

North Central College Library Services

Comparing Periodicals

Periodical literature is found in five types of publications. Knowing the type of articles for which you are looking will help you determine what databases to use.

1. **Newspapers** present current information, news and commentary, and generally have a geographic focus. Their purpose is to inform. They are usually published daily or weekly. The articles are written by reporters and staff writers and reviewed by an editor

If you are looking primarily for newspaper coverage, *Lexis-Nexis* is a good database to use. Oesterle Library subscribes to the complete historical and current archive of *The New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*.

2. **Popular Magazines** contain overview articles covering current events, and general interest topics such as travel, relationships, child-rearing, cooking, etc. Their purpose is to inform or entertain. Articles are written by staff writers or free-lance authors and are reviewed by an editor. They are aimed at a general audience. Most magazines are supported by advertising.

If you are looking primarily for popular magazine coverage, *Academic Search Premier*, is a good databases to use.

3. **Journals of Opinion** present a political viewpoint in the form of commentary on politics and society in general. Their purpose is to persuade. They can be considered a subset of popular magazines. The articles are written by staff writers or guest authors and are reviewed by an editor. They are aimed at an educated audience.

4. **Scholarly Journals** contain reports of original research and in-depth analyses of subject specific topics. These reports by scholars of their own research results are primary literature sources. Scholarly journals are very narrow in scope, frequently covering only a subset of a topic area.

Articles are refereed, or reviewed, by recognized experts in the field. Their evaluations, (based on the importance of the subject material, the originality and currency of the research, and the validity of the conclusions drawn) are used to determine which submitted articles are published. The Peer review process ensures that articles published are of the highest quality. Articles are aimed at an educated audience generally, and specifically to other scholars in the same field.

If you are looking primarily for scholarly journal coverage, *Academic Search Premier*, *JSTOR*, and *Project Muse* are good databases to start with. More in-depth coverage will be found in a subject specific database such as *ERIC* in the field of education, *PsycINFO* for psychology, etc.

5. **Trade/Professional Journals** are written for practitioners in a specific field. They contain articles about current trends and practices, new product information, etc. Articles are written by members of the profession or trade and are reviewed by editors.

If you are looking primarily for trade/professional journal coverage, *Academic Search Premier* is a good database to start with. More in-depth coverage will be found in a subject specific database such as *ERIC* in the field of education, *PsycINFO* for psychology, etc.

Examples

| Newspapers | Popular Magazines | Journals of Opinion | Scholarly Journals | Professional Journals |
|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Chicago Tribune | Ebony | Gallup Poll Monthly | American Journal of Sports Medicine | American Biology Teacher |
| Daily Herald | National Geographic | Nation | Developmental Psychology | Mathematics Teacher |
| Naperville Sun | Newsweek | National Review | History of Religions | Physics Teacher |
| New York Times | Rolling Stone | New Republic | Journal of Abnormal Psychology | Practical Accountant |
| USA Today | Sports Illustrated | Progressive | PSQ: Political Science Quarterly | Scholastic Coach & Athletic Director |