

Scholarly Journals vs. Popular Magazines

What is the Difference????

In academic research it is important to distinguish between scholarly journals and popular magazines. Scholarly journals may be referred to as peer-reviewed, refereed, or professional. Below are some simple tips to help distinguish between these two types of periodicals.

Scholarly Journals



- Authors--usually scholars in their field
- Editors--articles are often reviewed by experts or professionals within the field
- Audience--the intended audience is other scholars or experts within that particular discipline
- Publishers--Usually published by an academic press or endorsed by professional associations
- Submission Guidelines--strict; sometimes on inside or back cover
- Overall look--usually rather plain covers
- Content--often reports on original research or experimentation
- References or Bibliographies--Credit freely given to sources

Examples: *Journal of Medieval History*
Harvard Theological Review

Lancet
Global Finance Journal

Popular Magazines



- Authors--Usually Journalists and/or freelance writers Contributors may not be listed
- Audience--Broad appeal for general readers
- Publishers--Commercial publisher and mass produced for profit
- Submission Guidelines--less strict, ambiguous, and/or unstated
- Overall Look--Glossy photographs and numerous advertisements for consumer products
- Content--Wide-ranging, general, and topical based upon consumer appeal
- References--Sources are rarely credited

Examples: *People* *Psychology Today*
Time *Field & Stream*
Newsweek *Business Week*

If you have any questions about a periodical, ask at our reference desk. You may also consult *Ulrich's International Periodical Directory*. Ulrich's identifies the audience and content of specific journal titles. You may access Ulrich's at the library homepage where it is listed by *Title* under the [Indexes & Databases](#) link.

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