This site I like

Meta.org

https://meta.org/

Co-founded by Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg, it's unsurprising that, even in beta phase, Meta.org is smooth in design and delivery. The free-to-use platform is targeted at academics, researchers, librarians, and students "to discover, rank and deliver the most relevant [biomedical research] papers to you in real-time." Meta uses machine learning to scan the literature on PubMed and bioRxiv and decide which articles are best suited to you, on the basis of the information you provide.

At this beta stage of testing, if you want to try Meta, you will have to register your interest and wait for your login details (this took a week for me). Once approved, the site is simple to use. The user adds specialties, journals, and researchers to their feed to receive the latest research filtered according to these cues. Feeds can be divided into themes or topics; the more filters a user adds, the narrower the theme of the research presented. These feeds can also be shared with colleagues. Once the AI decides on the 'new' research you need to see, the user can filter by type of content; for example, preprint, journal article, clinical trial, comment or editorial, correction, case report, retraction, review, and other. The user can then save their publications of interest to a library. Click on a publication, and a sidebar opens with the title, publication details, abstract, and a "get paper" tab, which directs the user to the publisher or PubMed to retrieve a copy of the original publication.

If you are already using PubMed keyword searches to direct research to your inbox, the process of creating a library on an external site but then still having to head back to PubMed does feel a little roundabout. That being said, the site is smooth and, I imagine, much more appealing to some and easy to use than existing options. I think this site would, initially at least, be suited to undergraduate and high school students who are learning to navigate primary literature, or perhaps PhD students or postdoctoral researchers coming to grips with a new field of research. I think Meta might find it harder to convert those researchers who have their PubMed search terms finely tuned, but I could be wrong. (Throwback to when Facebook first came into my world and I did not see how a platform of people "poking" one another was going to gain traction.) For editors looking to find reviewers or authors, the 'suggested researchers' tab that appears after clicking on a specific publication could be useful, but perhaps does not necessarily replace Scopus in usefulness.

As part of the Chan–Zuckerberg initiative, whose mission is "to find new ways to leverage technology, community-driven solutions, and collaboration to accelerate progress in Science, Education, and within our Justice & Opportunity work", the site promises to always be free.

At this stage, rather than Meta being "this site I like", it is "this site I am keen to keep an eye on".

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