Scholarly Journal or Magazine?

The distinction between scholarly journals and magazines is not always clear-cut. Not all journals have all of the characteristics listed below, and some magazines have some journal-like features. The chart below lists some of the most common characteristics of both.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Scholarly Journals</th>
<th>Magazines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To expand the current knowledge in a discipline</td>
<td>To entertain and inform; to make money for the publisher</td>
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</table>
| Authors        | • Written by experts in the field such as college professors, research scientists, doctors, lawyers, and graduate students.  
• Authors credentials generally given | • Written by the magazines editorial staff, journalists and freelance writers  
• Author’s name may not be given  
• Author’s credentials rarely stated |
| Audience:      | Scholars, professionals, and students                                             | General public or a specific group of consumers, such as computer users, African-American women or collectors of comic books |
| Appearance     | • Covers are straightforward and vary little from issue to issue                  | • Eye-catching covers;  
• Glossy paper;  
• Lots of color pictures  
• Many advertisements.  
• Designed for visual appeal |
| Frequency      | Usually quarterly or monthly                                                      | Most often weekly, biweekly, or monthly                                    |
| Article selection | Articles are read and approved *(peer-reviewed or refereed)* by a panel of experts | • Articles are selected by the editorial staff of the magazine.  
• Articles are not peer-reviewed or evaluated by experts. |
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| Article Characteristics  | • Uses specialized language (jargon) of the discipline and assumes knowledge of the field  
• Lengthy articles  
• Journal articles generally include most or all of the following:  
  • Article title  
  • Author and his/her affiliation  
  • Abstract  
  • Problem / Hypothesis  
  • Method / Procedures  
  • Data analysis and results  
  • Discussion, conclusions and interpretation  
  • Limitations  
  • Implications / Further research  
  • Includes a list of works cited (bibliography) and/or footnotes | • No abstracts  
• Few if any references & rarely includes an abstract  
• Uses general language or, for special interest publications, uses the jargon of the targeted group  
• Assumes little or no specialized knowledge  
• Short Articles  
• Magazine articles usually include:  
  • Article title  
  • Author--although some articles in an issue may be unsigned |
| Examples                 | • Infants and Young Children  
• JAMA  
• Journal of Applied Psychology | • Ladies Home Journal  
• Psychology Today  
• Money |
| Similar Terms            | • Scholarly journal  
• Peer-reviewed journal  
• Refereed journal  
• Academic journal | • Popular magazine  
• General interest magazine  
• Trade journals are written for people in a specific industry but are otherwise more like magazines than scholarly journals. |