

PUBLICATION TYPES - POPULAR, SCHOLARLY, PROFESSIONAL

Instructors frequently have a requirement that information used in class assignments, term papers and projects must be found in particular types of publications. The most frequent stipulation is that the information be found in a scholarly or research journal.

At one time the distinctions among the various types of periodical publications were quite clear. This is no longer the case.

There continues to be a blurring of the lines, with scholarly research being reported in what were once considered popular magazines and newspapers. Advertising is now found in scholarly journals.

This means that the student may have to make a judgment about whether the information itself is presented in a scholarly format in whatever publication it is found.

There are some journals in every discipline which are recognized as scholarly by that discipline. The citations in the list of references in textbooks are usually from such journals.

Instructors may have lists of acceptable and unacceptable sources of information. Or they may have their preferences for the lines between categories. Ask for clarification. The reference librarian is likely to assess the content of the particular article, rather than the periodical title, for scholarly or research content.

In general, periodicals fall into categories: popular, scholarly and professional. The following lists of criteria will help you assess and evaluate a specific publication for its place among the categories.

You may not be able to tell until you examine an issue and the article you thought useful based on the periodical index citation you found. Some periodicals contain several or all three categories of information.

The criteria for an individual article is similar to that of the publication in general. Evaluate single articles as you would a publication.

POPULAR

Purpose: provide information and entertainment to the general reader.

Publisher: commercial

Audience: general public for general information

Writers: employers, free lancers including journalist and scholars/experts

Coverage: wide variety of topics, cross disciplinary, public interest.

Characteristics:

- ▶ Little technical language or jargon;
- ▶ Few, if any, bibliographies or cited references
- ▶ General summaries of background information and descriptions

PROFESSIONAL

Purpose: application of information, professional support

Publisher: professional occupational or trade group.

Audience: professionals workers and managers.

Writers: members of the group. Journalists researchers, scholars

Coverage: information relevant to field and members of group

Characteristics:

- ▶ Application of new technology, information
- ▶ Employment issues
- ▶ Practitioner's viewpoint
- ▶ Technical language used
- ▶ Interpretation of research trend, issues.

SCHOLARLY

Purpose: scholarly communication of research and ideas.

Publisher: professional or academic associations: colleges & other institutions; an increasing number of commercial publishers

Audience: other scholars, students

Writers; scholars, researchers, experts.

Coverage: may be very narrow and specific subjects.

Characteristics:

- ▶ Technical language and discipline specific jargon; Peer review, editorial board
- ▶ Methods, materials & procedures often described in detail;
- ▶ Bibliographies included
- ▶ Assumes background knowledge