Harvesting terminology

I subscribe to several environmental journals (both electronic and print) in German and English. My German-language subscriptions include [EUWID Recycling und Entsorgung](#) and [Recycling-Magazin](#), as well as a number of online newsletters published by environmental organisations and industry associations. I also regularly read [Let's Recycle](#) for UK waste management news, [Waste News](#) and [Scrap Magazine](#) for US developments and the [Environmental News Network](#) for more general news about environmental affairs, to name but a few. [Google News](#) is also a great tool and whenever I have a few minutes, I enter a few search terms (waste, recycling, trash) and see what pops up. I am also constantly on the lookout for special editions on environmental topics. For instance, [National Geographic](#) recently published a special report on climate change that I picked up at Borders last week.

With the German-language journals, I grab my handy green marker and spend about some time going through as many articles as possible and looking for environmental terms that I've not come across before. I start entering them into a simple Excel file with three columns: German, English and Source/Additional Information. I started this process a few years ago after hearing this suggestion at an [ATA](#) conference. It's really simple but works very well for me. When I have a few minutes or want a break from translating, I go back to the file and start researching the term and its possible translations into English. I also keep this file open while I'm translating and add other terms that I come across while translating that I would like to research further at a later date. I follow a similar process for English terms, albeit with less urgency.

I recently started another English-only file that contains separate sheets for different areas including climate change, waste recovery versus disposal operations, WEEE (waste electrical and electronic equipment), waste exports and other waste streams. Each sheet contains details of relevant international legislation and initiatives and links to legal texts (which crop up in a lot of the work I do) and other details about the industry. For instance, the WEEE sheet contains information about the different categories of appliances and problematic materials, the EU's WEEE Directive, the UK and Germany's legislation to implement this directive, industry associations, Europe-wide take-back schemes and the US approach (or lack thereof) to handling this waste stream. I find that this information-gathering process truly keeps me up to date with new developments in this field and helps to reduce the time I spend researching terminology while translating.