

Popular Magazines vs. Trade Magazines vs. Scholarly Journals

The following are a list of **general criteria** that can be used to distinguish between popular magazines, trade magazines and scholarly journals. Some journals do not meet all the criteria in one category. For example, *Scientific American* has glossy pages and color pictures and contains both scholarly articles as well as those geared to a more general audience. **Accountability** and **content of the specific article** are the key criteria used to determine if an article is scholarly.

	Popular Magazines	Trade Magazines	Scholarly Journals
Appearance	Print: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eye-catching cover • Glossy paper • Pictures and illustrations in color • Each issue starts with page 1 Website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “flashy” 	Print: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover depicts industrial setting • Glossy paper • Pictures and illustrations in color • Each issue starts with page 1 Website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varies from “flashy to utilitarian” 	Print: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain cover • Plain paper • Black/white graphics and illustrations • Pages are consecutive throughout the volume Website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilitarian
Audience	Nonprofessionals	Members of a specific business, industry or organization	Researchers and professionals
Content	Personalities, news and general interest articles Articles written by staff, may be unsigned	Industry trends, new products or techniques, and organizational news Articles written by staff or contributing editors	Research projects, methodology and theory Articles written by contributing authors
Accountability	Editorial review No bibliographies	Editorial review May have short bibliographies	Peer review/refereed Bibliographies always present
Advertisements	Heavy	Moderate (all or most are trade related)	Few or none
Examples	Newsweek, Psychology Today, Rolling Stone, Science News	Chemical and Engineering News, Nursing Times, Nursing	Science, Nature, New England Journal of Medicine, Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), Journal of Organic Chemistry

A Note About Peer Review

“Peer review” refers to the policy of experts in the field examining journal articles before acceptance for publication. Peer review insures that the research described in a journal’s articles is sound and of high quality. Sometimes the term “refereed” is used instead of peer review

****If you are not sure that an article you have is peer reviewed check with your instructor****

Adapted from Arizona State University-Science Reference Room: <http://www.asu.edu/lib/noble/library/popular.htm>