

Descriptions of information types

Information type	Author	Audience	Purpose
Scholarly	Has some degree of authority in the field, typically has an academic post or is a researcher with a PhD or other advanced degree	Other experts in a field	To advance a field of study by reporting new findings or ideas, increase author's authority and credentials in field
Professional / Trade	Member of a profession or trade but not necessarily a researcher	Members of a particular field or trade	Inform, promote, and generally strengthen the profession, increase creators' authority in the fields
Government	Varies (could be government employee, elected official, or expert in a particular field)	Varies (could be public, elected official, or government agency)	Generally created to run the government and inform decision making and carries a mark of "officialness," which requires some degree of precision
News	Non-expert in a field usually with a degree in journalism or training as a writer	General public	Report current events in a timely fashion to sell publication or bring people to Web site
Entertainment / Popular	Non-expert in a field usually with a degree in journalism or training as a writer	General public	Present information in an interesting manner that does not necessarily focus on depth of coverage
Special interest / Opinion	Typically a non-expert in a field, but could be an expert expressing his or her opinion	General public / people subscribing to a particular point of view	To advance a particular point of view or express an individual's point of view (the attribution of authority may heavily depend on the beliefs of the reader)
Unsubstantiated or uncredited information	Unable to substantiate identity of the author or author's credentials do not carry authority	General public or unable to determine	Hobby or personal interest

Table from: Swanson, T. (2005). "Teaching students about information: Information literacy and cognitive authority." *Research Strategies* 20(4): 322-333