

Types of Periodicals

When conducting research it is important to distinguish between scholarly journals and trade and popular magazines. Articles from journals are typically referred to as "scholarly," while magazine articles are usually considered "popular." Trade magazines or journals are written for professionals in a particular field and are not necessarily research related, nor are they considered scholarly.

Below are criteria to consider when differentiating between scholarly journals and magazines. Notice how many of the criteria are related to the factors (noted in parenthesis) that you need to consider when evaluating an article. Please refer to the Mission College handout Evaluating Books and Articles for Academic Use for the factors to consider when evaluating an article.




	Scholarly Journals	Trade Magazines/Journals	Popular Magazines
Also Called	Academic, Peer-Reviewed or Reviewed	Professional or Special Interest	General
Example			
Publisher (Authority)	Universities, scholarly presses, or academic/research organizations.	Professional or trade associations or commercial publishers.	Commercial publishers.
Published	Monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually.	Frequency varies.	Usually published weekly or monthly.
Audience	Scholars, researchers, and students.	Professionals in the field; the interested non-specialist.	General public.

Chart continues on back

	Scholarly Journals	Trade Magazines/Journals	Popular Magazines
Content (Content)	In-depth , primary account of original findings written by the researcher(s); very specific information, with the goal of scholarly communication.	Current news, trends and products in a specific industry; practical information for professionals working in the field or industry.	Secondary discussion of someone else's research; may include personal narrative or opinion ; general information, purpose is to entertain or inform.
Author (Authority)	Author's credentials are provided ; usually a scholar or specialist with subject expertise.	Author is usually a professional in the field , sometimes a journalist with subject expertise.	Author is frequently a journalist paid to write articles, may or may not have subject expertise .
Language	Specialized terminology or jargon of the field; requires expertise in subject area.	Specialized terminology or jargon of the field, but not as technical as a scholarly journal.	Vocabulary in general usage; easily understandable to most readers.
Graphics; Advertisements	Very little use of color; lots of graphs, charts, and tables; very few advertisements and photographs.	Colorful; lots of photographs; some graphics and charts; advertisements targeted to professionals in the field.	Colorful; some graphs, charts and tables; lots of glossy advertisements and photographs .
Layout & Organization	Structured ; includes the article abstract, goals and objectives, methodology, results (evidence), discussion, conclusion, and bibliography.	Informal ; articles organized like a journal or a newsletter. Evidence drawn from personal experience or common knowledge .	Informal ; may include non-standard formatting. May not present supporting evidence or a conclusion.
Accountability (Authority/Accuracy)	Articles are evaluated by peer-reviewers or referees who are experts in the field; edited for content, format, and style .	Articles are evaluated by editorial staff who may be experts in the field, not peer-reviewed ; edited for format and style .	Articles are evaluated by editorial staff , not experts in the field; edited for format and style .
List of References (Accuracy)	Required . Quotes and facts are verifiable.	Occasional brief bibliographies, but not required.	Rare . Little, if any, information about source materials is given.
Additional Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Annals of Mathematics</i> • <i>Journal of Anatomy and Physiology</i> • <i>Brain Research</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Architectural Record</i> • <i>Library Journal</i> • <i>PC World</i> • <i>Restaurant Business</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sports Illustrated</i> • <i>National Geographic</i> • <i>Ladies Home Journal</i> • <i>Cooking Light</i>

Acknowledgement: This is a modified version of a document originally created by librarians at the University of Michigan Shapiro Undergraduate Library.