In the industry of sports medicine, a major topic of concern that has continued to headline news stories is the issue of performance enhancing drugs, and their usage with professional athletes. Ever since the creation of these synthetic substances, the dilemma of allowing its usage in professional sports has remained a heavily debated topic, with many scandals only propagating opinion pieces on this subject. There are no clear answers to this complex issue, but still experts and bloggers alike have weighed in their thoughts ~~on a matter so divisive, gay marriage even seems like a relatively straightforward matter~~. Two men who have written their sentiments on this topic employ vastly different strategies and appeals to persuade their audiences. Chris Smith, a Forbes staff writer, wrote an article discussing his points as to why performance enhancing drugs should be legalized when brought about by a specific situation, and using a simple line of reasoning to convince his audience. On the contrary, Urban Wiesing, the director of the Institute for Ethics and History of Medicine of the [Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen](http://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?depth=1&hl=en&prev=/search%3Fq%3DUrban%2BWiesing%26espv%3D2%26biw%3D1503%26bih%3D912&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=de&u=http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eberhard_Karls_Universit%25C3%25A4t_T%25C3%25BCbingen&usg=ALkJrhhDVaWHYdPx_7_X_JIv_Lmq1pP8tA), approaches this controversy with a much more methodological and varied approach as an “expert” on the situation.

The differences in credibility, or ethos, of both author’s pieces directly corresponds with the medium in which they are written. This can drastically influences the audience’s ability to be changed by what they are reading. Urban Wiesing’s essay was published in *Sports Medicine*, which is an academic journal that contains comprehensive reviews of the latest research in applied medicine and science in sports and exercise. Therefore, as an academic piece, Wiesing’s discourse is thoroughly cited to corroborate any information used. All of the references are clearly labeled and structured so that they can easily be reviewed, and they also add an extra sense of authenticity to any facts included in his essay. Contrarily, Smith’s article in Forbes makes assertions that are not so easily traced back to a valid source. One example, is his claim that an exciting season of baseball in 1998 when steroids were used “ruined post-steroid baseball.” However, the authenticating resource of this claim is simply a hyperlink that only leads to a different article, where the authenticity of this new author must be questioned. Much like a rabbit hole, a series of hyperlinks that lead the reader from source to source only serves to convolute where the information originated. This simple difference in the way that these two pieces were published; and more specifically, how they cite their sources, can easily persuade a reader to either be swayed by the author’s opinion, or distrust their legitimacy.

Continuing on the subject of each author’s credibility, it should be observed that the background of each author directly corresponds with their ethos on the matter of performance enhancing drugs. As mentioned previously, Urban Wiesing is a scholar and director of the ethics and history of medicine at a reputable university. He is himself a physician, and has been a part of numerous ethics and medical associations. Even if the audience were unaware of these accolades, it can still be implied that he must be of some repute as he is published in an academic journal. Fortunately, his standing and occupation are clearly listed at the bottom of his review. Conversely, Chris Smith is published on a website that is not nearly as distinguished for their respectability. Furthermore, the credentials of the author are not as readily available. His only description is that he is a Forbes staff writer, and that he “covers the business of sports.” By clicking a hyperlink on his name, a ‘full-bio’ is shown which only discusses his interests. The audience is left to decide whether the credibility of this author can be trusted by only knowing the reputation of Forbes.com, and perhaps browsing his other work. The essay on *Sports Medicine* openly states the credentials of Urban Wiesing, and prove him to be educated on the subject matter. The openness of each author’s credibility, or lack thereof, certainly influences whether a reader will be moved by each piece.

The ethos of each author is definitely different, and because of this, a reader of both pieces might prefer one over the other. However, the authors can get away with such a disparity simply because their audiences as a whole are different. These articles will most likely not sway a reader’s opinion to fall in line with their ideologies by comparing and contrasting the two. This is because each article reaches completely different people, regardless of each author’s stance on the issue, and also because they serve different purposes. The everyday reader of Forbes.com, a business magazine, is most likely not a part of the discourse community that involves sports medicine. The same is true with the reciprocal of this scenario. Academic journals tend to only be read by those that are in the field of what they are discussing, such as sports medicine. A professor of the subject are the only ones qualified to be published in these journals. The authors in academia are not concerned about the broadness of the audience that they reach, but rather are invested in furthering their field of study, or in this case, to point out the flaws that could plague the legislation of performance enhancing drugs. Weising certainly wants to persuade those capable of creating PED legalization laws. Arguably, a staff writer of a news site is writing not so much as an expert, but to put out stories that will garner attention, no matter the reader. The audience is much more varied, but likely not as versed on the intricacies of this subject as a reader of *Sports Medicine* would be. This broader audience will therefore not be as readily changed by the piece they are reading, and so the rhetorical audience of this article might be much smaller than the general audience.

The rhetorical situations, or the exigences, of these pieces help to understand the fashion in which they are written. Urban Wiesing wrote his review in a sophisticated and deliberate manner that showcases his ideas in a prominent academic journal. There was no single event that sparked his opinion, save for the growing usage of PEDs in top level athletics. This discourse is something that he wants to be proud of; that he can stand behind as an expert in the field of sports and ethics. Naturally, this means that the quality of his work must be top-notch, especially when writing in a peer reviewed journal. The points that he makes are clearly labeled in subsections throughout the review. An abstract, introduction, and conclusion, as well as a table of contents, are also included to better analyse and consult his work. This was written in a way such that a peer, or maybe even a legislature, could easily navigate and reference his work.

In Smith’s case, it is a tabloid style event that sparked a tabloid style discourse. The piece opens with a large image of the infamous Lance Armstrong, who lost his seven Tour de France titles after being convicted of doping. This article was written with the impression of Armstrong’s downfall fresh in everyone’s mind. Therefore, Smith was constrained in the amount of time he had to compose this piece, otherwise the kairos of the situation would have passed. Had he waited even a few weeks after the news was first broken, his audience would have been much less receptive. The hurried foundation of this article explains why it lacks the depth and thought that Weising was able to produce. It was not structured in a way for individuals to reference or promote his ideas, because fundamentally, it was written to bring viewers into Forbes. There are no subsections or organized ideas. Rather, a claim is thrown out such as “if performance enhancers were made legal, then they could be safely distributed and regulated so that players aren’t forced to rely on shady back alley transactions for untested drugs.” but no evidence is provided to support his ideas. Additionally, Smith was not constrained in the structure of his discourse by the medium in which he wrote. Weising had to meet certain requirements in order to publish in an academic journal. By writing on a webpage for a news company, Smith had much more freedom in the way he chose to write his article.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/chrissmith/>