Hi I’m Kimberly Wirth, a librarian at the Porter Henderson Library. Today we’re going to discuss the differences between scholarly and popular resources. Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of each will enable you to better choose more appropriate sources for your research projects.
Popular Resource

Popular resources are magazines, newspapers, and websites. They contain easy to read information written by people who are not experts on the subject in which they are writing, so their reasoning or research might be less reliable.

Scholarly Resources

Scholarly resources include journals and books that are written by scholars or other experts. They contain long sentences and a complex vocabulary that may be specific to a field of research making these sources intellectually challenging.
Some scholarly journals are also peer reviewed which means that a panel of experts approved the articles before publication. This process increases the likelihood of unbiased, accurate information.

**Different Information Needs**

Think about what you need. Are you looking for resources that delve into an innovative area of research or give you a sense of what members of the scholarly community are saying about a topic? Scholarly resources provide this type of information.

Or, are you looking for information to get a sense of a topic or to discover how the general public responds to a particular idea? Popular resources provide this type of information.
Comparing Popular and Scholarly Resources

Here are some tips to help determine whether something is popular or scholarly. We’ll start with scholarly resources.

Scholarly Resources

Scholarly resources usually have a name that’s Academic sounding. Such as:

The Journal of Acute Care Physical Therapy
Scholarly articles usually have many formal sections; like an introduction, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion.

Here's a methodology section,

the Results section,
the Discussion section,

And the conclusion.

### Comparing Popular and Scholarly Resources

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<th>Popular</th>
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<tr>
<td>Name of Publication</td>
<td>Single and memorable</td>
<td>Academic sounding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sections</td>
<td>Either simple-sounding sections or no sections</td>
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Also, scholarly resources usually provide a list of references.
And here they are.

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Scholarly resources usually use complex language

Here, you can see the author’s use of complex words like affiliation, causily, incite, and spurious.
Because this article satisfies the requirements of a scholarly publication, it’s likely to be scholarly.

### Popular Resources

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Now, let’s take a look at a popular resources. They usually have a name that’s simple sounding like People or Time.

This one is called Current Health.
Popular resources may have sections, if they do, generally they will not be as formal as scholarly sections.

In this article, we see that there are two simply named sections: who’s in charge here and what’s the big deal.

Popular resources also do not usually provide a list of references used in the writing of their articles.
If we look at the end of this article, we’ll notice that there aren’t any references.

And finally, the language used in popular resources is simple enough for a wide variety of people to understand.

Let’s zoom into the first few lines where we can get a sense of this article’s language.
Because this article satisfies all the requirements of a popular resource, I would suggest that it’s popular.

Recap

- Popular and Scholarly resources fill different information needs
- Know the differences between the two
- Popular resources provide basic information
- Scholarly resources provide more in-depth information

Popular and Scholarly resources serve different purposes and it is important to know the differences between the two.

Are you looking for information that you can quickly scan to get a sense of a topic? A popular resource would be excellent for this. Or, do you need a deeper understanding of issues related to a topic – then a scholarly resource is what you need.
This concludes the video on Popular & Scholarly Sources. Please contact us if you have any questions.

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