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| **What Kind of Articles Should**  **I Use in my Capstone Project?** |

## When you search for and review preexisting literature for your Capstone project, you may discover information from many sources, to include the following:

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| Scholarly JournalsProfessional Journals or Trade MagazinesEntertainment Magazines (*inappropriate for use in a Capstone project*)Government Websites |

## Is there a difference in the above listed sources? Yes! The differences are explained below:

## Scholarly Journals

[Scholarly](https://www.dictionary.com/browse/scholarly) journals have academic articles in them. They are also called “periodicals” in the library. Scholarly journals are written by researchers in specific areas of study, such as in criminal justice, business, the medical field, etc.   To achieve recognition as being scholarly, an article is first submitted to other [peer](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/peer) researchers (who are usually in the same academic discipline) to be “peer reviewed,” [critiqued](https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/critique) and evaluated. Peer reviewers determine if the article should be published in a scholarly journal.  This review process helps to ensure that only high-quality research articles are published in scholarly journals.

* Key: **Authors of scholarly articles must cite the sources that they use in their paper.**

**Professional Journals or Trade Magazines**

Professional journals are also known as [trade](https://www.dictionary.com/browse/tradesman) journals or trade magazines. They are written by [subject matter experts](https://www.opm.gov/faqs/qa.aspx?fid=a6da6c2e-e1cb-4841-b72d-53eb4adf1ab1&pid=c9d6d33b-a98c-45f5-ad76-497565d58bcf) for people who work in a specific trade. For example, there are professional journals for criminal justice in specialized areas such as forensics, school resource officers, fraud investigations, corrections, parole operations, etc. Trade journals require an author to have [background knowledge](https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/background%20knowledge) about their profession. The articles that they write are not necessarily scholarly.  Trade journals are somewhere “between scholarly journals and trade magazines.” Professional articles address specific workplace issues by providing insightful and innovative solutions.

* Key: Professional articles are written by subject matter experts who provide innovative ideas for overcoming workplace problems.

**Entertainment Magazines**

Journalists write entertainment articles for magazines to provide information. Journalists may or may not have subject matter expertise about the topic that they write about. They generally try to present information to a large audience, which may include the general public, laypeople, professionals, retirees, students and anyone else who will buy the magazine. Generally, entertainment magazines are not appropriate for a Capstone project, although there may be some exceptions.

* Key: Magazine articles are not required to provide references at the end of each article.

**Government Websites**

City, county, state and federal government websites may publish criminal justice data that is relevant to your Capstone project, such as crime statistics, recidivism rates, incarceration rates, juvenile crime rates, case studies, legal or [legislative](https://www.dictionary.com/browse/legislative) updates, etc.

* Key: The usefulness of government websites varies greatly.

**That’s it!**