



Scholarly Journals, Magazines, Web Resources, and Online Research Databases

Different types of publications target different audiences and serve different purposes. A clear understanding of different types of publications can help you choose the most appropriate resources.

Scholarly Journals

Scholarly journals should be used for reliable information for research papers. They are available at the library in print format or in electronic format (databases). Here are some characteristics of scholarly journals:

- Articles are written by scholars, researchers, experts, or specialists in the field.
- Journals are published by recognized societies, professional associations, or academic institutions for a professional or academic audience.
- Articles go through a peer-review*, referee and/or an official editorial process before publication.
- Authors are identified and their credentials and affiliations are always provided in the document.
- Authors cite their sources in bibliographies and footnotes.
- Topics are focused in one academic field or discipline, usually scholarly research reports and in-depth analysis.
- Articles use jargon of the discipline.
- Journals have few or no advertisements, plain covers, and mostly black and white illustrations, charts and graphs.

Examples: *Philosophical Review*, *JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association*, *Zygon*.

* "Peer-review" refers to a process of having scholars and experts in the field review, critique and select articles for quality before they are published.

Popular Magazines

Magazines are great sources of current information. But they may not be appropriate sources for scholarly research papers. Here are some characteristics of popular magazines:

- Articles are written by journalists, staff or freelance writers.
- Published by commercial press for general audience with the purpose of informing and/or entertaining.
- There is no peer review process.
- Authors may or may not be identified and their credentials are usually not provided.
- Sources may be mentioned but are rarely formally cited in bibliographies.
- Articles cover a wide range of topics.
- Vocabulary is geared towards general audience; usually no jargon or technical language is used.
- Magazines are heavily illustrated with colorful photographs; contain numerous advertisements; and have glossy, colorful and attractive covers.

Examples: *Time*, *National Geographic*, *Popular Science*, *Readers Digest*, *Vogue*.

Web Resources

The Web is a phenomenal resource for current information. However, as there are no publication standards or anyone regulating the Internet, the quality, reliability and accountability of Web resources may be questionable and should be always be critically evaluated. Here are some general characteristics of Web pages:

- Web pages can be published by individuals (.com, .net, .org, .info), commercial bodies (.com .org), organizations (.org), educational institutions (.edu) and governments (.gov, .mil). Generally, information from government sites and educational sites are more reliable than commercial sites (.com, .net) and even some organizational sites (.org).
- Most Web pages are not reviewed. Anyone with a computer and Internet access can publish a web page regardless of the accuracy of the content and the qualifications of the author.
- The author's credentials and the sources of content are often unavailable. Even if the authorship is indicated, it is hard to authenticate.
- Many Web pages are outdated and have no publication date.
- Web pages are not published in a finalized and stable format; they can easily be edited and are transient. One may not be able to retrieve the same Web page or the same content at a later time.
- Examples of some reputable Web sites and directories: www.cdc.gov, www.howstuffworks.com, www.webopedia.com, www.findlaw.com, www.lii.org, www.ipl.org

Online Research Databases

Although accessible via the Internet, online research databases are not the same as Web resources. They are paid subscriptions of print journals in an electronic format, or e-journals. Different databases have different collections of information. They usually contain scholarly journals, magazines, newspapers, books and other publications in electronic format, often in full-text. Electronic databases allow users to search for information more effectively than print sources. In a word, online research databases are *reliable* resources.

Some databases available at Butte College Library:

- Academic Search Premier
- Access Science
- Alt HealthWatch
- America's Newspapers
- Biography in Context
- Britannica Online
- Business Source Premier
- CINAHL Plus
- CQ Press Electronic Reference Library
- College Source Web
- Country Watch
- Discovering Collection
- Ethnic News Watch
- ERIC
- FACTS.com
- Gale Virtual Reference Library
- GreenFile
- Health and Wellness Resource Center
- Health Reference Center Academic
- Health Source Academic
- JSTOR
- Literature Resource Center
- MasterFILE Premier
- MEDLINE
- Military & Government Collection
- Omnifile Full Text Select
- Oxford Art Online
- Oxford Music Online
- Professional Development Collection
- Psychology & Behavioral Sciences
- Proquest
- RAND California
- Regional Business News
- Religion and Philosophy Collection
- SIRS Knowledge Source