

Journals, Magazines, Periodicals ... What're the Differences?

(And What Difference Does it Make?)

Periodicals are published on a fixed time schedule: daily, weekly, monthly, bimonthly, annually, etc. Here at Maag Library we subscribe to many different types of periodicals like: newspapers, proceedings from conferences, almanacs, journals, and magazines just to name a few.

Most frequently people wonder what the difference is between a journal and a magazine. Just like those in microbiology we librarians tend to try to classify things. There are actually three broad categories that we can look at: scholarly journals, trade magazines, and popular magazines.

Where it comes from makes a huge difference depending on what kind of information and how much a person seeks.

What are the differences?

Scholarly Journals:

- Author(s) are experts in a field (also referred to as scholars)
- Audience is other experts, researchers, and students
- Reviewed (scrutinized) by a panel of other scholars (peers) before being accepted for publication
- Articles typically follow a prescribed format: Abstract, Introduction, Literature Review, Method of Data Collection, Results, Analysis, and Conclusion
- Few if any advertisements
- Not intended for entertainment purposes

Trade Publications:

- Author(s) practitioners in the field
- Audience is other practitioners in the field
- No typical format or style for each article is obvious
- No formal review process
- Advertisements are for products and services that pertain specifically to the field
- Articles vary between informative and entertaining

Popular Publications:

- Author(s) are not always identified
- Audience is the general public
- No typical format or style
- No formal review process
- Advertisements tend to be numerous
- Attempts to entertain

Additional Information:

<http://library.albany.edu/divs/usered/char/index.html>