


Identifying Types of Publications: Scholarly, Trade (Practitioner), and Popular

Criteria	Scholarly Academic Journals	Trade and Practitioner Publications	Popular Magazines
Author	Acknowledged expert, such as a professor, scientist, or prominent researcher	Working professional in a specific field, or a journalist with experience in the field	Journalist, professional writer, or layperson often without academic or professional credentials in the field
Audience	Scholars, experts, & others knowledgeable about the subject	Professionals working in a specific field or industry	General audience without special knowledge of the topic
Content	Research reports, comprehensive detailed articles on specific study areas, & critical reviews	Current news, events, trends, and products that relate to a specific field or industry	General interest items, current events, opinions, introductory, or overview information
Language / Writing Style	Specialized terminology or jargon that subject experts use and understand; advanced vocabulary	Field terminology or jargon, but not as technical as a scholarly journal	Everyday language that the average person can understand
Editors / Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By an editorial board of subject scholars If the editors require a strict review process, then the journal moves into a smaller subdivision known as peer-reviewed (refereed) journals.¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By a professional editor with good subject knowledge (usually not expert level) Usually not peer-reviewed² Implied professional ethics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By a professional editor who may not have any subject knowledge at all Not peer-reviewed Implied professional ethics
Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Author(s) always identified Long in-depth articles that always include references Plain black-white layouts; some statistical images No or very little advertising Issue page numbers are continuous throughout an entire year/volume 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Author may not be identified Moderate to short articles that might include a few references Colorful layouts with variety of images for visual appeal Specialized advertising aimed at professionals in the field Each issue begins with page number 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Author may not be identified Moderate to short articles without references Colorful layouts with variety of images for visual appeal Lots of general advertising aimed at a wide audience Each issue begins with page number 1
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>International Journal of Communication</i> <i>Bioscience</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Publishers Weekly</i> <i>Billboard</i> <i>Variety</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Time Magazine</i> <i>Sports Illustrated</i> <i>People</i>

If you still can't distinguish the difference: use the [Ulrichsweb Database](#) (access through our library's "Databases A-Z" link). Enter the journal title in the *Ulrichsweb* search box and then select the matching journal title link. The "Serial Type" field gives the classification (magazine, journal, newspaper) and the "Content Type" field will identify trade-practitioner publications. If the journal is peer-reviewed/refereed, then there will also be a "Refereed"  symbol.

¹ While scholarly academic journals and scholarly peer-reviewed journals share the same general characteristics, they are not the same. **Scholarly peer-reviewed (refereed) journals are a smaller subdivision of scholarly academic journals.** Peer-reviewed (refereed) journals use a rigorous check list of criteria performed by the journal's editorial members (subject scholars) to determine an article's eligibility for publication. The criterion varies by individual journal, but it is usually found on the journal's official website in the section that gives instructions for author submissions.

² A small number of trade-practitioner publications do publish a few peer-reviewed articles. However, most research databases do not include trade-practitioner publications within their scholarly peer-reviewed filters (limiters); instead, scholarly peer-reviewed filters (limiters) include only publications considered scholarly in terms of audience and content.

If you need help finding **journal title abbreviations**, try these sources:

- XpertScientific's List of Common Academic Journal Title Abbreviations* <https://xpertschscientific.com/journal-abbreviations/>
- All That JAS: Journal Sources Abbreviations* <https://www.abbreviations.com/jas.php>