Popular, Professional and Scholarly Periodicals

Finding the right article can be difficult. Periodicals (magazines and journals) present us with the freshest, most reliable information, but they can be somewhat confusing to use because to the new user, all articles look the same. How can you tell them apart?

POPULAR magazines and journals focus on a variety of topics such as news, hobbies, entertainment, or social and political commentary. In some cases the entire magazine will support a specific opinion or special interest groups’ viewpoint.

Popular magazines are mostly characterized by many graphics and advertisements. Articles aim at entertaining and informing the general reader, requiring no specialized knowledge to understand. These articles are generally short and many times are a summary or paraphrase of a much larger topic.

Authorship of the articles is not necessarily by experts in the field but rather most have been composed and/or edited by staff writers.

The popular magazine is the best place to get the latest information on current topics.

PROFESSIONAL journals (sometimes known as TRADE journals) focus on providing news and practical application information primarily to practicing professionals within a single, specific field of employment.

The appearance of professional journals can vary from a popular glossy presentation to a more somber and reserved academic presentation. The length of articles can vary from short and newsy, to lengthy and in-depth.

Articles focus on trends, forecasts, news, products, employment, reviewed and edited by professionals.

The professional journal is the best place to get information that can help you within a particular practicing profession.

SCHOLARLY journals (sometimes referred to as PEER-REVIEWED journals) focus on research, analysis of current research and scholarship within a specific academic or professional field aimed at a readership with an in-depth knowledge of the topic.

Presentation is minimal with few advertisements. Articles are most often lengthy and may be in an empirical (experimental results) format.

All articles are reviewed by a jury of “peers” (experts) before inclusion in the journal.

The scholarly journal is the best place to get information that will give you the latest in research within a specific discipline of study.