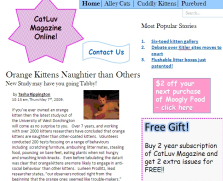# Library:Scholarly versus Popular Sources/Quick Reference

Quick Reference

The following outlines the key differences between scholarly, popular and professional publications.

Criteria	Scholarly	Popular	Trade/Technical
Advertisements	Few ads, usually for publication services in the discipline covered	Many ads - typically for retail products and services.	Will have advertisements which will generally be targeted to professionals in the field.
Appearance	Plain design, black and white graphics (print versions), containing charts, graphs, and tables.	Slick design, glossy paper (print versions), with colour pictures, photographs, and illustrations.	Slick design, glossy paper (print versions), with graphics, photos and illustrations.
Audience	Professors, researchers, college and university students	General public	Professionals in the field and possibly interested amateurs.
Author	Written by scholar within an academic field - i.e., a current researcher at a university or research institute.	Written by journalists who may lack discipline and/or subject expertise.	Professionals in the field or journalist with specialist background
Language	University level, in the specialized vocabulary of the discipline covered. No glossaries or list of defined terms - target audience will already be familiar with this vocabulary.	Non technical, simple vocabulary accessible to the majority of readers. Online popular sources may hyperlink unfamiliar terms to dictionary defintions, Wikipedia entries etc.	Specialist jargon/terminology of the field but likely not as technical as scholarly journals.

Peer Reviewed/Refereed?	**Usually** Journal Articles: Experts in the field review articles in most scholarly journals. Submissions are not published if they do not pass the scrutiny of the reviewers. **Maybe** Scholarly books: Academic presses typically employ editorial boards to review the quality, accuracy and validity of manuscripts. However, not all editorial boards are comprised of subject experts - check board members' affiliation/qualifications to determine if "peers" are part of the review process	**No** Only the magazine editor reviews submitted articles.	**No** May be reviewed by staff editors with experience in the field, but no formal peer-review process.
Publisher	Professional organizations, universities, research institutes, scholarly presses and scholarly units of commercial enterprises.	Commercial enterprises.	Professional society/association; commercial enterprises
Purpose	Report on original research, experimentation, methodology, and theory. Refute / support theories of other researchers in the field.	Inform or entertain the reader, sell products, and/or promote a viewpoint.	Report on the state of a particular trade or industry - news, trends, products etc. Focus is on information for practitioners in the field - continuing professional development
Research Documentation	Footnotes and bibliographies cite the author's research.	Sources are rarely cited.	May have footnotes or bibliographies but not essential practice.

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