Kinds of Information

Information is created to deliver a message, and we all receive many different types of messages each day, in many different formats. This chapter will provide an overview of these messages, their purposes, and how they are packaged.

**SHORT FORMATS**

Some of the messages we receive every day are very short. They are intended to convey an idea or reaction through a word or few words, or through an image. Examples of short formats are things like lapel pins, mottos or slogans, logos, brands, tweets, artifacts, and banners or billboards.

A **logo** is sometimes meant to get people to associate an image with a company or brand. If a logo is successful, consumer recognition will become automatic. For example, when one sees the yellow double arches, they think of McDonald’s. The white apple symbol is associated with Apple Computers, and the “swoosh” is associated with Nike products. A **motto** or **slogan** is intended to make a statement of belief or expectation, yet these too conjure images in people’s minds. For example, McDonald’s uses the motto “I’m lovin’ it,” and KFC uses the motto “Finger Lickin’ Good.” Others, such as Ford’s “Quality is job one” or IBM’s “Think” send a message to both company employees and consumers.

Another type of short format information can be found on Twitter, an electronic messaging service that allows a user to send short messages called **tweets** to their followers -- other users who subscribe to receive their tweets. The purpose of a tweet is to send a brief message to a select group of people quickly. This type of message is not very detailed (140 characters or less) but is meant to provide brief information, updates, or promote awareness.

**Artifacts** are physical things that people use for research, like fossils, furniture, coins, plant or animal specimens, tools, and clothing. Others include works of art (e.g., paintings or sculpture) or architecture (e.g., buildings), or musical instruments.

**LONG FORMATS**

When one needs to convey more information than is possible in a tweet or a motto, there are many options, including books, newspapers, magazines, journals, blogs, websites, and web pages.
BOOKS

Books have been around for centuries. Materials in the books category include print, electronic, and audio books. They can be found in library databases, online search engines, through physical and online stores like Barnes and Noble or Amazon.com, and on websites like Project Gutenberg. Books are cited differently, depending on where you find them and how much of them you are using (e.g., the whole book or a single chapter).

Typically, books take several years to create and are not published on a regular schedule. Scholarly books will often require a proposal, research, synthesis, and editing before being published. They will often contain extensive bibliographies which will provide additional sources of information. Popular books, on the other hand, can be rushed into publication because they aren’t carefully researched and represent a quick profit (such as unauthorized celebrity biographies). While they might be good sources for topic ideas, they are usually not appropriate for most research topics.

Books are great for a broad overview of a topic and are more comprehensive in their coverage. Because of their length, they can explore more aspects of an issue in greater detail. One disadvantage of books is that they are not a good source for current events since they take so long to be published. Also, because of their length, they typically take significantly longer to read than articles.

PERIODICALS

Newspapers are designed to provide current news, and may be found in print, in library databases, or on the Web, and help make up the category of sources called periodicals, so named for the way they are published periodically, such as daily, weekly, or biweekly. Some are broad-based sources of information, while others are specialized, providing news of a particular geographic locale, political party, or subject category. They are typically good sources for local interest issues. Content found in newspapers is written by reporters or journalists.

Magazines are similar in that they are periodical publications written for the general public. Some are more news-focused, and some are more entertainment-focused. Both newspapers and magazines are controlled by organizations, usually for-profit, who produce the information for the general public or for specific groups of people. The organization hires people to do the writing and to publish the information according to specific standards set by the organization for content and style; information is filtered and selected by the organization. The quality of these publications varies from poor (sensational magazines like National Enquirer) to substantive sources, such as The Economist.
Scholarly journals are written by experts in specific fields, and target a specific discipline. Many -- but not all -- are peer-reviewed, meaning other experts in the field review the articles before they are published. Scholarly journals are also a type of periodical publication, but they are typically published less frequently than newspapers or magazines, such as monthly or quarterly, so they are not the best format for very current information. The language is typically very dense, and they are difficult to understand unless you are a scholar or expert in the field. They are often extremely expensive. Bonnie Swoger, a Science and Technology Librarian at a small public undergraduate institution in upstate New York, published a blog that discussed a library session for biology students where she noted that “You can get a year of People for just $100, or a year of Scientific American for only $25... [but] a library subscription to the Journal of Co-ordination Chemistry (24 issues per year) costs $11,367 per year.” The expense of these publications limits access for many people, which is paving the way for the open access movement, which is discussed in Chapter 6.

BROCHURES

A brochure would appear to fit into the “short format” category, but actually delivers much more information than could be contained in a logo or a tweet. Think about all of the information you might find in a travel brochure to visit a foreign country. There could be information on weather, safety, traveling via plane or boat, leisure activities, culture, cuisine, hotels, car rental, pictures of tourist destinations, etc. While much shorter than a travel book, there is enough information presented in this small source to give people a good idea of whether they might want to travel there or not. While some brochures are designed to be informative, others are designed to sell or advertise.

BLOGS

A blog, or weblog, is found on the Web and usually provides commentary on a specific topic, though some more closely resemble diaries. Blog posts are usually displayed in reverse chronological order. Most were published by individuals, though more recently, “multi-author blogs” (MAB) have become popular. These are written, and sometimes edited, by groups such as news outlets, advocacy groups, educational institutions, think tanks, etc. Many blog entries include text, images, and links to other sources, and readers are able to publicly comment on their contents. Social news sites, such as Reddit, allow readers to interact by voting for articles and commenting on them.
WIKIS

Wikis differ from blogs in that they allow users to change the content of the wiki pages, not just to post comments about the content. Wikis such as Wikipedia can be publicly accessed and edited by any user, but wiki software can also be used to support more private collaboration projects, where only members of the group can see and edit the wiki content. Most wikis are a bit like a user-created and user-edited encyclopedia, where the content may be general, such as Wikipedia, or subject-specific, like the Harry Potter Wiki that can be found at https://harrypotter.fandom.com/wiki/Main_Page, which focuses on information about the imaginary world of wizards created by author J. K. Rowling.

WEB PAGES/WEBSITES

Most people have used the Web for research at one time or another. One of its strengths is the ability to explore a particular topic by clicking through links from one web page to another, or from website to website. The Web often provides immediate access to breaking stories that will normally take a day to appear in newspapers. In addition, it provides information on almost any topic, and coverage from a variety of perspectives.

Obviously, the quality of the information you find on the Web varies widely; it can be difficult to verify the credibility of a particular site. In addition, the Web is not organized; pages may not be archived or preserved, and what you find today might not be there tomorrow. Many pages include advertising which can lead to bias, and some information on the Web may require a subscription or fee to access.

When you do a search using Google or some other search engine, you’ll typically get some combination of websites and web pages. Typically, a website consists of many pages that are related, usually because of content or purpose. These pages can generally be accessed from the home page of the website through a series of menus and/or links. For example, the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke has a large website found at: https://www.ninds.nih.gov. Their home page allows you to search for a specific topic related to neurological disorders such as epilepsy (https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/All-Disorders/Epilepsy-Information-Page). Or, you can search their A to Z index of disorders or use any of their other links to connect to specific pages.

On occasion, it may be appropriate to cite an entire website. However, you generally want to use the most specific information for your research, so web pages are the ones most often cited. Using the previous example, instead of citing the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke website: https://www.ninds.nih.gov you would cite their Epilepsy page: https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/All-Disorders/Epilepsy-Information-Page. One way to distinguish between websites and web pages is to think of websites as a book, with web pages being pages in that book.
REFERENCE SOURCES

Think of reference sources as sources you refer to rather than read cover to cover -- hence the name “reference.” These sources generally summarize topics or assist in finding secondary literature. Their purpose is to provide background information, short answers to simple questions, or to help you find other sources. They are also great for quick facts, statistics, or contact information, and can be very useful for learning specific vocabulary. Many contain great bibliographies for further reading or additional sources on your topic.

In short, they can be a great starting point for research. After doing a little reading about a topic in an encyclopedia or other reference source, you should have a better idea of how to focus your topic and where to look for further information.

Most print reference sources cannot be checked out from the library. However, online reference sources are available on the library’s website and can be accessed from home, though some require that you be affiliated with the university. Following is a list of the most common types of reference sources, and examples of each:

**Dictionaries** define words and illustrate pronunciation. They are also used to find out how words are used, help to locate synonyms and antonyms, and trace the origin of words. Examples of general dictionaries include *Webster’s Dictionary* and the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which is also available online: [https://www.oed.com](https://www.oed.com). Examples of subject-specific dictionaries include *Dictionary of Music Education* and the *Dictionary of Soil Science*. An online example is the *Dictionary of Slang* located at: [http://www.peevish.co.uk/slang/](http://www.peevish.co.uk/slang/)

**Bibliographies** provide lists of literature on a specific subject or by a specific author. One example is the *Bibliography of American Literature*.

**Concordances** are alphabetical listings of keywords or phrases found in work of an author or work in a collection of writings. Examples are the *Concordance of Federal Legislation* and the *Topical Bible Concordance*.

**Biographies** are sources of information about the lives of people. Examples are the *Twentieth-Century British Humorists* and *Who’s Who in America*. An example of an online biographical reference source is *Biography.com* located at: [https://www.biography.com/](https://www.biography.com/)
Almanacs are typically single-volume works with statistics and a compilation of specific facts. Examples include The World Almanac and Book of Facts and Information Please Almanac. Information Please is also available online: https://www.infoplease.com/

Directories list contact information for individuals, companies, organizations, and institutions. Examples include the Directory of Corporate Affiliations and the Encyclopedia of Associations.

Encyclopedias cover topics in a comprehensive, but summary fashion. They are useful for providing facts and giving a broad survey of a topic, and are often written by specialists. While encyclopedias are for good for background information to lay the groundwork for understanding a topic, they are not typically cited as sources in a college-level research paper. Typically, if students want to use encyclopedias, they should use specialized encyclopedias that go more in-depth. Examples include general encyclopedias, such as the World Book Encyclopedia or Encyclopedia.com located at: https://www.encyclopedia.com/, and subject-specific encyclopedias, such as the Encyclopedia of Education or the Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Education.

Manuals provide “how to” information, such as how to write a correct citation. An example is the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition.

Handbooks treat one broad subject in brief, or give a brief survey of a subject. They may also include directions or examples. Examples are the Handbook of American Popular Culture and the Business Plans Handbook.
Guidebooks provide detailed descriptions of places, and are intended for travelers. They often include both maps and geographical facts. One example is the *Hiker’s Guide to Utah*.

Atlases are books of maps and geographical information -- not just maps showing how to get from A to B, but also maps that show climate, crops, population, etc. Examples are the *World Atlas of Military History* and *Atlas of the Great Plains*. The *Census Atlas of the United States* is available online at: [https://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/censusatlas/](https://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/censusatlas/)

Gazetteers are dictionaries of geographical places. Examples include the *Historical Gazetteer of the United States* and the *Utah Atlas & Gazetteer*.

**CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS/RESEARCH REPORTS**

Researchers present papers at conferences that describe research they are doing. These papers are often published in a volume called a conference proceeding. This information is sometimes -- but not always -- published in scholarly journals, but this process can take months. Sometimes proceedings are treated like an individual book. Other times, conferences that occur every year are treated like journals, so instead of a single record for each conference, there is a single record (usually in the library catalog) for all of the years of that conference's proceedings. Sometimes conference papers are not published at all, and may only be available from the authors, which means they can be difficult to find.

**MULTI-FORMAT INFORMATION**

Much of the information available today is available in several formats. Books are the most obvious example. A single book can be published in print, as an audio book, and available electronically through library databases, the free Web, or via *Kindle* or *Nook*. Articles are similar. These can be available in print, via a subscription library database, or freely available on the Web. One caveat to these is that sometimes, the version you might find for free could be different than the one that is offered through a subscription service.

One of the advantages to multi-format sources is that users can choose their preferred method of viewing. For example, this textbook, available for free on the Stewart Library website, can be downloaded in PDF format and viewed on a large screen computer, an iPad, or a phone. Readers may also choose to print out sections or check out a bound “book” copy from the library’s reserve collection. While some like the feel of an actual print book, others prefer to read online; some online readers are comfortable reading on a small phone screen, while others prefer to sit in front of a large monitor to view the content.
Visual formats include videos, online games, documentaries, speeches, songs, movies, plays, photographs, paintings, pictures/illustrations, and even numerical information in the form of charts, graphs, diagrams, word clouds, tables, or infographics. Visual information has the ability to tell a story, explain a concept, or stimulate an emotion. Social media and social photo- and video-sharing websites, such as YouTube, Flickr, and Vimeo, allow viewers to interact by sharing photos or videos and commenting on user submissions. As with all information, it is very important to consider the source of the information and to cite these sources when you use them.

Visual information does have some caveats. First, people may see different things when viewing images. Critical pieces of the image could be ignored or missed, and people with different backgrounds and experiences may have different perspectives. Second, images will sometimes appear very different depending on whether they are viewed in person, in a high quality print publication, on a computer, or on a small device such as a cell phone. In other words, different devices can change the message. Third, statistics presented in visual form, such as charts, graphs, or infographics, can distort or misrepresent what the numbers are actually telling you. Sometimes this is deliberate, and sometimes people just don’t understand the data. For example, a vertical scale can be too big or too small, skip numbers, or not start at zero. Other times the graph is labeled incorrectly or data is simply left out.

Take a look at these two graphs. Though the numbers are exactly the same (X=75, Y=58, Z=54), the way each graph presents them makes a very different impression. The chart on the right implies that X is three times as great as Y, and nearly six times as great as Z. However, note that the vertical axis of that chart starts at 50, and goes up by increments of 4, making X, Y, and Z look farther apart, while the vertical axis of the chart on the left starts at 0, and rises by increments of 20, more accurately depicting the relationship between X, Y, and Z.
Sometimes, when you are given an assignment, you will be required to use a specific type of source. The previous section discussed formats of information, which tells you what it is (a book, an article, a web page, a blog, etc.). The type of source describes what kind of source it is.

**PRIMARY & SECONDARY**

At some point you may have a professor who requires you to find primary research articles. How can you know if you’ve found the right kind of source for the assignment? Think of **primary sources** as first-hand accounts or reports written by the person or people who experienced the event. A primary research article will be one in which the authors of the article are the same people who conducted the research, analyzed the results, formed some conclusions, and reported their findings and methodology in the article. Primary sources may also include such things as diaries and journals, autobiographies, case studies, memos, photographs, fiction novels, and eyewitness newspaper articles written at the time of the reported event.

**Secondary sources** review and summarize the research conducted by others. Articles in which the authors study and analyze past events they did not experience themselves are also considered to be secondary sources. Other examples of secondary sources include encyclopedia articles, biographies written by someone other than the subject, scientific literature reviews on a topic, and textbooks.

**SCHOLARLY, POPULAR, & TRADE**

For college level work, you will often be required to use academic (**scholarly**) sources, though sometimes it might be okay to use **popular** sources and/or **trade** publications. While there are general characteristics that can be used to distinguish each type of source from the other (see next page), it is important to remember that many sources will not match all of the characteristics of a particular source type. For example, *Scientific American* has glossy pages and color pictures, but includes scholarly articles as well as those geared toward a more general audience. The *American Journal of Nursing* is a glossy trade publication that includes both popular and scholarly articles written for those in the nursing profession.

It is important to point out that the table following is focused primarily on articles. Other formats such as books, videos, and websites may also be classified as scholarly, popular, and/or trade. These are just general guidelines.
POPULAR

Authors of popular sources can be freelance writers, journalists, staff members, and occasionally scholars. Their credentials are usually not provided. Sometimes articles written in popular sources are unsigned. Content in these publications is usually wide-ranging and covers many topics, although some may focus on news or current events, and others on how-to or “DIY” tips, and yet others on a limited topic, such as sports or cooking. The intended audience for these publications is usually nonprofessionals or the general public. Some are intended for a more educated readership, but still a general audience. Advertising for these publications is usually fairly heavy, including glossy photos and the like, and the type of advertising depends on the magazine and its intended audience. Their purpose is to make money, to provide general interest information to a wide audience, to entertain, to sell advertising, products, and subscriptions, or to promote a particular viewpoint. With regard to accountability (quality control), these typically undergo editorial review. Some may use unidentified sources or may give “suggested readings” list, but won’t have a formal bibliography or footnotes. These are usually published by commercial presses and specific interest groups.

SUBSTANTIVE

Publications that fall under this category are still considered popular, meaning they are not scholarly, but articles are generally of a higher quality than those in a typical popular source, putting them into something of a “gray area” between the two. Terms used in these publications may be more sophisticated than you might find in People Magazine or Better Homes and Gardens, and may even report on others’ discoveries or progress in research. Examples that fall under this category might include National Geographic, Science Magazine, and Time Magazine.

SCHOLARLY

Authors of scholarly sources are typically experts, scholars, researchers, or authorities in their field. Their credentials are almost always provided. The intended audience for these publications includes researchers, scholars, experts, professionals, and the college and university community. Content in these publications typically covers a a single discipline, and may include original research, meta-analysis, literature reviews, or theoretical discussion of a specific topic. Articles in scholarly publications usually include both abstracts and extensive references to sources cited, as well as extensive use of jargon and the terminology of the discipline. There is typically very little, if any, advertising. There may be a few ads for conferences, job openings, and professional publications and journals, or for very specific items related to that field of study. Their purpose is to contribute to the scholarly conversation by exploring theories, presenting new ideas, inviting discussion, and generally add to the body of research and guide future research in a particular discipline. With regard to accountability, scholarly sources also undergo an editorial review, but some (not all) are also subject to an additional quality control process called peer review.

TRADE

Authors of articles from trade publications may be field or industry specialists (like substantive publications), staff writers with expertise (like popular publications), and occasionally, scholars that work in that field (like scholarly publications). Their credentials are usually provided (like scholarly), but not always (like popular or substantive). The intended audience includes people in specific trades, industries, or professions, or employment seekers in specific industries. Content in these publications may include industry trends, new products or techniques, organizational news/industry forecasts, or job openings in that profession. Language may exhibit extensive use of jargon and terminology of the industry or trade (like scholarly). These publications may include original and/or industry related research (like scholarly). There is typically a moderate amount of advertising. Most or all ads are trade related and directed to specific industries and professions. Their purpose is to provide industry news, contacts, and updates, and to keep trade professionals informed, and to contribute practical knowledge to industry professionals or practitioners. With regard to accountability, articles typically undergo an editorial review by those in the field (like substantive or scholarly). Articles may have a limited reference list or bibliography (like substantive or scholarly), and these are usually published by trade or professional associations, corporate or commercial presses. As demonstrated here, trade publications can have characteristics seen in all three types of sources: popular, substantive, or scholarly.

Examples of popular/substantive trade publications include Architecture Today, Pharmacy Times, or The Economist. Examples of scholarly trade publications include the Journal of Academic Librarianship or the Journal of Educational Computing Research.
In the next section we describe popular and scholarly resources a bit more, and how to tell the difference, but first, a note about trade publications: The term "trade" refers to a job or field of work, and when used to describe a resource, it generally refers to an entire publication (not just an article) written about a particular trade. Articles in trade publications are typically written by practitioners, for practitioners -- that is, they are written by people practicing their trade, for other people practicing their trade.

A single trade publication may include some popular articles and some scholarly articles, or it may tend toward one or the other. However, it is important to evaluate each article on its own merits to determine whether it is popular or scholarly, rather than assuming a trade publication includes only one or the other. They may share general news, trends, practical advice, opinions, or research. Authors may be PhDs using sophisticated language, practitioners using the jargon of the field, or editorial staff using layman’s terms. Some articles may provide authors’ credentials and lists of references, while others may include only one or the other, or neither. Some trade publications have a glossy look, like a magazine, and some look more like a traditional journal. In fact, some people call them either "trade magazines" or "trade journals."

The bottom line is that if something is trade, then the article could be trade-popular or trade-scholarly. If you’re not sure whether your resource is a trade publication, the title may give you a clue: Middle School Teacher is written for middle school teachers, Advertising Age is written for people in the advertising field, and Pharmacy Times is written for people working in pharmacies or the pharmaceutical industry.
DETERMINING WHAT TYPE OF SOURCE YOU HAVE

Don't confuse primary and secondary sources with popular and scholarly sources. Think of **primary and secondary** sources in terms of the **author** -- did the author experience the event they are writing about or write with first-hand knowledge of research they conducted?

Think of **popular and scholarly** sources in terms of the **audience and content**. An article which reviews and summarizes a large number of research studies would be a secondary source. If that article was written for scholars or researchers in a field and listed numerous references, it would be a scholarly secondary source. If that article was written for the general public, it would be a popular secondary source.

Another misconception is that scholarly sources are better than popular sources. Sometimes that’s true, but not always. Popular just means it was written in such a way that most readers can understand it. For example, an article titled “Fossil Moon,” published in the October 2017 issue of *Scientific American*, discussed a study about oxygen that comes from Earth to the moon. The gist of the article was that studying lunar soil could tell us more about Earth’s atmospheric history. This brief two-page summary was written in language that is comprehensible to an educated lay reader. In contrast, the actual study, published in January of 2017 in *Nature Astronomy*, is the in-depth scholarly article with complicated jargon and a lengthy bibliography. Both talk about the same thing, but one is a shorter easy-to-understand summary, while the other is a lengthy complicated piece.

Following are a few more examples:

**SECONDARY & SCHOLARLY ARTICLE**

This article is a literature review (secondary) on fish stranding, which was published in a peer-reviewed (scholarly) journal.

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*Journal of Environmental Management*

**Volume 103, 30 July 2012, Pages 133-141**

**Fish stranding in freshwater systems: Sources, consequences, and mitigation**

Alexander Nagrodski A A, Graham D. Raby, Caleb T. Hasler, Mark K. Taylor, Steven J. Cooke

[Show more](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2012.03.007)

Abstract

Fish can become stranded when water levels decrease, often rapidly, as a result of anthropogenic (e.g., canal drawdown, hydropowering, vessel wakes) and natural (e.g., floods, drought, winter ice dynamics) events. We summarize existing research on stranding of fish in freshwater, discuss the sources, consequences, and mitigation options for stranding, and report current knowledge gaps. Our literature review
PRIMARY & TRADE ARTICLE

This article has practical advice for individuals in the field of librarianship, which makes this a trade publication. However, it is also a report on original research, which makes it a primary source.

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR ACADEMIC VIDEO GAME COLLECTIONS: STRATEGIES FOR ACQUIRING, SUPPORTING, AND MANAGING ONLINE MATERIALS

Diane Robson & Patrick Durkee

Abstract

The work of collection development in academic video game collections is at a crucial point of transformation—gaming librarians are ready to expand beyond console games collected in disc and cartridge format to the world of Internet games. At the same time, forms and genres of video games such as serious and independent games are increasingly important to university instruction and curricula, and the move to online gaming allows university and college libraries to give campus communities access to them. This essay reviews the most significant LIS literature.

PRIMARY & SCHOLARLY ARTICLE

This is a report on research done by the authors. It is published in the Journal Marine Micropaleontology, which is a scholarly peer-reviewed journal. Since the authors conducted the research themselves, this is considered primary.

HOLOTYPES IN THE TAXONOMY OF PLANKTONIC FORAMINIFERAL MORPHOSPECIES

George H. Scott

Abstract

The claim that holotypes serve as exemplars of morphology is examined in the context of planktonic foraminiferal taxonomy. A review of some species described.
**PRIMARY & POPULAR BOOK**

*Eat Pray Love* is a **primary** and **popular** book. This book is a memoir (primary) written for the general public (popular).

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**PRIMARY & POPULAR WEB PAGE**

**Eyewitness report - inside the wreckage of Japan's Fukushima nuclear reactor**

Japan’s stricken Fukushima nuclear plant has opened its doors to reporting for the first time since the March 11 earthquake. Martin Fackler of the New York Times sent this pooled dispatch.

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**This web page presents an eyewitness (primary) newspaper account (popular) of a nuclear power plant disaster in Japan.**

SECONDARY AND SCHOLARLY BOOKS

Both of these books are secondary and scholarly. *Dividing the Spoils* is a history book on the Egyptians with footnotes and a bibliography. *The Dust Bowl*, which covers the 1930’s environmental disaster in the Southern Great Plains of the US, also has an extensive bibliography. The language used is suited to an educated audience, and the author is Hall Distinguished Professor of American History at the University of Kansas.

SECONDARY AND POPULAR BOOK

This book, written for the general public (popular), pulled information from many sources (secondary), including interviews with survivors, to present an account of the “Great American Dust Bowl.”
SECONDARY AND TRADE BOOK

This is a book that gives instruction on how to create a business plan. This source took information from a number of other sources (secondary) and the intended audience is small business owners or entrepreneurs (trade).

PRIMARY AND POPULAR BOOK

Works of fiction, such as *To Kill a Mockingbird*, are considered primary sources. This book is the fictional creation of an author (primary) and is written for the general public (popular).
PRIMARY AND NEITHER POPULAR OR SCHOLARLY

Some sources, such as interviews, diaries, and photographs are primary sources if they are created at the time of the event, but aren’t considered either popular or scholarly. The photo below depicts a farm house in Dalhart, Texas surrounded by sand dunes.

Dust Bowl Farm 1938. Photo by Dorothea Lange

A NOTE ABOUT SCHOLARLY & PEER REVIEW

The vast majority of scholarly articles are also peer-reviewed, so the terms are often used interchangeably. However, they do not mean the same thing. As noted previously, a publication is regarded as scholarly if it is authored by experts, for experts. Its focus is academic, often reporting original research (experimentation) or theory. Publishers of scholarly works are typically professional associations or academic presses. That said, while it can be safely assumed that all peer-reviewed articles are scholarly, not all scholarly articles are peer-reviewed.

Peer-reviewed articles, in addition to being written by experts and published in scholarly journals, must also go through a rigorous assessment prior to publication. They are examined and evaluated by the author’s peers (experts in the same subject area), who may make recommendations to improve the quality of the article or even recommend against its being published if it is not up to the standard expected. In some cases, the review is a “blind” or “double-blind” peer review -- in these cases, the reviewers don't know who wrote the article, the author doesn't know who reviewed it, or both. Peer-reviewed periodicals publish articles only if they have passed through this official editorial process. The peer review and evaluation system is intended to safeguard, maintain, and improve the quality of the scholarly articles that are published in academic journals.