

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. Trade publications often use the specialized vocabulary of the profession they serve.

Author, Audience, 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. Trade publications also often offer a platform for targeted advertising, and it can be difficult to differentiate between advertising and content.

Examples

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

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. 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 every day practical concerns in the field. Occasionally, trade journals can be primary sources.

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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.

How do I Find Trade Publications?

Subject-, field-, and discipline-specific databases like *EBSCO Business Source Complete* often provide trade sources alongside popular press and scholarly sources. You can find the names of publications associated with a specific organization using *Associations Unlimited*, available through the library databases portal.

Language

- These sources are usually written with language specific to professionals in the field.

Editorial Oversight

- Usually the main consideration of editors for trade journals is whether an article will be of interest to professionals in the field. There is some variation in this, however. Information about the editorial process can be found by googling the publication.