

## The Information Cycle

### **During and Minutes after an Event:** Social Media

- Is primarily provided through up-to-the-minute resources like facebook, twitter and Instagram, YouTube.
- Is quick, generally not detailed, and constantly updated.
- Explains the who, what, when, and where of an event.
- Often includes photographic evidence or video.
- Can, on occasion, be inaccurate.
- Is written by anyone with access to social media.
- Is intended for a general audience.

### **The Day of an Event:** Television, The Internet, and Radio

- Is primarily provided through up-to-the-minute resources like broadcast news, Internet news sites, and news radio programs.
- Is quick, generally not detailed, and regularly updated.
- Explains the who, what, when, and where of an event.
- Can, on occasion, be inaccurate.
- Is written by authors who are primarily journalists.
- Is intended for a general audience.

### **The Day After an Event:** Newspapers

- Is longer as newspaper articles begin to apply a chronology to an event and explain why the event occurred.
- Is more factual and provides a deeper investigation into the immediate context of events.
- Includes quotes from government officials and experts.
- May include statistics, photographs, and editorial coverage.
- Can include local perspectives on a story.
- Is written by authors who are primarily journalists.
- Is intended for a general audience.

### **The Week of or Weeks After an Event:** Weekly Popular Magazines and News Magazines

- Is contained in long form stories. Weekly magazines begin to discuss the impact of an event on society, culture, and public policy.
- Includes detailed analysis of events, interviews, as well as opinions and analysis.
- Offers perspectives on an event from particular groups or geared towards specific audiences.
- While often factual, information can reflect the editorial bias of a publication.
- Is written by a range of authors, from professional journalists, to essayists, to commentary by scholars or experts in the field.
- Is intended for a general audience or specific nonprofessional groups.

**Six Months to a Year After an Event and On: Academic Journals**

- Includes detailed analysis, empirical research reports, and learned commentary related to the event.
- Is often theoretical, carefully analyzing the impact of the event on society, culture, and public policy.
- Is peer-reviewed. This editorial process ensures high credibility and accuracy.
- Often narrow in topic.
- Written in a highly technical language.
- Includes detailed bibliographies.
- Is authored by scholars, researchers, and professionals, often with Ph.D's.
- Is intended for other scholars, researchers, professionals, and university students in the field.

**A Year to Years After an Event and On: Books**

- Provides in-depth coverage of an event, often expanding and detailing themes, subjects, and analysis begun in academic research and published in journals.
- Often places an event into some sort of historical context.
- Can provide broad overviews of an event.
- Can range from scholarly in-depth analysis of a topic, to popular books which provide general discussions and are not as well-researched.
- Might have a bias or slant, but this dependent on the author.
- Includes bibliographies.
- Is often written by scholars, specialists, researchers, and professionals, though credentials of authors vary.
- Can be intended for a broad audience depending on the book, ranging from scholars to a general audience.

**Adapted:** University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
<http://www.library.illinois.edu/ugl/howdoi/informationcycle.html>