

Popular, Scholarly, and Trade Sources

Criteria	Popular	Scholarly	Trade
Purpose (Intent)	To inform, entertain, or persuade about current events or popular opinion and to make money	To inform, report, or make available original research, promote scholarly communication, or advance knowledge	To provide news, trends, or practical information or examine problems or concerns in a particular field, trade, or industry
Audience	General public	Scholars, researchers, and students of specific discipline or field	Practitioners of a particular field, trade, or industry
Creator	Professional writers, journalists, freelance writers or creators that deal with a variety of topics regularly	Scholars or researchers with extensive credentials and experience in the specific discipline or field and usually associated with a university or other organization	Professionals or freelance writers or creators with experience in a particular field, trade, or industry
Language (Tone)	Entertaining, non-technical language	Specialized terminology or jargon from the specific discipline or field	Specialized terminology or jargon in the field or industry
Reference	Sources rarely cited	Sources always cited	Sources occasionally, but not usually cited
Accountability	Content not evaluated by experts in the field; often published or produced by commercial organizations	Usually reviewed and critically evaluated by a subject expert or board of subject experts (peer review); published or produced by a scholarly organization or society (university, association, commercial enterprise, etc.)	Content may be evaluated by experts in the field; often published or produced by a trade association