



## INTRODUCTION TO INFORMATION ANALYSIS

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### SCHOLARLY VS. POPULAR

Understanding the types of journals available is critical to any student conducting library research. Basic characteristics of both scholarly and popular journal sources are listed below:

<b>SCHOLARLY SOURCES</b>	<b>NEWS OR GENERAL INTEREST</b>	<b>POPULAR SOURCES</b>
Expert authors, academic titles	Authors may be a member of the publications editorial staff, a scholar, or a freelance writer	Authors are generalists
Include bibliographies or references to works cited	May sometimes cite sources, but generally do not	Most often do not include bibliographies
Convey complex ideas and use technical or field-specific jargon	Conveys information of a general nature	Convey more common ideas based on popular subjects, entertainment, hobbies, etc.
Articles written for other scholarly or academic audiences	Written for a broad category of interested readers, sometimes including members of professional organizations	Articles are written for the general public, often at the sixth-grade reading level
Have little or no advertising	Often have appealing illustrations	Have many glossy advertisements
Examples: <i>JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association, Journal of Gerontology, Journal of Palliative Care, Journal of Educational Psychology</i>	Examples: <i>Economist, New York Times, Catholic World, Discover</i>	Examples: <i>Time, Newsweek, US News and World Report, Rolling Stone, People Weekly, Sports Illustrated, etc.</i>



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### Evaluating Web Sites

While there is an abundance of information available on the World Wide Web, it is not always reliable or accurate. The following concepts and criteria should help Internet "explorers" evaluate Web Site information.

- You may evaluate the reliability of a site by its domain type:

<i>Domain Types – the last part of the address or URL</i>	
.gov	U.S. Government
.mil	U.S. Military
.edu	An Accredited Post-Secondary Educational Institution
.com	Commercial, For Profit Entity
.org	Non-Commercial, Not-For-Profit Entity
.net	Internet Related Computer Network
.int	International Organization
.jp, .ru, .ca, etc	Country Identifiers

- You may evaluate the reliability of a website by using the following criteria:

Authority	Is the author/organization an authority on this topic?
Accuracy	Does the information appear accurate (are they typos, misspellings, incorrect data)? Also, are the links from the primary page active or dead? Where do the links on the primary page direct you?
Objectivity	What is the motivation for creating the site? Is the information judgmental or one-sided?
Currency	When was the site last updated?
Coverage	Is the information complete, providing a thorough review of the topics or issues addressed?