



ERC Quick Guide: Scholarly Journals vs. Popular Magazines

The ERC has access to thousands of **periodicals** (publications such as journals, magazines and newspapers that are issued on a regular basis - daily, weekly, monthly, etc), and sometimes it's difficult to distinguish between the various levels of scholarship within them. This table notes the differences between two basic kinds of periodicals - scholarly journals and popular magazines.

| | Scholarly Journals | Popular Magazines |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Content | Bibliographies or references are always included | Usually do NOT have bibliographies or works cited |
| Author | Articles are written by a scholar or expert in the field | Authors are often generalists |
| Language | Written in the language or jargon of the field | Written in short, simple language that is easy to understand |
| Intended Audience | Audience is the scholarly reader, such as professors, researchers, & students | Audience is the general public |
| Purpose | Main purpose is to report on original research in order to inform others in the field | Main purpose is to inform the general reader, entertain, sell products, or promote a point of view |
| Appearance | Usually have a sober, serious look | Usually slick and attractive in appearance |
| Use of graphics, pictures | Illustrations are usually limited to maps, graphs, and charts that support the text with few graphics or photographs | Lots of photographs and graphics are used to add to marketing appeal |
| Publisher | Many are published by professional organizations or academic institutions | Generally published by commercial enterprises, but some may come from professional organizations |
| Examples | <i>American Journal of Nursing</i> <i>Journal of Marriage and the Family</i> <i>Modern Fiction Studies</i> | <i>People Weekly</i> <i>Sports Illustrated</i> <i>Time</i> |

Still need help with a specific periodical title? Try these resources:

Books available in Columbus State's ERC:

Magazines for Libraries (Ref 050 M194)

Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory (Ref 050 U45)

Internet Sources:

"Distinguishing Scholarly from Non-Scholarly Journals." 14 August 2004.

<<http://www.valpo.edu/library/user/scholarly.html>>.

Engle, Michael. "Distinguishing Scholarly Journals from Other Periodicals." 8 October 2004.

<<http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill20.html>>.

Questions? Ask a Librarian!

The Educational Resources Center (ERC) at Columbus State
Columbus Hall

Reference Desk: 614.287.2460

Circulation Desk: 614.287.2464

<http://www.csc.edu/library>