

# The Scholarly Article Autopsy

Information Sources from the Inside Out

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# Presentation Overview:

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# Background: Earlier incarnations

## Types of Periodicals:

### *Distinguishing Scholarly from Non-scholarly Periodicals: A Checklist of Criteria*

#### Introduction

Journals and magazines, collectively referred to as periodicals, are important sources of up-to-date information in all disciplines. In the future you may need to read a particular type of periodical known as a scholarly or research-oriented journal. This guide is designed to help you distinguish between a scholarly journal and other types of periodicals.

#### Periodical Classification

There are four broad categories of periodicals: 1) scholarly or research-oriented, 2) professional, trade, or industry, 3) news or opinion, and 4) popular. Use the information below to help you distinguish between a scholarly journal and other types of periodicals.

#### If In Doubt

A periodical may not be clearly within one of the four categories outlined above. If in doubt, see **Magazine for Libraries** (Ref. Z6941.M23). Use the title index at the back to locate your periodical. Another option is **Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory**. This is an online resource available to WIU users. Only one person may log in at a time, so please log out when you finish.

|                      | Scholarly and Research Journals                                      | Professional, Trade and Industry  | News or Commentary  | Popular  |
|----------------------|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Intent</b>        | To report original research; provide in-depth analysis               | To report current trends, news, and events in a particular field, focusing on product, company and biographical information | To report or comment on current events in all areas; often hard to distinguish between fact and opinion | To entertain and inform                              |
| <b>Authors</b>       | Researchers, professors, scholars; author's credentials noted        | Journalists; author's credentials infrequently noted  | Journalists; author's credentials rarely noted  | Journalists; author's credentials rarely noted       |
| <b>Audience</b>      | College educated or equivalent; assumes background knowledge         | Practitioners in the field  | General population  | General population                                   |
| <b>Sources</b>       | Footnotes and bibliographies present                                 | Sources rarely cited, usually noted within article rather than in notes   | Sources rarely cited, usually noted within article rather than in notes                                 | Sources rarely cited                                 |
| <b>Advertisement</b> | Ads are rarely present   | Ads relate to the profession/industry   | Advertises any and all products   | Advertises any and all products                      |
| <b>Publisher</b>     | Professional organizations   | Commercial/trade publisher or professional organization   | Commercial publisher  | Commercial publisher                                 |
| <b>Examples</b>      | <i>Psychological Bulletin, New Journal of Medicine, Econometrica</i> | <i>Beverage World, RN, Library Journal</i>  | <i>Time, Sports Illustrated, New Republic, Sierra, Psychology Today</i>                                 | <i>People Weekly, Reader's Digest, Redbook, Self</i> |

## Scholarly and Non-Scholarly Periodicals

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Periodical (on cover): \_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions about the periodical AS A WHOLE:

1. Is the cover visually interesting (pictures, etc.)?

 Yes Kinda No

2. Does the periodical have advertisements?

 Yes Just a few No

3. Who is responsible for publishing it?

 A business (i.e. Time Warner) I'm not sure A university or association

4. How many articles are listed in the table of contents?

 A lot of little articles Only a few big articles

Choose ONE ARTICLE and answer the following questions:

5. Is there an abstract (summary) at the beginning?

 No Yes

6. Is there information about the author?

 No Yes

If yes, what is his/her job/position? \_\_\_\_\_

7. How long is the article?

 Under 5 pages Between 5 and 10 pages More than 10 pages

8. Does the article have footnotes and/or a bibliography?

 No Yes

9. What type of content does it contain?

 News or opinion In-depth analysis Original research

10. For whom is it written? Who is the audience?

 General public Practitioners (i.e. teachers) Researchers

What makes you think so? \_\_\_\_\_

Based on your answers to the above questions, what kind of publication is this?

 non-scholarly not sure scholarly

## Scholarly and Non-Scholarly Sources: Comparison Worksheet

|     | Article 1 title:  | Article 2 title:   |  |
|-----|---|--|--|
| 1   | Is the article visually interesting (pictures, etc.)?   |  |  |
| 2   | Does the article contain advertisements? How many? What kind?                                     |  |  |
| 3   | Can you tell who is responsible for publishing it?  |  |  |
| 4   | Is there an abstract (summary) at the beginning?  |  |  |
| 5a. | Is there information about the author?  |  |  |
| 5b. | If yes, what is his/her job/position?   |  |  |
| 6   | How long is the article?  |  |  |
| 7   | Does the article have footnotes and/or a bibliography?  |  |  |
| 8   | What type of content does it contain?   | <input type="checkbox"/> News or opinion<br><input type="checkbox"/> In-depth analysis<br><input type="checkbox"/> Original research | <input type="checkbox"/> News or opinion<br><input type="checkbox"/> In-depth analysis<br><input type="checkbox"/> Original research |
| 9a. | For whom is it written? Who is the audience?  | <input type="checkbox"/> General public<br><input type="checkbox"/> Practitioners<br><input type="checkbox"/> Researchers            | <input type="checkbox"/> General public<br><input type="checkbox"/> Practitioners<br><input type="checkbox"/> Researchers            |
| 9b. | What makes you think so?  |  |  |
| 10  | Based on your answers to the above questions, which of the two publications is the scholarly one? |  |  |

# Goals for Developing New Activity:

- ▶ Incorporate Active Learning:
  - ▶ Teamwork
  - ▶ Self-discovery
  - ▶ Responsibility for various tasks
  - ▶ Reporting of findings
- ▶ Align more closely with ACRL Framework

# autopsy, n.

1. The action or process of seeing with one's own eyes; personal observation, inspection, or experience. *Now rare.*

1651 R. Wittie tr. J. Primrose *Pop. Errours* i. xiv. 53 "Or by autopsie [L. per autopsiam], when by our observation, wee get a certaine knowledge of things."

2.

a. *med.* Examination of the organs of a dead body in order to determine the cause of death, nature and extent of disease, result of treatment, etc.; post-mortem examination; an instance of this.

b. *fig.* A critical examination or dissection of a subject or work.

1835 *Hist. Eng. in Lardner's Cab. Cycl. IV.* viii. 375 "He [sc. James I.] is, moreover, one of the least inviting subjects of moral autopsia."

"autopsy, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2017. Web. 22 May 2017.



# Learning objectives:

- ▶ The student will be able to identify the standard elements of scholarly writing.
- ▶ The student will be able to distinguish scholarly from non-scholarly literature.
- ▶ The student will be able to select the appropriate type of source to use in various contexts.

# Audience:

- ▶ Students taking a research methods course in the major:
  - ▶ Sociology 323: Social Research Methods II
  - ▶ Anthropology 305: Applied Anthropological Methods
- ▶ Possible adaptations: any setting that requires in-depth examination of:
  - ▶ information creation processes
  - ▶ the construction of authority
  - ▶ contextual appropriateness of sources

## Time duration:

- ▶ Ideally at least 75 minutes
- ▶ Can be fit into 50 minutes, but resulting student learning is more superficial

# Materials:

- ▶ Instruction station with access to the internet
- ▶ Online guide with links to example articles in PDF
- ▶ Each pair/group needs:
  - ▶ a copy of the worksheet
  - ▶ a copy of a printed scholarly article
  - ▶ at least one computer with access to the internet
  - ▶ a highlighter and a writing utensil

# Description of exercise:

- ▶ **Setup:** assign teams, distribute materials (5 min.)
- ▶ **Introduce the process:** review worksheet, tell students to assign roles (5 min.)
- ▶ **Activity:** Check in with teams as they complete worksheet and mark up article (30-35 min.)
- ▶ **Report back:** Have students report findings back to entire class; guide the discussion so as to cover all aspects of worksheet and stress information creation processes and construction of authority (20-30 min.)
- ▶ **Session evaluation** (5 min.)

## Today's Activity

Today we're going to perform an autopsy on a scholarly article. In other words, we're going to cut it open and look at all the parts so that we can better understand it. For this activity, you will:

1. Break into groups and assign in-group tasks.
2. Complete a worksheet that answers specific questions about a scholarly article.
3. Look at a non-scholarly article and compare the two types.
4. Present your findings to the class.
5. Turn in your worksheet and the paper copy of article 1.

## IN-CLASS WORKSHEET

## Scholarly Articles (Sociology)



**Please use this article to answer the questions in the first part of your worksheet:**

- Group 1:** Boys Doing Art: The Construction of Outlaw Masculinity in a Portland, Oregon, Graffiti Crew
- Group 2:** Masculinities and College Men's Depression: Recursive Relationships
- Group 3:** Brotherly Love: Homosociality and Black Masculinity in Gangsta Rap Music
- Group 4:** 'The Whole Playboy Mansion Image': Girls' Fashioning and Fashioned Selves Within a Postfeminist Culture
- Group 5:** Smash Mouth Football: Identity Development and Maintenance on a Women's Tackle Football Team

## Non-scholarly Articles (Sociology)

**Please complete the last part of your worksheet by comparing this article to your scholarly article:**

- Group 1:** Graffiti's Story, From Vandalism to Art to Nostalgia

# Activity: Preliminaries

## **Scholarly Article Autopsy**

**Group Members:**

**Recorder:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Presenter 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Presenter 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title of Article:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Activity: Quick Clues

## SECTION 1: QUICK CLUES

1. What kind of information can you find about the **author(s)** of the article?
2. Find the **abstract** and quickly scan it. What is an abstract? Why is it included with the article?
3. Are there any **graphics** included in the article? What kind? Why are they included?
4. Identify **citations** within your article text. **Circle** below what style of citation your article uses:
  - a. Numbered endnotes
  - b. In-text citations
  - c. Numbered footnotes
5. Find one citation in the article text and **highlight** it, then turn to the bibliography/notes at the end of the article. **Highlight** the entry that corresponds to your citation.



# Activity: Content

## SECTION 2: CONTENT

6. Find the **research question** and **highlight it** (it may be more than one sentence). If it is not explicitly stated, please write the article's central idea in your own words below:
7. Find the **methods** or **methodology** section of your article. How was the study conducted? How were subjects found? What tools were used to gather data? Summarize what was done.

# Activity: Comparison

## SECTION 3: COMPARISON

**After you have completed questions 1-7, come ask me for your comparison article.**

8. Look at the comparison article and find at least three major differences between your scholarly article and your comparison article:
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
9. **When** could you use this kind of article?
10. Is it **better or worse** than a scholarly source?
11. **So, why** do scholarly articles exist? **Who** should use them and for what purposes?

# Activity: Report Back Structure

1. Bring up PDF of article 1 up on screen. All of the presenters with article 1 come to the front and discuss **questions 1-3**, showing what they found on screen.
2. Presenters for article 2 come up, bring up the PDF, and talk about questions 4-5, **citations**. Make sure they show the link between a citation and its bibliography entry and discuss how citation is part of the research process and construction of authority.
3. Presenters for article 3 talk about the **research question**. Display it on screen, talk about what a research question is and what role it plays in the creation of information.
4. Presenters for article 4 talk about **methods** used and their role in information creation and authority construction.
5. Finally, have presenters for article 5 talk about the **comparison to non-scholarly**. Make sure they show the visible differences on-screen.

**Note:** The above process *must* be adapted to fit with the number of groups constituted, the example articles used, and students' reports.

# Assessment of student learning:

The librarian and the teacher of record evaluate students' learning based on:

- ▶ oral reports of the groups
- ▶ discussion between groups
- ▶ completed worksheets and accompanying marked-up articles

## Questions to ask:

- ▶ Did students correctly identify the elements and appropriate uses of scholarly and non-scholarly articles in their oral reports and on worksheets ?
- ▶ Did discussion between groups demonstrate students' ability to apply knowledge of the characteristics/elements of scholarly and non-scholarly writing to other, unfamiliar articles?

# ACRL Information Literacy Framework:

## ▶ Authority is Constructed and Contextual:

- ▶ Knowledge Practice 2: *Use research tools and indicators of authority to determine the credibility of sources, understanding the elements that might temper this credibility.*
- ▶ Knowledge Practice 3: *Understand that many disciplines have acknowledged authorities in the sense of well-known scholars and publications that are widely considered standard. Even in those situations, some scholars would challenge the authority of those sources.*

## ▶ Information Creation as a Process:

- ▶ Knowledge Practice 1: *Articulate the capabilities and constraints of information developed through various creation processes.*
- ▶ Knowledge Practice 2: *Assess the fit between an information product's creation process and a particular information need.*
- ▶ Knowledge Practice 4: *Recognize that information may be perceived differently based on the format in which it is packaged.*
- ▶ Disposition 1: *Are inclined to seek out characteristics of information products that indicate the underlying creation process.*
- ▶ Disposition 2: *Value the process of matching an information need with an appropriate product.*

# Experience: Challenges

- ▶ Lack of buy-in by some students
- ▶ Not enough time
- ▶ Teacher involvement is imperative
- ▶ Teams of three not ideal



# Experience: Positive Outcomes

- ▶ More active learning
  - ▶ More discussion during class period
  - ▶ Greater ownership taken for learning
- ▶ Closer alignment with ACRL Framework
  - ▶ Direct & sustained engagement with sources
  - ▶ Deeper understanding of the difference in creation, audience, & uses of source types
  - ▶ Emphasis on discipline-specific standards through use of targeted examples



# Comments & Suggestions:

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