



Types of Information



Person 1: There's so much information around. I'm not sure what I can use in my assignments...

Speaker 2: It helps to think about information as falling into four broad categories: scholarly, professional, popular and social.



Speaker 1: My lecturer said I needed to use scholarly information for my assignment. What does that mean?

Speaker 2: Well, a publication is scholarly when it is written by an academic for an academic audience.

Speaker 1: So how can I tell if something is scholarly or not?

Speaker 2: Scholarly information is evidence-based and includes a bibliography or list of references. Scholarly information is often peer-reviewed.

Speaker 1: What is peer-reviewed?

Speaker 2: Peer-review is an editorial process which helps to determine an academic paper's suitability for publication. Prior to publication, an article is sent to other experts in the field who read and assess the research. For scientific papers, the author must include their data and methodology.

Speaker 1: Where can I find scholarly information?

Speaker 2: You can find the latest research in journals. Books are also a good source of scholarly information. You can use Summon or one of the library's databases to find scholarly material.

Scholarly information

- written by scholars, academics or researchers
- written for an academic audience
- includes a list of references or bibliography
- has a rigorous publication process and may be peer-reviewed.

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Scholarly information is...

- written by scholars, academics or researchers
- written for an academic audience
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- has a rigorous publication process and may be peer-reviewed.

So what is professional information?

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Speaker 1: What is professional information?

Speaker 2: This is information aimed at a professional audience which communicates some aspect profession-related issues, developments or knowledge.

Speaker 1: So how do I know if a journal article or book is professional information or not?

Speaker 2: Well, often professional information is published by a professional body or peak organisation. It is usually more practical than scholarly information – it can be technical or just of general interest to the profession.

Professional information is also not necessarily research-based so it doesn't always contain references or a bibliography.

Speaker 1: Where can I find it?

Speaker 2: You can find it on the websites of professional organisations, government websites, in professional or trade journals and conference proceedings.



Professional information is...

- written by a professional for other professionals
- published in professional journals, trade journals and websites
- emphasis is placed on profession-related issues or concerns
- has a less rigorous publication process and is not necessarily peer-reviewed

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Professional information is...

- written by professionals for a professional audience
- published in professional journals, trade journal and websites
- emphasis is placed on profession-related issues or concerns
- has a less rigorous publication process and is not necessarily peer-reviewed



Person 1: Is information from newspapers and magazines scholarly?

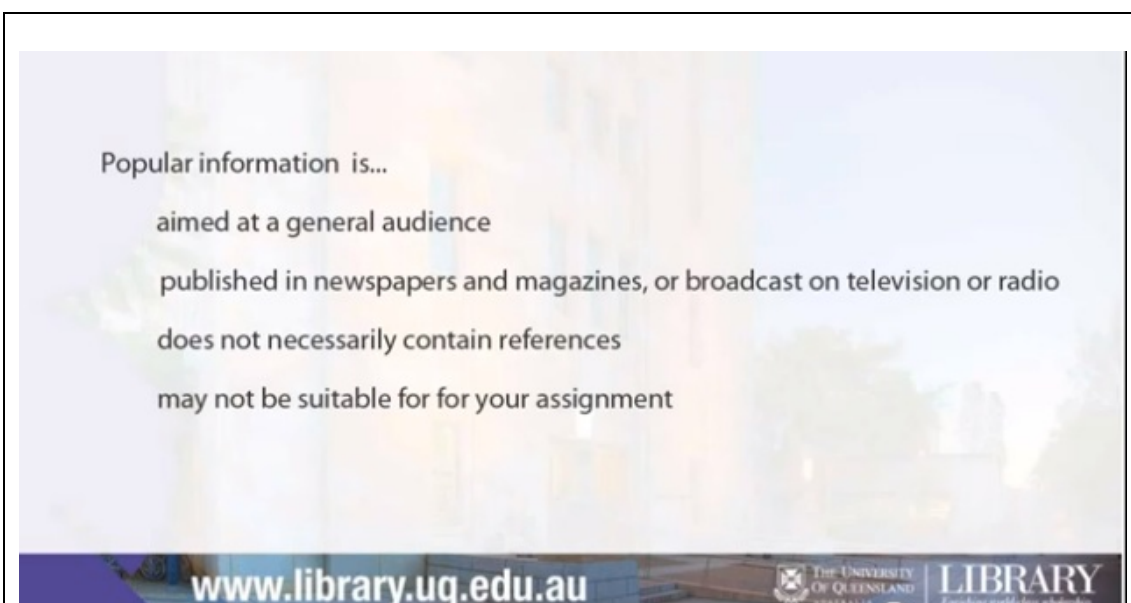
Person 2: This is considered popular information as it covers topics of general interest and is written for a general audience not an academic one.

Person 1: What about a science magazine like National Geographic?

Person 2: Some magazines like National Geographic repackage scholarly information, however, they don't include all the research data and references.

Person 1: What about websites?

Person 2: You may be able to use this information, but once again, check your assignment task description.



Popular information is...

- written for a general audience
- published in newspapers, magazines or broadcast on television or radio
- will not necessarily contain references
- may not be suitable for your assignment.



Person 1: What about blogs, tweets, Facebook posts or conversations?

Person 2: This information is considered to be social information. Social Information is communicated through social networks, either online or verbally.

Person 1: Can I use it in my assignment?

Person 2: It's important to check your assignment task description. For some assignments it might be ok. The key is to determine the type of information you require for your research, how to find it, evaluate it and use it.



Social information is...

- a product of personal conversations or social media.
- is not formally published or peer-reviewed
- may not be suitable for your assignment



For more information, visit the Library website.

