

# Trade Publications

Many industries, businesses, and organizations have one or more publications that address practical concerns of people in a profession. This may include news specific to the profession, reports on major developments in the field, targeted advertising, or information about new technologies, regulations, or changes in the field.

## Author, Audience, and Purpose

Authors include journalists, professional writers, marketers, industry insiders, and spokespeople.

The audiences addressed are typically professionals working for the covered business, industry, or organization.

The purpose is generally to inform professionals about developments in their field.

## Reliability

Trade journals are often published as a form of marketing or targeted advertising and usually reflect the norms, biases, or ideologies that circulate within a given profession. It may be difficult to differentiate between advertising and content. Even so, they often include insider accounts or representation of a profession and its practices.

## Uses in the Research Process

Trade journals can sometimes give insight into the particular jargon or terminology used by professionals in a field. This can be helpful when gathering a list of keywords for future searches. Trade journals can also provide information on how the state of scholarly knowledge affects everyday practical concerns in the field. Occasionally, trade journals can be primary sources.

### Examples:

- *APA Monitor*
- *College & Research Library News*
- *Construction Today*
- *Columbia Journalism Review*
- *Bar Journal*
- *Law Officer Magazine*

## Tips for Identifying Trade Publications

- **Publication name:** Trade journals usually clearly identify the profession they address in the title.
- **Publication type:** Printed trade journals often have glossy pages and/or many full-color illustrations. They generally have advertisements relevant to professionals in the field.
- **Genre:** The writing is often more informal than in scholarly writing. There may be citations or references, but there are generally fewer than in scholarly writing. The articles rarely provide a formal report on original research and consequently lack a thorough literature review, methods section, etc.
- **Language:** These sources are usually written with language specific to professionals in the field.
- **Editorial oversight:** Usually the main consideration for editors of trade publications is relevance to professionals in the field; however, there is some variation. Editorial process details may be found by searching the publication on the internet.

## How to Find Trade Publications

Subject-specific databases often provide trade publication articles. Typically, you can filter these results by using the source or publication type limits.

