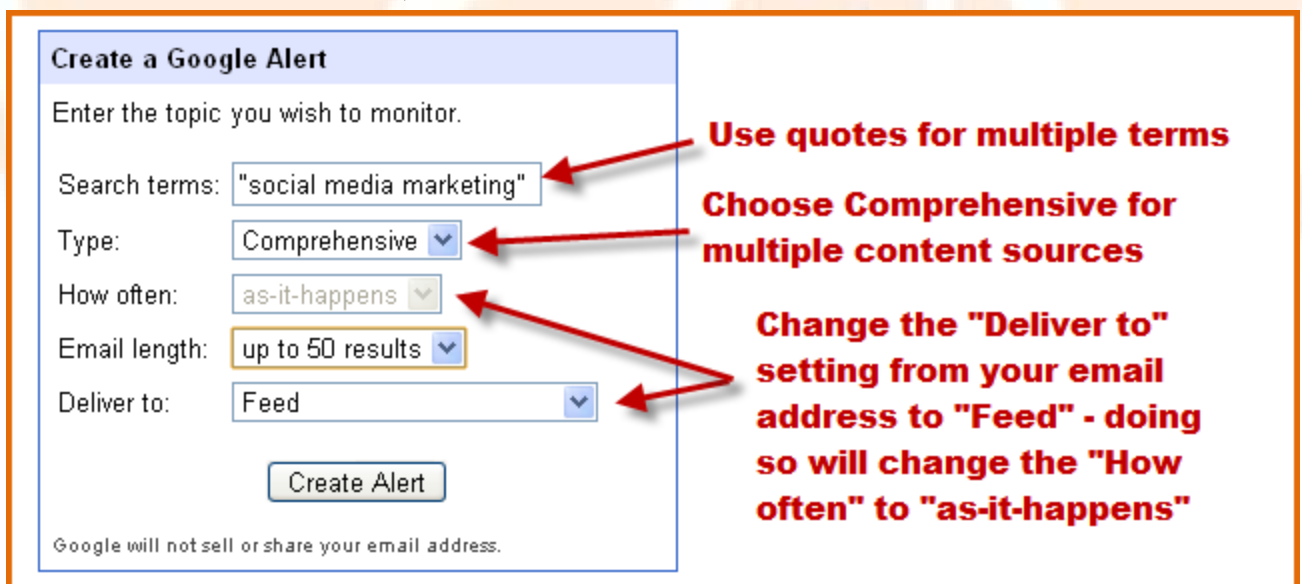
Adding Content Via

The default Google Alerts page when you are signed in to your Google Account will look like the one shown below:



The screenshot shows the Google Alerts interface. On the left, there is a 'Welcome to Google Alerts' section with a list of uses and a link to manage alerts. On the right, the 'Create a Google Alert' form is displayed. The form includes a search terms input field, a 'Type' dropdown menu set to 'Comprehensive', a 'How often' dropdown menu set to 'once a day', an 'Email length' dropdown menu set to 'up to 20 results', and a 'Deliver to' dropdown menu set to 'greg@zephyrmarketing.net'. A 'Create Alert' button is at the bottom of the form. A small note at the bottom of the form states 'Google will not sell or share your email address.'

3. In the “Create a Google Alert” box (see below) type in the first keyword you want to monitor in the box. Use quotation marks if more than one word to find content exactly matching these terms being used together. Selecting Comprehensive will pull in sources: News, Blogs, Web, Video and Groups. Choose Feed Vs. Email, and click “Create Alert”



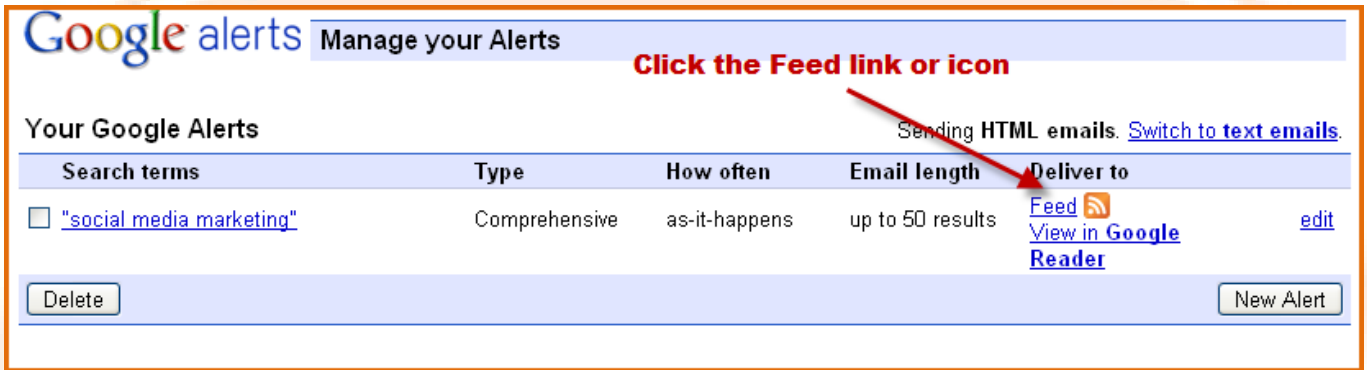
This annotated screenshot shows the 'Create a Google Alert' form with several settings highlighted by red arrows and text:

- Search terms:** "social media marketing" (indicated by an arrow and the text: **Use quotes for multiple terms**)
- Type:** Comprehensive (indicated by an arrow and the text: **Choose Comprehensive for multiple content sources**)
- How often:** as-it-happens (indicated by an arrow and the text: **Change the "Deliver to" setting from your email address to "Feed" - doing so will change the "How often" to "as-it-happens"**)
- Deliver to:** Feed (indicated by an arrow and the text: **Change the "Deliver to" setting from your email address to "Feed" - doing so will change the "How often" to "as-it-happens"**)

The 'Create Alert' button is visible at the bottom of the form. A small note at the bottom of the form states 'Google will not sell or share your email address.'


Adding Content Via

4. On the “Manage your Alerts” screen, click on the Feed link or RSS Feed icon as shown below:



Google alerts Manage your Alerts **Click the Feed link or icon**

Sending HTML emails. [Switch to text emails.](#)

Search terms	Type	How often	Email length	Deliver to
<input type="checkbox"/> "social media marketing"	Comprehensive	as-it-happens	up to 50 results	Feed  View in Google Reader edit

This will create the Feed URL for your search terms you will need to copy and add to your iGoogle listening station tab in the next step.



<http://www.google.com/alerts/feeds/02014566603880285064/1651243334158824965>

Google Readertag:google.com,2005:reader/user/02014566603880285064/state/com.google/alerts/16512433341588249652Google Alerts - "social media marketing"2010-02-10T16:17:08Ztag:google.com,2005:reader/item/e3b9f2ec48f7e597Feeds for Google Alerts2010-02-10T16:17:08Z2010-02-10T16:17:08ZWelcome to this Google Alerts feed! Here you will receive new alerts for your Comprehensive query ""social media marketing"". Depending on your query, it might take some time before any items pop up. Go to the [Alerts Management console](http://www.google.com/alerts/manage?hl=en&gl=us) to change the alert query or delete it. Thanks for using Google Alerts. Google Alertstag:google.com,2005:reader/user/02014566603880285064/state/com.google/alerts/16512433341588249652Google Alerts - "social media marketing"

Feed URL

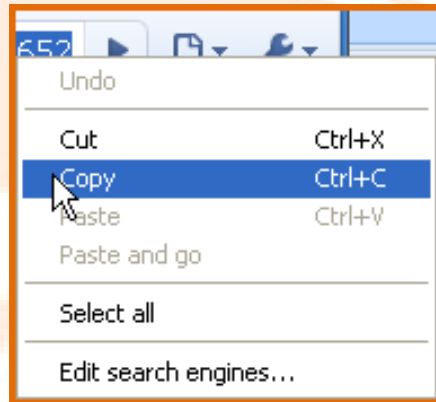


Don't worry about all of the info below the Feed URL address bar. All you need is to copy the full URL highlighted in the red box above.

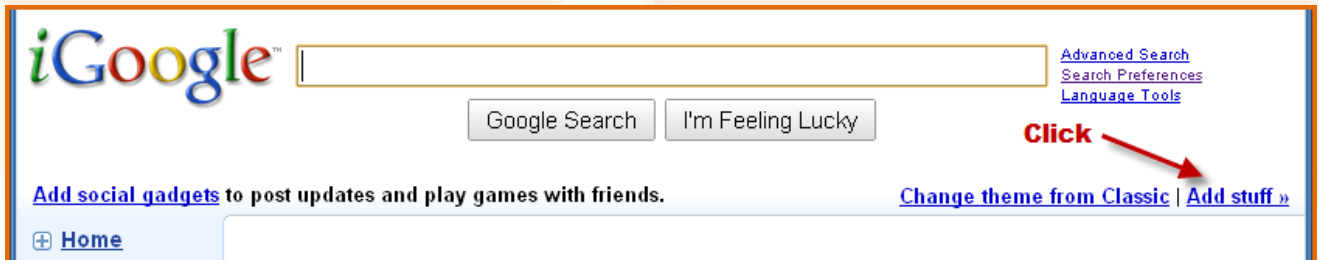
Adding Content Via



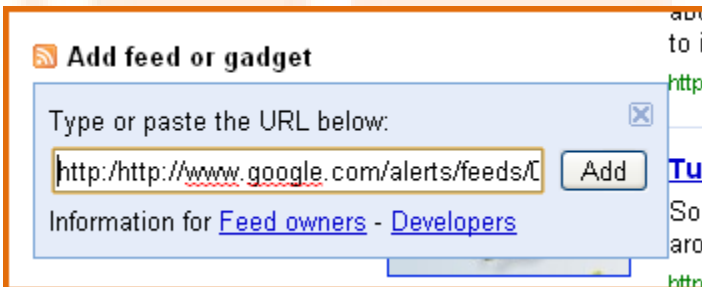
5. Copy the Feed URL by doing a right click with your mouse followed by "Select all" to highlight the URL and then choose "Copy" as shown at right:



6. Go back to your iGoogle listening station tab and click on the "Add stuff" link.



7. On the left side of your iGoogle page look for a link as shown on right, "Add feed or gadget" and click this link.



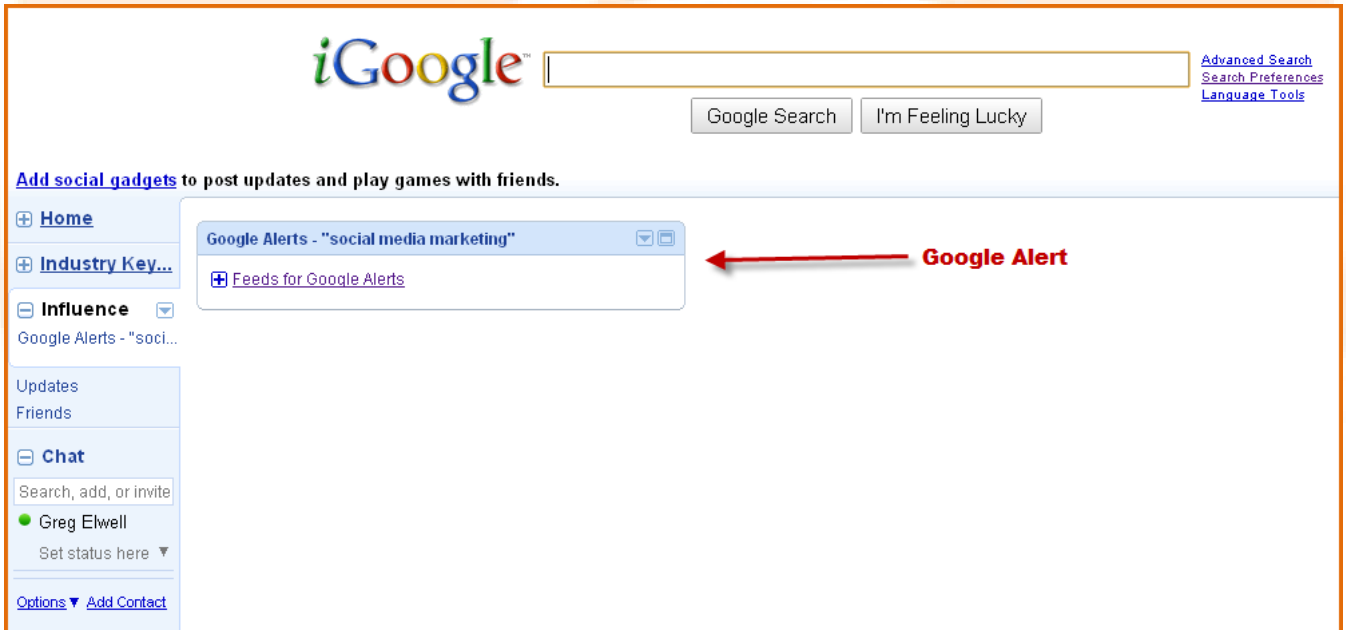
8. Paste the Feed URL link you copied from step 5 above and click "Add" as shown on the left:

Adding Content Via

9. Scroll up to the top of the iGoogle page and click on the “Back to iGoogle home” link as shown below:



10. You'll now see your first Google Alert show up on your listening station tab for the keyword or terms you created the RSS Feed for. See example below. Note: Most likely you will not start seeing content come in right away. It may take up to 24 hours to see content (from blogs, news, videos, etc) populated into your Google Alerts.



11. Repeat steps 3-10 for additional search terms or keywords you want to monitor. Then move on to the next section to select content for your listening station that already has an RSS Feed you can pull in.

Adding Content Via RSS Feeds



There's a ton of content now on the Web that is RSS enabled. RSS stands for Real Simple Syndication. It's an easy and effective way to select and read just the content you want from multiple sources – without having to visit all of them one-by-one to see if something is new.

Subscribing to an RSS Feed is like subscribing to your favorite magazine and having it delivered to your mailbox each time a new edition is published. Instead of going to the magazine rack at the store to see if there's a new one on the shelf you just receive it directly to your mailbox.

It's also possible to subscribe to an RSS Feed and have the content delivered to your RSS Feed Reader, like for example the Google Reader. For our purposes, we want to subscribe to the RSS Feed and have the content delivered to our iGoogle Page and in my case, the "Influencer" tab I've set up.

1. Find industry blogs to subscribe to. In my example of a listening station setup, I've decided to pull in content from industry keywords, blogs and Twitter. I'm going to put them in 3 columns on my iGoogle listening station tab as you will see. Now, I'm going to add some blogs I want to monitor to the middle column. I already have researched the blogs I want to include and will bring them into my station in the next step.



If you're not sure how to find blogs in your industry or area of interest, I wrote about how to find blogs using blog search engines in this article:

<http://zephyrmarketing.net/2010/01/11/how-to-start-up-a-successful-blog/>

Adding Content Via RSS Feeds



2. **Subscribe to the blog's RSS Feed.** Here's a screenshot showing the top of a blog page from <http://www.smallbiztrends> that I'd like to subscribe to. All I need to do is to find and click the "Subscribe via RSS" link or icon as shown:

The screenshot shows the top of the Small Business Trends website. At the top left is a banner for the American Express OPEN card. To the right of the banner is a red box containing the text "Subscribe via RSS" with an RSS icon. Below this is a "Subscribe via Email" dropdown menu and a "119K readers BY FEEDBURNER" badge. A red arrow points from the text "Click to subscribe" to the "Subscribe via RSS" link. Below the header is the site logo "Small Business Trends" and a navigation menu with links for HOME, MARKETING TIPS, SMALL BIZ EXPERTS, NEWSLETTER, ABOUT, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, PRODUCT REVIEWS, BOOK REVIEWS, RESEARCH, PRESS RELEASES, and RADIO. A "Previous Post" link is visible on the left, and a quote from Anita Campbell, Editor, is on the right.

3. **Look for a option to “Subscribe with Google” or add to your “Google Home Page” and click that option.**

The screenshot shows the Small Business Trends website with a "Small Business Trends" logo in the top right corner. Below the logo is a red box with the text "Click" and a red arrow pointing to a yellow button labeled "Subscribe with Google". Below the button is the text "Reset this favorite; [show all Subscribe options](#)". On the left side of the page, there is a section titled "Small Business Trends syndicated content powered by FeedBurner" with a paragraph of text and a link "Learn more about syndication and FeedBurner...".

Adding Content Via RSS Feeds



4. The blog's RSS Feed and last 3 posts are added.

Added to my iGoogle "Influence" Listing Station Tab

Small Business Trends

- Does Your SMB Do These 8 Things?
- 3 Reasons Contractors Should Register with Angie's List and the Better Business Bureau
- Getting Bloggin': Customers Trust Transparent Experts

Google Alerts - "social media marketing"

- Feeds for Google Alerts

Note: A red arrow points from the text above to the 'Small Business Trends' gadget.

Small Business Trends

- Does Your SMB Do These 8 Things?
- 3 Reasons Contractors Should Register with Angie's List and the Better Business Bureau
- Getting Bloggin': Customers Trust Transparent Experts

Google Alerts - "social media marketing"

- Feeds for Google Alerts

Edit settings

- Delete this gadget
- Minimize this gadget
- Share this gadget
- You might also like...
- About this gadget

Note: If you wish you can click on the down arrow and choose "Edit settings" to change how many article title's you want to see displayed from 1-9.

Note: A red arrow points from the text above to the 'Edit settings' option in the menu.

Adding Content Via RSS Feeds



I changed mine from 3 articles to 5 as shown below. Also notice if you hover over the hyperlink title you'll get a good summary of the post. From this you can decide whether to click the link and read the post. This is a neat feature!

The screenshot shows two RSS feed windows. The left window is titled "Small Business Trends" and contains five article links, each with a plus icon to its left. The second link, "3 Reasons Contractors Should and the Better Business Bureau", is highlighted. A tooltip is visible over this link, containing a paragraph of text. The right window is titled "Google Alerts - 'social media marketing'" and contains one link with a plus icon to its left.

Small Business Trends

- + Does Your SMB Do These 8 Things?
- + 3 Reasons Contractors Should and the Better Business Bureau
- + Getting Bloggin': Customers Tru
- + Win a Copy of "Build A Green Srt
- + Small Business Cash Flow Prob

Google Alerts - "social media marketing"

- + Feeds for Google Alerts

Tooltip text: I spend a lot of time talking to small business owners and startups. I speak with them through my SEO consulting company, during phone calls about social media projects and even just while I'm on my way to and from conferences and taking the train. It's something I enjoy doing because I like hearing their stories, their successes and the struggles that they're facing. Often it's nice to know you're not the only one going through something and to have a chance to commiserate. I work out of my apartment. I'm not exactly overflowing with social interaction these days. Through talking with people, I've found there are often common factors in the startups and businesses t hat do well compared to those that struggle. Here are some things I think small business owners should strive to do or remember when working in their business. Think NicheDon't set out trying to solve every problem that your industry has ever experienced. Instead, focus on one problem, the smallest problem, that you can solve in order to be...

5. **Repeat steps 1- 4** to select more industry blogs and have them delivered to your iGoogle page via their RSS Feed.



Keep in mind you can add any other RSS Feed enabled content to your listening station just as you are doing with blogs. Next, I'll demonstrate how to do this with Twitter.



Sometimes you'll click on an RSS Feed link and it won't give you the easy-to-subscribe option with Google. It will look like the custom feeds you were creating via Google Alerts. Just copy the feed's URL and add it to your iGoogle page as you learned in the Google Alerts section.

Adding Content Via RSS Feeds



You can also “grab” each content box with a left-click of your mouse and move them around to arrange the content however you want from column to column, or vertically up and down within the same column!

In the example below, I’ve moved the Google Alerts back to the left and placed the blog content in the middle column:

Google Alerts - "social media marketing"



[Feeds for Google Alerts](#)

Small Business Trends



[Does Your SMB Do These 8 Things?](#)

[3 Reasons Contractors Should Register with Angie's List and the Better Business Bureau](#)

[Getting Bloggin': Customers Trust Transparent Experts](#)

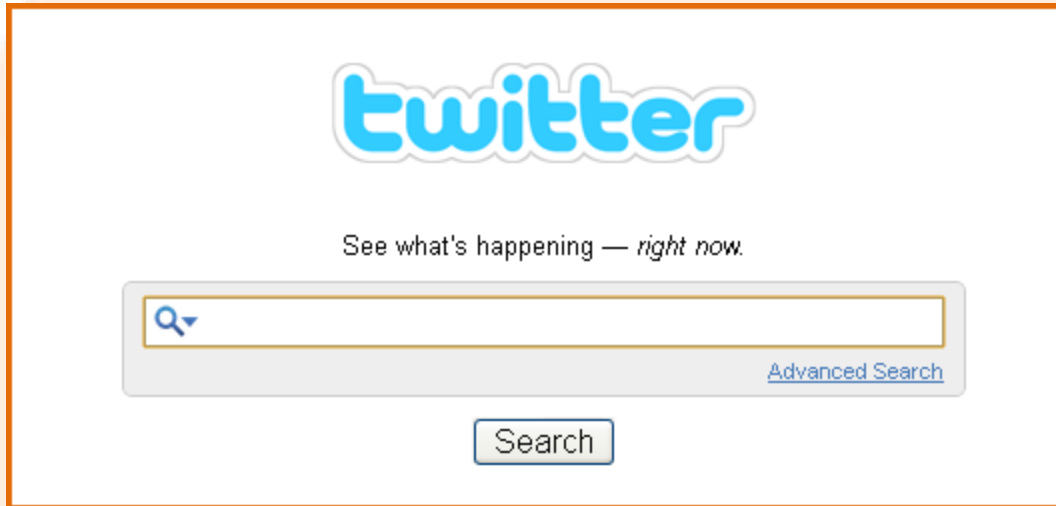
[Win a Copy of "Build A Green Small Business" Book](#)

[Small Business Cash Flow Problems Still Not Declining](#)

Adding Content from Twitter



1. Go to <http://search.twitter.com>. You don't need to have a Twitter account or be logged into Twitter to do this.



2. Enter your search terms in the box and click “Search.” Again, if you want to find exact phrases add “quotation marks” to your terms. If the results look interesting/relevant click the “Feed for this query” link.



Adding Content from Twitter



3. Copy the Feed URL and go to your Google page to the “Add stuff” link as you did in the Google Alerts section of this guide (see page 8).

To summarize the steps are to

- (a) Copy the feed URL
- (b) Go to iGoogle page and click “Add stuff”
- (c) Click the “Add feed or gadget” link
- (d) Paste the feed URL in the box and click “Add”
- (e) Return to your iGoogle Home or listening station page



4. Repeat steps 1-3 for additional Twitter keyword searches.



You may also try and search for a hashtag and save that as a Twitter RSS Feed query to your listening station as well. A hashtag is a term, or series of terms strung together without any spaces and preceded by the symbol “#” without the quotes. Like this: #localbusiness. You’d be surprised how many times people on Twitter setup and follow searches grouped by hashtags.

My "Influence" Listening Station in iGoogle

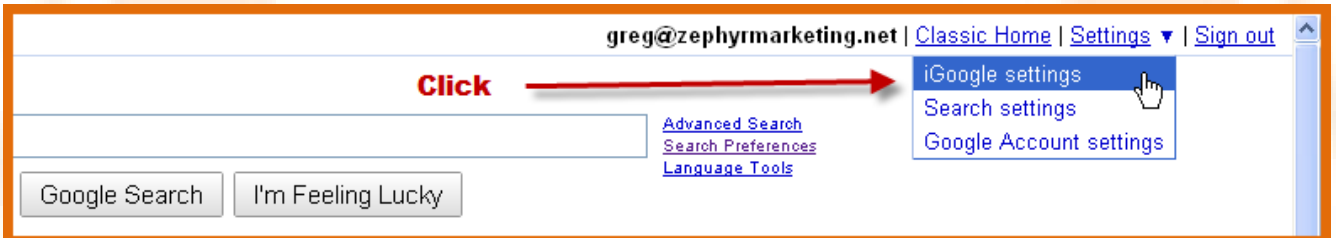
The screenshot shows an iGoogle dashboard with a search bar at the top and three columns of content. The 'Keywords' column contains three Google Alerts for 'content marketing', 'social media marketing', and 'small business marketing'. The 'Blogs' column contains three sections: 'Small Business Trends' with three articles, 'Blog For Profit' with three articles, and 'chrisbrogan.com' with three articles. The 'Twitter' column contains two sections: '"social media marketing" - Twitter Search' with three tweets and '#localbusiness - Twitter Search' with three tweets. Red arrows point from the column headers to their respective content boxes.

You can see from the above I now have my 3 columns organized by the categories of Keywords, Blogs and Twitter searches. The blog and Twitter content is already populating, I'm still waiting for the keywords to come in, again it may take 24 hours or so for that to happen.

Next, the final section in creating your custom listening station on iGoogle is to customize the look and feel.

Customizing Your iGoogle Listening Station

1. Click on the Settings dropdown and select the “iGoogle settings” link.



2. Change the theme. (Note this is also where you could add a new tab.)

A screenshot of the iGoogle 'Content' page. The page is titled 'Content' and has a sidebar on the left with links for 'Home', 'Industry Keywords', 'Influence' (selected), and 'Add a tab'. The main content area is divided into two sections: 'Gadgets' and 'Theme'. The 'Gadgets' section lists several gadgets, each with a 'Delete' link. The 'Theme' section shows the current theme is 'Classic' and has a 'Change theme' link. A red arrow points from the 'Change theme' link to a text box on the right. Below the 'Theme' section, there is a 'Layout' section with three options: '1 column', '2 columns', and '3 columns'. The '3 columns' option is selected. A text box on the right contains the following text: 'The main things to do here are to change the layout columns or change the theme. I'm going to leave the layout to 3 columns of equal width, but I'll click and change the theme from classic to something else.'

Name	Share	Delete
Influence		
Gadgets		
Google Alerts - "content marketing"		Delete
Google Alerts - "social media marketing"		Delete
Google Alerts - "small business marketing"		Delete
Small Business Trends		Delete
Blog For Profit		Delete
chrisbrogan.com		Delete
Inbound Marketing Strategies		Delete
Social media marketing hacks for nonprofits Powered by JohnHaydon.Com		Delete
"social media marketing" - Twitter Search		Delete
#ocalbusiness - Twitter Search		Delete
Add more gadgets		
Theme		
Classic		
Change theme		
Layout		
1 column	2 columns	3 columns
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Customizing Your iGoogle Listening Station

There's a lot to choose from. I chose the "Black UI" theme as shown below:

The screenshot displays the iGoogle Black UI interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the iGoogle logo, a search button, and a "Feeling Lucky" button. Below the search bar, there are links for "Advanced Search", "Search Preferences", and "Language Tools".

The main content area is organized into several columns of widgets:

- Left Column:** A navigation menu with "Home", "Industry Key...", "Influence", "Updates", "Friends", and "Chat".
- Second Column:** Three "Google Alerts" widgets for "content marketing", "social media marketing", and "small business marketing", each with a "Feeds for Google Alerts" link.
- Third Column:** "Small Business Trends" widget with articles like "Does Your SMB Do These 8 Things?", "3 Reasons Contractors Should Register with Angie's List and the Better Business Bureau", and "Getting Blogain: Customers Trust Transparent Experts". Below it is a "Blog For Profit" widget with articles like "The Lazy Woman's Guide to Posts", "Boomers and Social Media - Are you where your potential customers are?", and "War of the Words: The Ethics of Ghost Blogging".
- Fourth Column:** "social media marketing" - Twitter Search widget with tweets from @TheNextWeb and @ionasyouare. Below it is a "#localbusiness - Twitter Search" widget with tweets from @wefollow.com, @Susuh, and @meeting_w_dave.
- Fifth Column:** "chrisbrogan.com" widget with articles like "Earn Your OED- Find Success Tomorrow", "Pursue the Goal Not the Method", and "Your Blog From the Prospect's Point of View". Below it is an "Inbound Marketing Strategies" widget with articles like "B2B Buzz Marketing with Paul Dunay", "How to Convert Old Media Marketing to New Media Marketing", and "B2B Content Marketing for SMB Business".

At the bottom of the page, there is a navigation bar with "Add social gadgets to post updates and play games with friends." and "Change theme from Black UI | Add stuff »".

Listening Station Tips

- Save your listening station iGoogle page as your Home Page.
- Check your listening station content at least once a day.
- Experiment by searching for and adding new content sites periodically.
- Delete sources that don't prove to be valuable or relevant to you.
- Let your listening station help generate greater awareness of what's going on within your areas of interest and expertise.
- Consider monitoring your personal name, social media account profile names, company name, competitors and so on.
- Remember: Listening will make you a better marketer and writer.

About Zephyr Marketing

- I help local and small businesses be more visible, credible and remarkable in the current Internet economy.
- I have a marketing background and focus on providing strategic solutions with measurable results.
- Packaged solutions that include a content marketing strategy via blogs coupled with social media engagement on sites like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn are offered in a 4-stage process to: Plan, Build, Engage and Manage.
- Standalone solutions are also available. Please contact me with any interest or questions in any of the following areas:
 - Keyword Research
 - Social Media Opportunity Analyzer
 - WordPress Blogs
 - Twitter Profile Setup and Marketing
 - Facebook Fan Page Setup and Marketing
 - Social Media Management and Productivity Tools
 - Email Marketing Strategies and Service for Small Business
 - Search and Social Media Optimization
 - Reputation Marketing
 - Implementing a Content Marketing Cycle
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 - Email: greg@zephyrmarketing.net
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 - Web: <http://www.zephyrmarketing.net>
 - Mail: 1060 Grant Street, Suite 1-D, Benicia, CA 94510