

Scholarly Journals & Other Periodicals

A handout of USC Upstate Library

Periodical – A publication issued at regular intervals such as a newspaper, magazine or journal.

Magazine – A periodical containing a collection of articles, stories, pictures, or other features.

Journal – A periodical presenting articles on a particular subject: a medical journal.

Trade Journal – A commercial periodical published by trade associations and always aimed at the specialized audience of a specific trade or industry. Trade journals are excellent sources of information about industry trends, products and current issues.

Scholarly Journal (A.K.A. Professional Journal or Refereed Journal) – A journal that contains articles and research by scholars and experts in a specific field who wish to share their research with other professionals/scholars. Articles are usually based on original research and contain author credentials, abstracts and bibliographies. Professional associations often publish these journals.

Periodicals That Are NOT Scholarly Journals

News magazines such as Newsweek, Time, and U.S. News & World Report are not scholarly journals. These magazines are aimed at a general audience. This "general audience" does not require subject familiarity or an advanced reading and comprehension level. Glossy ads and photos are prevalent.

Opinion magazines such as Mother Jones, The Nation, National Review, or The New Republic are not scholarly journals. These magazines are aimed at an educated audience, but without assuming particular scholarly backgrounds. Opinion magazines comment on current events and offer a particular viewpoint on world affairs, politics, and cultural matters. Glossy ads and photos are prevalent.

Popular magazines such as People Weekly, Jet, Sports Illustrated, Entertainment Weekly, Sierra or New Yorker are not scholarly journals. Most academic libraries do NOT subscribe to many of these magazines. Instead, you will find a wide variety of popular magazines at public libraries. Popular magazines are NOT the kind of source to rely upon when writing an academic research paper. Glossy ads and photos are prevalent.

Trade Journals (A.K.A. Trade Magazines) – such as Automotive News, Home Healthcare Nurse, Teaching Exceptional Children, Library Journal or E Week are not scholarly journals. These magazines are industry specific and designed to keep the practitioner updated. Glossy ads and photos are prevalent

Is My Article From A Scholarly Journal?

1. Check to see how articles are chosen for publication:
 - Is it a publication sponsored by a professional society or association?
 - Is there a list of reviewers inside the front cover, on the first few pages?
 - Is it in Ulrichs list of "refereed" or Juried Journals? REF Z 6941 .U5 (the most current edition is behind the Reference desk)

2. Look at the general characteristics of the article / does the article provide at least some of the following:
 - Is the original print journal plain and lacking glossy ads?
 - Does the title of article reflect its content?
 - Are the sections titled? for example: Introduction, Literature Review, Theory or Background, Subjects, Methods, Results, Discussion
 - Is there a list of references or is there a bibliography?
 - Are the author's credentials listed?
 - Is there an abstract at the beginning of the article?
 - Is the article based on original research or authorities in the field rather than popular or personal opinion?
 - Are there diagrams, illustrations and statistics?

If the answer to the majority of these questions is YES, you are most likely dealing with a scholarly journal.