Popular Magazines, Scholarly or Professional Journals and Trade Journals

Understanding the Difference
Characteristics of Popular Magazines

- Aimed at a general audience
- Titles you might find at a newsstand
- Articles are usually written by professional writers or journalists
- Articles usually have no bibliography
- Published by commercial presses
- Used to inform, update, or introduce a topic to a general reader
- Examples include Time, PC Magazine, Rolling Stone, Newsweek, Jet and USA Today
Characteristics of Scholarly, Research, Professional or Peer Reviewed Journals

- Aimed at scholarly readers (researchers, professors, and students)
- Journals usually have a narrow subject focus
- Articles are written by people in the field
- Articles have references or bibliographies
- Articles are often reviewed by an author’s peers before publication (refereed)
- Often published by academic or association presses
- Often includes original research (hypothesis, literature review, methodology, data and results, discussion, and conclusion), reviews and essays
- Examples include American Historical Review, Journal of Applied Social Psychology and Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)
Characteristics of Trade Journals

- Aimed at practitioners in a particular profession, trade or industry
- Often libraries have relatively few of these – they are more likely to be found in a commercial office.
- Published by professional or trade associations
- Useful for examining issues in a particular profession or industry
- Examples are Advertising Age, Metalworking Digest, Plant Engineering, and Fuel Cell Magazine