Materials in the “books” category include print books and electronic books. Electronic books or eBooks can be found in library databases, online search engines, through stores like amazon.com, and on websites like Project Gutenberg. Books are cited differently, depending on where you find them.

Typically, books take several years to create and are not published on a regular schedule. Scholarly books will often require a proposal, research, synthesis, and editing before being published. They will often contain extensive bibliographies which will provide additional sources of information. Popular books, on the other hand, can be rushed into publication because they aren’t carefully researched and represent a quick profit (such as unauthorized celebrity biographies). While they might be good sources for topic ideas, they are usually not appropriate for research papers.

Books are great for a broad overview of topics. While journal articles typically explore a very narrow issue in depth, books are more comprehensive in their coverage. Because of their length, they can explore more aspects of an issue in greater detail. One disadvantage of books is that because they take so long to be published, they are not a good source for current events. Also, because of their length, they will take significantly longer to read than articles.

Print and electronic books may be scholarly or popular. Ebooks may be found from a library system such as the library catalog or OneSearch; on the Web; or in a library database such as Safari Books Online or the EBSCO eBook Collection.
Information in the “periodicals” category includes newspapers, magazines, and scholarly journals, both print and online. If found online, they may be found in either a library database or on the Web; each is cited differently. The table below illustrates their differences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEWSPAPERS</th>
<th>MAGAZINES</th>
<th>SCHOLARLY JOURNALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• usually published daily</td>
<td>• published frequently, usually weekly or monthly</td>
<td>• published less frequently, such as monthly or quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• contain accounts of the previous day’s events and other features</td>
<td>• cover everything from news and entertainment in magazines (<em>Time</em> or <em>Rolling Stone</em>), to amateur science (<em>Sky &amp; Telescope</em>), or recreation and hobbies (<em>Runner’s World</em> or <em>Popular Mechanics</em>)</td>
<td>• contain scholarly articles, empirical research reports, and/or learned commentary on subjects of special interest to a specific academic or professional audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• authored by journalists</td>
<td>• authored by freelance writers, journalists, staff members, and occasionally scholars</td>
<td>• authored by experts, scholars, researchers, or authorities in their field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• written for the general public</td>
<td>• written for the general public</td>
<td>• written for researchers, scholars, professionals, college and university community, experts</td>
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<tr>
<td>• great for local perspectives on a story, events in a specific city or region, community interest items</td>
<td>• good sources of information on current events, names, dates, photographs, explanations of research that may be complicated or difficult to understand, viewpoints of particular groups on popular issues, reviews of literature, art, and film</td>
<td>• very authoritative sources of in-depth analysis in very specific areas, most appropriate for college level research</td>
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<tr>
<td>• past newspaper articles may need to be accessed via microfilm or microfiche unless they are available on the Web, online versions of newspapers can sometimes differ from the print version</td>
<td>• quality can vary greatly from poor (sensational magazines like <em>National Enquirer</em>) to substantive sources (<em>The Economist</em>)</td>
<td>• typically have dense vocabularies that require intimate knowledge of that field, often very expensive, may only be available to students or researchers through academic libraries</td>
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Print and electronic articles may be scholarly or popular. Online articles may be found from a library system such as OneSearch; on the Web via a search engine; or in a library database such as Academic Search Premier, MEDLINE, or Psychology & Behavioral Sciences Collection.
You have probably used the Web for research at one time or another. One of its strengths is the ability to explore a particular topic through links. The Web often provides immediate access to breaking stories that will normally take a day to appear in newspapers. In addition, it provides information on almost any topic, and coverage from a variety of perspectives.

Obviously, the quality of the information you find on the Web varies widely; it can be difficult to verify the credibility of a particular site. In addition, the Web is not organized; pages may not be archived or preserved, and what you find today might not be there tomorrow. Many pages include advertising which can lead to bias, and some information on the web may require a subscription or fee to access.

Information in the “Web Sources” category is the most diverse. Besides websites and Web pages, this category includes blogs, presentations, MSOffice documents, images, social media (like FaceBook), and video media (like YouTube). Each of these can be further divided into categories based on their purpose, such as commercial, non-profit, entertainment, educational, personal, news, etc. All may be used for academic research, but it is important to understand the purpose and to evaluate the quality of the information provided.

While you can also find online books and journal articles using general search engines, these are still classified as books and periodicals, respectively.

**WEB PAGES VS. WEBSITES**

When you do a search using Google or some other search engine, you’ll typically get some combination of websites and Web pages. Typically, a website consists of many pages that are related, usually because of content or purpose. These pages can generally be accessed from the home page of the website through a series of menus and/or links. For example, the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke has a large website found at: [http://www.ninds.nih.gov/](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/). Their home page allows you to search for a specific topic related to neurological disorders such as epilepsy ([http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/epilepsy/epilepsy.htm](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/epilepsy/epilepsy.htm)). Or, you can search their A to Z index of disorders or use any of their other links to connect to specific pages.
On occasion, it may be appropriate to cite an entire website. However, you generally want to use the most specific information, so Web pages are the ones most often cited. Using the previous example, instead of citing the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke website: http://www.ninds.nih.gov/ you would cite their Epilepsy page: http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/epilepsy/epilepsy.htm. One way to distinguish websites and Web pages is to think of websites as a book, with Web pages being pages in that book.

This video illustrates the difference between Web pages and websites: http://library.weber.edu/il/libs1704/textbook/videos/WebsitesWebPage.html

This video discusses the various types of websites you can find on the Web: http://library.weber.edu/il/libs1704/textbook/videos/WebsiteTypes.html

**BLOGS, WIKIS, & OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA**

A blog is a regularly updated website or Web page that is typically run by an individual or small group. Blogs are often written in an informal or conversational style and often take the form of an online diary or short commentary on a particular topic. Readers can usually post comments on the blog entries.

Wikis differ from blogs in they allow all users to change the content of the wiki pages, not just to post comments about the content. Wikis such as *Wikipedia* can be publicly accessible and edited by any user, but wiki software can also be used to support more private collaboration projects, where only members of the group can see and edit the wiki content.

This video discusses the use of *Wikipedia* for academic research: http://library.weber.edu/il/libs1704/textbook/videos/Wikipedia.html

Social media, as a whole, refers to tools that allow people to create, share or exchange information, ideas, pictures, or videos virtually. Because social media is such a broad term, it covers a large range of sources that you find on the Web. However, their common link is that you are able to interact with the site and interact with others. Here are a few examples:

- Social Bookmarking sites allow you to tag websites and search through sites bookmarked by other people. Examples include *Delicious*, *Diigo*, and *Blinklist*.
• Social News sites, such as Digg, Propeller, and Reddit allow readers to interact by voting for articles and commenting on them.

• Social Networking sites such as Facebook, Hi5, and Google+ allow visitors to interact by adding friends, commenting on profiles, joining groups and having discussions.

• Social Photo and Video Sharing sites, such as YouTube, Flickr, and Vimeo allow viewers to interact by sharing photos or videos and commenting on user submissions.

• Wikis, which were discussed earlier, allow readers to add articles and edit existing ones. The most well known Wiki is Wikipedia.