

follow.up: University of Porto News Aggregator

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The goal of the “follow.up” project is the development of a web-based information system for the aggregation, consolidation and organization of news published by the multiple organic units of the University of Porto (UP). UP is a large academic organization, with dozens of organic units, each one publishing several articles a day. Our vision is to create a centralized access point to all the published content to improve information consumption within the university.

We started collecting data on June 2012. Since then we have stored more than 5,200 articles published through the RSS channels available on the SIGARRA platform of 15 organic units. We also implemented a web-based system to perform a statistical analysis on the collected data. We classified the organic units as sources; the RSS feeds as channels and the feeds' names as topics. Each source has one or more channels and each channel has one topic and one or more articles published. Next, we summarize some of the main findings for the period between June 1st and October 31st of 2012.

The number of channels that each source has varies greatly, going from only 2 channels (FADEUP) to 12 (FCUP, FEUP, FMUP and FPCEUP). There is a total of 108 channels. FEUP was the source with the most articles published in the analyzed period (498 articles published through 12 channels) and FMDUP the one that published the least (52 through 3 channels). We identified 56 distinct topics. The topic “Geral”, shared by 9 sources, lead with 554 publications, while the topics “Divulgação” and “Serviços Administrativos”, both belonging to just one source, published a single article. The topic from a single source with the highest number of published articles was “Notícias FEUP”, with 229.

September was the month with the most articles published (900) and August the one with the least (431). As for the hourly data, the main publishing period is between 06h00 and 21h00, with some occasional publication out of that period. There's a peak in the morning, at 10h00, and another, higher, in the afternoon, at 15h00.

This initial study was important to understand the volume and dynamics of the data published by the several organic units. Based on this information, we are currently working on the design of the interface that already have an initial prototype available online, aiming to aggregate in a user-friendly and joyful manner all this information oriented to the UP academic staff.