

ONE OR MORE DAYS AFTER...

- something happens, articles appear in newspapers/newswires; information is disseminated on TV, radio, and the Web.
- Depending on what happened, the information may be prolific or sparse.

NEWSPAPERS, TV AND RADIO TRANSCRIPTS, NEWS SOURCES ON THE WEB

Audience: General public.

Coverage: Any subject of interest, newsworthy events, local coverage.

Written/Scripted By: Professional journalists, some articles or presentations are contributed by specialists.

Timelines: Up-to-date coverage (one-half day to a week)

Length: 50 - 2,000 words.

Content: Dependent upon the type of article or presentation: analysis, statistics, graphics, photographs, editorial opinion; no bibliography or list of sources.

Slant: Tends to be mainstream/neutral.

A WEEK OR WEEKS AFTER...

- articles may appear in general or subject-focused popular magazines.

MAGAZINES

Audience: General public and knowledgeable layperson.

Coverage: Popular topics, current affairs.

Written By: Professional journalists, not necessarily specialists in the field, poets and writers of fiction, essayists.

Timelines: Very current coverage (one week to several months).

Length: 250 - 5,000 words.

Content: As with newspapers, a strong emphasis on reporting: who, what, where, when and why; general discussion; editorial opinion; graphics; photographs; advertisements; usually no bibliography or list of sources.

Slant: Articles may reflect the editorial bias/slant of the magazine.

A MONTH OR MONTHS AFTER...

- articles appear in scholarly journals. This is also when scholars and researchers may start holding conferences on the topic and eventually, conference papers will be published.

JOURNALS AND CONFERENCE PAPERS

Audience: Scholars, specialists, and students.

Coverage: Research results, frequently theoretical in nature, may include data from studies.

Written By: Specialists in the field; usually scholars with PhDs .

Timelines: Current coverage (6 months - 3 years).

Length: >2,500 - 10,000 words.

Content: Detailed examination, statistical analysis, graphics, bibliography usually included.

Slant: Supposed to present objective/neutral viewpoint, may be difficult for a layperson to comprehend because of technical language or jargon, often sponsored by professional associations.

ONE TO THREE YEARS LATER...

- books treating the subject or incident are published, often within one to three years, maybe even sooner. Some topics may generate books for decades to come. This is particularly important to remember when researching topics that are not event-oriented. Also in this time frame published conference proceedings begin to appear.

BOOKS

Audience: Ranges from the general public to specialists.

Coverage: In-depth coverage of a topic, compilation of scholarly articles on a topic.

Written By: Specialists/scholars.

Timelines: varies (1 - 3 years plus).

Length: 150+ pages.

Content: varies from general discussion to detailed analysis; usually includes extensive bibliography.

Slant: Perspective entirely dependent on author, may be sponsored or published by professional associations.

FIVE TO TEN OR MORE YEARS LATER...

- as time passes (2 - 10 years), the knowledge and understanding
- of a topic or event becomes "established." It then appears in reference sources, such as encyclopedias, handbooks, statistical compilations, and more..

REFERENCE SOURCES

Audience: Ranges from general public to specialists.

Coverage: Factual information, the "Big Picture," overviews, and summaries.

Written By: Specialists/scholars.

Timelines: Depends -- articles typically appear in encyclopedias four to ten years later.

Content: convenient summaries of knowledge to date; may include data, statistics, directories, bibliographies.

Slant: supposed to present objective/neutral viewpoint; may be sponsored or published by professional associations.

Adapted from:

Five Colleges of Ohio Information Literacy Tutorial,

The Flow of Information, <http://www.denison.edu/ohio5/infolit/a1flow/>

Date accessed: 09/16/01