Newsletters, E-News & Email Alerts: Communicating Information in the Digital Age

Lisa M. Curch, PhD
Editor, AGHExchange
Associate Professor, Sociology Department
SUNY-College at Oneonta, Oneonta, NY
curchlm@oneonta.edu

Princeton’s WordNet defines a “newsletter” as a “report or open letter giving informal or confidential news of interest to a special group” (http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=newsletter). A document on the Temasek Polytechnic (located in Singapore) website, titled “A short history of newsletters,” informs readers that the very first newsletter made an appearance in 1538 and that the first newsletter in the United States, the Boston News-Letter, began in 1704 (http://spark.tp.edu.sg/dmr/package2/history.htm). According to this document, “By 1998, more than one million newsletters have been estimated to be published in the US. And that number doesn’t even include worldwide contribution!” (para. 10). While the newsletter over its history has been in and out of favor with the public as a form of media, it seems that in a world awash with information technology, there is a place for the newsletter.

There are many different types of newsletters. Companies have newsletters for their employees, banks have newsletters for their customers, trade organizations have newsletters for people in their industries, and individuals may send one out to family and friends at the holidays. More often than not, the newsletter of today, whether personal or professional, is electronic. The advent of digital and Internet communication technologies seems to have re-established the newsletter as source of information on a seemingly infinite range of topics, all delivered via electronic means. The newsletter has adapted with the new communication technologies and email in particular has become the means not just for newsletters but also news “alerts.” These are brief communiqués intended to inform the recipient of the latest relevant news and information on a particular topic/area. Typically there are hyperlinks included for the reader to access more information on the item.

According to the AGHE website, the AGHExchange “contains articles outlining ways in which instructors and administrators can evaluate and develop programs; reviews of resources for gerontological training; news about conferences, workshops, and programs of interest to gerontology educators; announcements of upcoming conferences in aging; activities and resources of interest to geriatric educators; public policy information related to educational gerontology; profiles of new AGHE members; and news items about AGHE programs, publications, and activities.” The mission of the AGHExchange therefore is to provide news about the field of gerontology and geriatric education and about AGHE as an organization to AGHE members and others interested in gerontology and geriatric education.

Helping to keep readers informed about happenings in gerontology and geriatric education is quite an undertaking, as there is much that is happening! And staying updated in gerontology and geriatrics in general is a challenge, as the going-ons in the biological, psychological, social, and medical areas of aging are numerous. But the good news (joke intended) is that there are many e-sources of information that can help you keep up with the news in your particular areas of expertise and teaching in aging. The following is a list, not exhaustive, of newsletters and alerts that can help you remain current and in-the-know in the field of aging.

**AARP Public Policy Newsletter**
http://msg1svc.net/static/aarpppi/html/mpi_form.html
AARP’s Public Policy Institute offers regular newsletters and alerts on policy issues.

**Administration on Aging E-News**
http://aoa.gov/AoARoot/Press_Room/Enews/index.aspx
“...an eNewsletter and periodic eNews alerts that offer up-to-date information that is of high value to readers. These vehicles are dedicated to sharing information of importance with the Aging Network, professionals in the field of aging and others interested in the needs and concerns of older adults and their caregivers.”

**Aging Today**
http://www.agingtoday.org/at/at-315/toc.cfm
American Society on Aging’s bimonthly newspaper, “covers developments in public policy, research, practice, media and programming in the field of aging.”

**American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR) Grants Alerts**
http://www.afar.org/grants.html
A subscriber can receive periodic updates on AFAR grant programs.

**Engaging Aging E-Newsletter**
http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~aging/
A newsletter put out by the University of California Berkeley’s Resource Center on Aging. Although has California-oriented aging news, also has information on resources that would be of interest to educators, practitioners, and researchers across the country.

**Gerontology News**
http://www.geron.org/Publications/Gerontology%20News
This is the Gerontological Society of America’s monthly newsletter, which “covers Society events (including the Annual Scientific Meeting), news on members, funding opportunities, resources for aging researchers, policy issues, and legislative actions.”

**Harry R. Moody Newsletters**
http://www.hrmoody.com/newsletters.html
E-newsletters that are currently edited by Harry R. Moody.

- **The Soul of Bioethics**
- covers bioethics and aging; features case studies, web resources and coming events.

- **Human Values in Aging**
- covers late-life creativity, spirituality, lifelong learning, and humanistic gerontology.
Teaching Gerontology
- covers pedagogy and instructional resources for those who teach courses in aging. AGHE sponsors and publishes this newsletter.

Health Update Newsletter
NYTTimes.com's e-newsletter covers all things related to health, including articles in the New York Times, as well as blogs, columns and multimedia features.

National Academy on an Aging Society Newsletters

Public Policy & Aging E-Newsletter
“This bimonthly e-newsletter highlights key developments and viewpoints in the field of aging policy from a wide variety of sources.”

Civic Engagement in an Older America E-Newsletter
http://www.agingsoociety.org/agingsoociety/Civic%20Engagement/cenewsarchive.htm
This e-newsletter “informs readers about efforts to advance research, programs, and policy that support older adults as a civic resource. This bimonthly publication highlights key developments related to civic engagement in later life from a wide variety of sources, including articles and reports circulating in the media, academy, think tanks, private sector, government, and nonprofit organizations.”

Aging Means Business E-Newsletter
"This quarterly e-newsletter explores the intersection of business and aging. Installments highlight free articles and reports that address the enormous potential for businesses to target baby boomers and seniors as consumers, identify effective strategies for marketing to an older consumer, and spotlight select industries.”

National Council on Aging (NCOA) News & Alerts
http://www.ncoa.org/news-ncoa-publications/
“NCOA is a national voice for older adults—especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged—and the community organizations that serve them. We bring together nonprofit organizations, businesses, and government to develop creative solutions that improve the lives of all older adults.”

National Institute of Aging (NIA) News & Announcements Email Alert
http://list.niapublications.org/niaalertlists/?p=subscribe&id=1

The Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral (ADEAR)
Center newsletter for professionals, researchers, and families interested in Alzheimer's disease research.

Links: Minority Research & Training (Work Group on Minority Aging News)
http://www.nia.nih.gov/NewsAndEvents/Links/

NIA Email Alerts
http://list.niapublications.org/niaalertlists/?p=subscribe&id=1

NIA News & Announcements Email Alert
http://www.nia.nih.gov/NewsAndEvents/

NIA New Publications Email Alert
http://www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation/Publications/

Spotlight on Aging Research: News and Notes from the National Institute on Aging
http://www.nia.nih.gov/NewsAndEvents/SpotlightonAgingResearch/about.htm
“...an online update from the National Institute on Aging’s (NIA’s) Office of Communications and Public Liaison, is designed to inform the research community, aging-services providers, health care professionals, policy makers, media, and others, including NIA staff, about NIA’s diverse resources and portfolio of aging-related research.”

Positive Aging Newsletter
http://www.taosinstitute.net/positive-aging-newsletter
The Taos Institute's electronic newsletter, which “brings to light resources—from scientific research on aging, gerontology practices, and daily life—that contribute to an appreciation of the aging process.”

The National Center on Elder Abuse E-News
Published monthly by the Clearinghouse on Abuse and Neglect of the Elderly (CANE) of the University of Delaware. To subscribe, select “Credits and Contact Information.”

Today’s Research on Aging
http://www.prb.org/TodaysResearch.aspx
Published by the Population Reference Bureau, this is “an e-newsletter series intended to increase awareness of research results and their application to major public and private decision making.”

We-News: Aging
http://womensenews.org/home/aging
Women’s eNews covers “issues of particular concern to women and providing women’s perspectives on public policy.” Not a newsletter, but rather an Internet news service.