

# Idea Outline

Andrew Winterbotham

This project is a reddit bot that parses the “Today I Learned” ([/r/todayilearned/](https://www.reddit.com/r/todayilearned/)) subreddit and scans for facts containing keywords typed in by the user. If it detects a fact containing one or more of these keywords, an email containing the fact and a link to its source is sent to the user’s Gmail address.

The bot scans reddit every 30 minutes, so that the user is not spammed by too many emails. Rather, whenever they check their email, there will simply be a few emails containing these interesting facts. This project uses PRAW (python api reddit wrapper) to crawl reddit.

This is in one way just a novel program; checking email can often be a somewhat boring and tedious task, and so while checking email it would be nice to come across an email with an interesting random fact. It can also however be a potential time saver, as it means that the user of the program does not have to spend any time browsing the “Today I Learned” subreddit, which can be extremely time consuming, as it is easy to get distracted and spend a lot of time reading all of the interesting facts. This is a problem I have certainly encountered myself!

The project thus helps eliminate the tedium of checking email, and acts as a potential time saver.

There are a few points worth noting in addition:

1. The user is prompted to enter the email address they want the facts to be sent to. The email address must be a Gmail address for the program to work.
2. The user is also prompted to enter the password for that account. This is done using the getpass module so that the password is not echoed to the screen. In addition, the password is destroyed immediately after it is entered, using the del command. This is an imperfect solution, as it does not guarantee that it is deleted from memory, but python due to its high level nature does not easily allow us to clear memory.
3. The script checks for profanity in the posts that contains the keywords specified by the user; if there is any instance of profanity in the post, it will not be emailed to the user, the bot will just look for another fact.