

# Types of Material on the Internet

by Sophia Tutorial



## WHAT'S COVERED

The Internet is like an endless virtual library where thousands of new sources of information are added every second of the day. That being said, there are many different types of information to be found across the vast expanse of the Internet. This lesson will cover:

1. Scholarly Journals and Databases
2. Online Encyclopedias
3. Video
4. Online Books
5. The Impact of Social Media

## 1. Scholarly Journals and Databases

The most common source of reliable, credible information you will find on the Internet is through scholarly journals and **databases**. These academic, **peer reviewed** collections provide you with extensive reports, case studies, articles and research studies to help bolster your research process.

Most online scholarly journals are categorized by certain subjects, professions, and fields of study and allow you to seek out the most targeted information possible. Many online journals and databases will only let you preview an article abstract or summary, requiring a paid per-article or subscription fee to view the complete article.

However, many college and university libraries have arrangements such that you don't have to pay to view articles. Check with your library to see if they can get you a copy of complete articles that you can't access online.

Popular online scholarly databases include:

- Academic Search Premier
- EBSCO Host
- Entrez-PubMed
- JSTOR
- Lexus Nexus Academic Search
- Project MUSE

- ProQuest



#### TERMS TO KNOW

##### Database

A structured collection of data, typically organized to model relevant aspects of reality (for example, the availability of rooms in hotels), in a way that supports processes requiring this information (for example, finding a hotel with vacancies).

##### Peer Review

The scholarly process whereby manuscripts intended to be published in an academic journal are reviewed by independent researchers (referees) to evaluate the contribution, i.e. the importance, novelty and accuracy of the manuscript's contents.

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## 2. Online Encyclopedias

Several major encyclopedia publishers have online versions of their materials. Some charge an access fee to view full entries.

In 2001, Wikipedia sought to change this by creating an open-source encyclopedia edited and curated by the Internet. With over 23 million articles, entries in Wikipedia are collaboratively written by volunteers around the globe. Because of this, the quality of writing may not make it the most reliable or accurate source of information.

However, if you're just looking to get a handle on basic ideas about your speech topic, Wikipedia is a great first source to check out. Also, make sure to click through and investigate a Wikipedia's article's references list to find other, more quality and reliable, sources of information on the same subject.

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## 3. Video

With over 48 hours of content uploaded to YouTube every minute, YouTube has compiled more videos across every two week span (8 years of video per day) than total number of years that motion pictures have existed (117 years in 2012).

Video can provide you a rich, visual depth to your Internet research, providing you with first-hand accounts, video tutorials and diaries, and **citizen journalism**.



#### TERM TO KNOW

##### Citizen Journalism

Independent reporting, often by amateurs on the scene of an event, and disseminated via new media.

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## 4. Online Books

Online tools such as Project Gutenberg and Google Books now allow you to access full books from the

comfort of your Internet browser.

Project Gutenberg is an open-source collective of full texts now in the public domain. Google Books offers both full texts and partial previews on millions of books.

Because both of these resources index the content of each full text, they are searchable to find the exact content and information you need.

## 5. The Impact of Social Media

While many would dismiss the credibility and reliability of information garnered from social media sources, both Twitter and Facebook can provide intrinsic value to your Internet search.

Most mainstream journalism outlets can no longer keep up social media's immediacy of information sharing, making some into a form of citizen journalism that provides real-time, first-person accounts of world events.

➞ **EXAMPLE** If you were preparing a speech about the Arab Spring or the 2012 Presidential Election, social media would be invaluable to your research tracking populist sentiment and eyewitness accounts in real-time reporting.



### SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that the Internet is a constantly expanding virtual library with over a million terabytes of data and information to be found and millions more gigabytes added daily. The Internet can thus provide you with a variety of sources, including **scholarly databases and journals, online encyclopedias, online books, and videos**. Even **social media** platforms such as Twitter and Facebook can provide you with unique and comprehensive sources of citizen journalism. However, you should remember to critically examine any Internet sources you find to ensure they are suitable for academic use.

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