

INFORMATION CYCLES

Start here: this 7-minute [video](#) from the [Penn State University Library](#) shows how information cycles through time, and how different sources are more valuable to use at different times in the cycle.

When is it best to use the internet? A scholarly book? A subject directory? This video helps you decide what type of sources to use for a specific topic.

Following any newsworthy event, information is created, distributed and eventually assimilated in different ways. Information about the event appears in different sources as time goes by. Following are some sources to use to find information about an event, based on the amount of time that has elapsed. Remember, too, that the early sources, such as newspapers and television programs, may later provide analysis or retrospective coverage.

Same Day:

Television, radio and the Internet are the best sources for same-day news coverage. Most daily newspapers and TV stations have a web presence. When you are following a breaking news story, try these sources or similar reputable sites:

- [CNN.com](#)
- [Excite News](#)
- [HeadlineSpot](#)
- [MSNBC](#)
- [National Public Radio](#)
- [Washington Post](#)

When you want to find same-day coverage of past events, look at:

- [CNN Transcripts](#)
- [National Public Radio Archives](#)
- [New York Times Archives](#)
- [Microform](#) (microfilm and microfiche, for older events)

Day After:

Print newspapers are a key source for following day coverage. Most of this coverage will be fact-based. Many newspapers have free websites for their current day's issue. Try online sites to locate the web versions of newspapers. The following sites link to hundreds of papers:

- [News and Newspapers Online](#)
- [RefDesk](#)

In addition, Cuesta carries two newspaper databases. *NewsBank* covers local and California papers, while *NNI* covers national newspapers.

- [News Bank](#)
- [Proquest National Newspaper Index](#)

The Cuesta Library subscribes to several state and local newspapers. Current issues of newspapers including the *SLO Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Wall Street Journal* can be found on the open shelves by the Reference Desk. Recent back issues are also available in print. Older back issues of these newspapers, and the *New York Times*, can be found on microfilm.

Weeks After:

Weekly and monthly magazines often provide in-depth reports on current events. Fact-based coverage may be supplemented by opinion or perspective pieces. Weekly magazines can be searched through many of the library's databases, including:

- [EBSCOhost](#)
- [SIRS](#)

To see what magazines and journals Cuesta subscribes to, access the [Periodical Holdings List](#) on the Library page or myCuesta.

Government information such as speeches, press releases, hearings and reports may be available in the days and weeks following an event. Sources to check for this information include:

- [Presidential News & Speeches](#)
- [United States Congressional Hearings](#)
- [United States Congressional Reports](#)

Months After:

It usually takes months before articles based on an event appear in scholarly journals. Many of the databases that contain weekly and monthly magazines also contain scholarly journals. EBSCOhost has a feature that allows you to restrict your searches to full text, scholarly peer-reviewed (refereed), and even primary source articles. In addition, there are some scholarly articles available online. Try [FindArticles.com](#).

Articles about events of enduring importance continue to be written and published for years after the event.

A Year or More After:

It takes at least a year, and often longer, for books on the event to be published. Scholars may write a book specifically about an event or a book that include discussions of an event as part of a larger theme. Years after the event, topical or general reference books may include entries about it. For example, ten years after it happened, a definitive book on Columbine has just been published.

Need help?

Talk to a librarian at the Reference Desk (546-3100 x.3157)

Thanks to [East Carolina University](#) for the outline above.

Some links for further information

Books, Websites, or Journals? The Information Cycle: a chart with the characteristics of each type media.

[AnokaRamsey Community College](#) charts the information cycle with reference to the Lockerbie plane crash.

A blog based on a 2004 [Changing Info Cycle](#) online article by Greg R. Notess.

Two good tutorials on the Information Cycle

http://www.lib.uconn.edu/instruction/tutorials/research/HTML/Infocycle/Sources/infocycle_00.htm A tutorial focusing on different sources, with their strengths and weaknesses.

<http://www.waikato.ac.nz/library/learning/wise/infoCycle/index.shtml> a tutorial about the information cycle focusing on primary, secondary and tertiary resources.

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