



# The Columbian

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## Vancouver begins custom news feed

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### **The Columbian**

Vancouver residents hungry for news and information from their city government can decide what they get and when they get it.

An electronic subscription service allows anyone with an e-mail address to automatically receive city updates and to decide how often these updates should be delivered.

The free service is customizable so users can choose from 160 topics, a way of catering to someone who wants to read everything regarding Vancouver police and annexation but couldn't care less about bid openings or the climbing wall schedule at the Firstenburg Community Center.

To sign up, go to the city's Web site — [www.cityofvancouver.us](http://www.cityofvancouver.us) — and click on the "Get E-Mail Updates" icon.

Users can update their subscription list at any time by adding or deleting topics. They also can choose when to receive their information: as soon as it is available, once a day, once a week or once a month.

"We are very enthusiastic about this new service that will empower citizens to receive information as soon as it is available on topics of interest to them without waiting or searching," Donna Mason, the city's media services director, said in a statement. "It puts customers in control of when, what and how they receive information."

The system also can also send text messages to cell phones, a potentially critical feature in emergency situations as long as cell service doesn't go down. All administrative tasks are done over the Web by the vendor, GovDelivery, whose servers are in the Midwest and would not be affected by a local disaster.

Several other agencies have been using GovDelivery, including the cities of Bellevue, Minneapolis and Washington, D.C.; Snohomish County; and TriMet, Mason said.

The e-mail distribution list is managed by GovDelivery and will not be sold, Mason said.