

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING INFORMATION – Print or Web or Media

	Scholarly / Peer-Reviewed	Academic (Texts or Textbooks)	Trade / Industry / Technical / Professional	Substantial News / General Interest	Popular
Audience	Audience of other scholars in the discipline or profession.	Often written by scholars for students and learners and/or a general audience.	Audience of people in a particular discipline or profession.	Educated audience with interest in the topics (not aimed at a professional or industry group).	General audience. If on the web, generally free.
Purpose	Reports or makes available original research or experimentation to other scholars.	Helps people learn about academic subjects and theories.	Helps people do their jobs better by reporting on new techniques and other news of interest to people in that profession. May include job listings and (but does not report original research). Covers information of relevance to a particular field.	Provides substantial information to an interested audience. Quality journalism strives for objectivity and balance. But publications often have a political, ideological, cultural, religious, or institutional purpose whether or not that is made clear.	Primarily entertains or tries to persuade.
Bias		Generally strives for a neutral point of view.			Main agenda may be to sell products or services.
Point of View	Sometimes scholars interpret information through a particular theory or ideological perspective or argue for their point of view, supported with evidence.				May include primarily personal opinions.
Authors	Written by scholars or researchers in a discipline or area. Author names and credentials are almost always included.	Written by scholars or researchers in the specialty.	Written by people working in a particular profession.	Written either by the magazine's staff, a scholar, or free-lance writers.	Written by the publication's staff or free-lance writers for a broad based audience.
Editors	Authors and editors have PhDs and are often affiliated with a college or university. Article or book usually published after extensive review by peers.	Editors choose qualified authors based on academic credentials.	Editors choose material and authors based on their extensive experience in the field and approve all articles.	Editors assign knowledgeable authors and approve all articles for publication.	Sometimes names are not included. Some web publications (like blogs) may not have editors who control the publication. This category may include self-published material in print or on the web with no oversight whatsoever.
Publishers	Generally published by an academic/research-oriented organization or university press	Generally published by educational publishers.	Published by an industry or professional association.	Published by commercial enterprises for profit. Occasionally published by reputable non-profits.	Published for profit or to develop a market. Individuals often publish to increase their own reputation.
Advertising	No advertising or very minimal, selective advertising.	No advertising.	Advertisements are aimed at people in that profession and include products and services of interest to them.	General advertising.	Extensive general advertising.

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Timeliness Currency	Scholarly material may have a longer life than more popular material although disciplines do change over time through scholarly debate and communication. Varies by discipline. Scientific information needs more currency than historical.	Textbooks and encyclopedias are updated often and try to remain current.	Developments in a profession change over time and these publications aim to present current developments. Older publications are good as a historical reference only.	News changes daily and the point of this information is currency. Older publications are good as a historical reference, gain insight into attitudes of a particular time period.	Popular materials change to present what's new and hot. Older publications are good as a historical reference only. For webpages, it may be difficult to find publication dates. Sometime difficult to find dates of publication on web.
Sources	Cite sources with footnotes and/or bibliography.	Cite sources with footnotes and/or bibliography.	Articles usually not footnoted.	Sometimes cites sources.	Rarely cite sources. Original sources can be obscure.
Format Graphics	Often text-based. May contain graphs, images, and charts to illustrate the articles according to disciplinary conventions, to illustrate and support the articles but usually quite plain in appearance with minimal use of color. Few scholarly/ peer reviewed publications on the web, although they are increasing.	Often text-based. Many academic publications are web-based, but some are quite expensive. Contains graphs, images, and charts according to disciplinary or field conventions to illustrate the articles.	Usually contains advertising targeted towards the specific profession. May be slick and contain advertising or not. Includes photographs, illustrations and graphics to enhance the publication.	Often slick and filled with advertising. Includes photographs, illustrations and graphics to enhance the publication. Sometimes also videos. On web, often contains moving gifs or videos.	Generally slick and bright and filled with advertising. Tries to grab attention. If print, needs to grab attention to sell on newsstand. Contains many photographs and illustrations to attract audiences. On web, often contains moving gifs or videos.
Language	Uses terminology, jargon and the language of the discipline covered. The reader is assumed to have a similar scholarly background.	Relatively free from jargon, but may explain the language of the discipline covered. Assumption is that the reader wishes to learn. Usually tries to summarize and cover the state of a discipline.	Uses terminology and jargon of the field, but are usually less formal in tone.	Uses language appropriate for an educated readership. They do not necessarily emphasize a specialty but do assume a level of basic knowledge.	Uses simple language. Articles are kept short, with little depth. Web headlines written to get clicks.
Examples Note: Sometimes information falls into more than one category.	<u>Art Journal</u> <u>TDR [The Drama Review - Journal of Performance Studies] Review</u> <u>Design Issues</u>	Encyclopedias, survey or other textbooks. But NOT Wikipedia. <u>Jansen's History of Art</u> <u>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</u>	<u>Animation Magazine</u> <u>Communication Arts</u> <u>Fine Woodworking</u>	<u>Art in America</u> <u>National Geographic</u> <u>Newsweek</u>	<u>Vogue</u> <u>People Magazine</u> <u>Huffington Post</u>