What’s the Difference?
Academic Journals vs. Trade Publications vs. Magazines

When you start your research in a database, the result list includes articles from various resources. The chart below explains the difference between the three most common sources of information – academic journals, trade publications and magazines.

**Academic Journals**
- **Style**: Simple, one color or black and white illustrations
- **Advertisements**: None
- **Article Length**: Long
- **Purpose**: To provide research findings and important information
- **Publication frequency**: Monthly, quarterly, semi-annually or annually
- **Writing Style**: Expert
- **Authors**: Professors, graduate students, professionals
- **Content Review**: Peer-reviewed (approved by a panel of experts in the discipline)

**Trade Publications**
- **Examples**: AdWeek, Chef, Fire Management Notes, Library Journal, Publisher’s Weekly
- **Style**: Color photos, glossy or matte paper
- **Advertisements**: Only those pertaining to the targeted industry
- **Article Length**: Medium
- **Purpose**: To inform or educate professionals in the industry
- **Publication frequency**: Monthly or quarterly
- **Writing Style**: Professional
- **Authors**: Industry professionals
- **Content Review**: Reviewed by industry editor

**Magazines**
- **Examples**: People, Sports Illustrated, Time, Life, Martha Stewart Living, American Girl, Cricket
- **Style**: Color photos, glossy paper
- **Advertisements**: Many
- **Article Length**: Medium or short
- **Purpose**: To inform or entertain the general public
- **Publication frequency**: Weekly or monthly
- **Writing Style**: Casual
- **Authors**: Staff writers, general freelance writers
- **Content Review**: Reviewed by general editor