

What is a journal?

A journal is a publication that is issued at regular intervals. It is also referred to as a magazine or periodical. Journal issues are usually published monthly, bimonthly e.g. November/December or quarterly. Due to the frequency of publication, information in journals is usually more up to date than books. Each publication is called an issue and is identified by a date or number.

Each issue contains journal articles, written by different authors and dealing with different topics. A journal article is like a chapter in an edited book.

Journals are often available in print and/or online.

There are **three basic types** of journals,

Popular journals

Trade or professional journals

Academic or scholarly journals

Popular journals contain articles on a variety of topics, written in a language and format suitable for the general public. Most have lots of glossy pictures and advertising. Articles are usually short and don't have an author or list of references.

The second type is **trade or professional journals**

Trade journals contain practical articles of interest to people working in a particular field. They contain trade related advertising, short articles and no references.

Academic or scholarly journals are important for research purposes and are written by individuals with specialist subject knowledge. Many of the assessment tasks at University will require that you use only scholarly journal articles.

Articles submitted for publication to scholarly journals are usually checked by respected authorities in the field to make sure they are of a high standard. This is what is meant by **refereed** or **peer reviewed** journal articles.

Scholarly journal articles usually *include*: **author credentials**, **abstract**, **keywords**, **extensive citations** and **references**.

Finding Journal articles on your topic.

Research databases are large collections of ejournals and their individual articles. They are organized in a way that allows them to be searched by either author, date, article title or keyword.

Each database has a different subject focus and will therefore index different journals. Some databases provide full-text, some are a mixture of full-text and abstracts while others provide only the abstract or summary. If you only find an abstract remember that the whole article might be available in a different database.

To find which database holds the full-text of a particular journal title, use a **Journal Title Search in the library catalogue**. Remember you must search for the **Journal Title**, not the article title.

If full-text is available, the Journal Title Search will provide a link to the journal title in the relevant Database. e.g. The Journal Network security opens with a direct link to the Science Direct database

Remember that a Journal Title Search cannot be used to search for articles on a particular topic. For this you must use a database.

Some databases contain only peer reviewed scholarly journals articles e.g. IEEE Xplore

Other databases are a collection of popular, trade and scholarly journals articles. e.g. ProQuest5000.

You must be selective when searching databases and evaluate everything you find.

To learn more refer to the **Finding Academic Journals guide** available from the Library Homepage under Resources by Topic / Academic journals