Periodicals

Why use periodicals?

- The bulk of published information is in periodicals.
- Periodicals are the most current published information (After Internet and TV).
  - A book can take months or years while newspaper and magazine articles are published everyday.
- They reflect the opinion of their times.
  - Articles are written about events at the time those events happen where books are usually written after the event has passed.
- They reflect evolving information and point of view.

Why use periodicals?

- It is often the only information available when book publishers are not interested.
  - A good example is local issues. Books are usually published by national or international organizations who are not interested in a local event or issues, but the local newspaper or magazine would be very interested. As such, while a book may not exist there may be several articles.

Types of Periodicals

- Popular & Scholarly

Popular
- General Magazines & Newspapers
  - Examples: Newsweek, L.A. Times, Entertainment Weekly
  - Designed to appeal to a broad population
  - Short articles in non-technical language
  - Aimed at reading the level of an average person
    - In a 1993 study, the average adult grade-reading level was 8th to 9th grade.
  - Usually written by staff writers
  - Primarily information about current events

Scholarly
- Journals
  - Aimed at a limited, professional readership
  - Written by experts in the field
  - Very technical vocabulary aimed at people educated and experienced in that field
  - Articles are usually the result of research in the field
  - Usually contain extensive bibliographies
  - Will often have the word “journal” in the title

- The Wall Street Journal is an exception. It is a newspaper.
Accessing Periodical Information

Print Indexes
- Provides citations to articles in periodicals
- Example of index entries
  - Name of author
  - Title of article
  - Title of periodical
  - Volume, number, date, or periodical
  - Page number of the articles
  - May also have an Abstract

Limits of Print Indexes
- Requires being in the library
- Not all articles in the print index are available at a particular library

Electronic Databases
- A searchable index of articles
- Usually the entire article is available in the database
  - This is called full-text.
- They are accessible from multiple points including from home

Limits of Electronic Databases
- Can be more difficult to browse as you often need the right terminology to locate your materials.
- Few databases have information older than the mid-1980's.
  - For information that old, you will usually still have to use a print index.

Microforms
- Microforms are used to store information for long periods. They do not take up much room and will not degrade significantly over time.
- To use a microform, you have to use a special machine to read the information.
- There are two types of microforms:
  - Microfilm
  - Microfiche

Microfilm
- Microfilm is 16mm or 35mm film just like what is used in motion-picture film cameras.
- One roll of film can hold a great deal of information, so it is usually used for storing newspapers.
- One roll of film can usually hold one to two weeks of a newspaper not including advertising inserts.
Microfiche (pronounced: micro-feesh) is thin and flat.

It does not hold as much information as microfilm so it is normally used for magazines who do not publish as often or as much as newspapers.

One issue of a magazine will usually be put on one to two pieces of microfiche.

Microforms are also used to store non-periodical information including:

- Land records
- Birth & death records (also called: Vital Statistics)
- Any archived information that needs to be kept for a long time.