Below is a listing of general characteristics which can be used to identify differences between popular magazines, trade magazines, and scholarly journals. Some magazines and journals, however, may not meet all the criteria in any one category. Journals that are “peer reviewed” or “refereed” are also those whose articles are of sound research and high quality. If you need to verify whether a journal is refereed, consult *Ulrich’s Periodicals Directory* for that particular journal title. Also, the publications listed in many of the EBSCOHost research databases indicate whether a journal is peer reviewed.

### Popular Magazines vs Trade Magazines vs Scholarly Journals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Popular Magazines</th>
<th>Trade Magazines</th>
<th>Scholarly Journals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appearance</strong></td>
<td>Attractive appearance</td>
<td>Cover depicts industrial setting</td>
<td>Plain cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eye-catching cover</td>
<td>Pictures and illustrations in color</td>
<td>May contain graphs, charts or case studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pictures and illustrations in color</td>
<td>Glossy paper</td>
<td>Plain paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience</strong></td>
<td>Non-professionals</td>
<td>Members of a specific business, industry or organization</td>
<td>Professors, scholars, researchers, or students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General audience</td>
<td>Professional or trade-associated audiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>Personalities, news, and general interest articles</td>
<td>Industry trends, new products or techniques, and organizational news</td>
<td>Report original research, discoveries, or experimentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A wide variety of subjects</td>
<td>Articles may include industry-specific statistics</td>
<td>Publish research projects, their methodology, and significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Articles are published by professional or trade associations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Articles written by staff, may be unsigned</td>
<td>Articles written by staff or contributing authors</td>
<td>Articles written by contributing authors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advertisements</strong></td>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Few or none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All or most are trade related</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reviewers</strong></td>
<td>Reviewed by editors</td>
<td>Reviewed by editors</td>
<td>Reviewed by editors, peers, and referees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Documentation</strong></td>
<td>Few or no bibliographic references</td>
<td>May have short bibliographic references</td>
<td>Bibliographic references (footnotes, end notes, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise

Choose a popular magazine, a trade magazine, and a scholarly journal and select one article from each publication. Using the characteristics of the three publications as a guide, describe how the information is presented differently.

Title of the Popular Magazine selected: ______________________________________________________

Title of the Trade Magazine selected: ______________________________________________________

Title of the Scholarly Journal selected: ______________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Popular Magazine</th>
<th>Trade Magazine</th>
<th>Scholarly Journal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appearance:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the appearance of your publication. Are the pictures in color and pages glossy?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Audience:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the audience the general public, trade associated members, professors, scholars, or students?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Content:</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the articles signed? Are they written by staff or contributing authors? Do they include a wide variety of subjects? Do they report original research or discoveries?</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advertisements:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there little or no advertising? Is any of it trade related?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reviewers:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the articles reviewed by editors? Are they reviewed by peers or referees?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Documentation:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there few or no bibliographic references? Are there many bibliographic references?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>