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What is a Scholarly Journal

Most instructors at the college level require that you include scholarly journals when you write a research paper, but how can you tell what is scholarly and what isn't?

Is "Scholarly and "Peer Reviewed" the same thing?

Yes, most of the time. Scholarly journals are sometimes referred to as "Refereed" or "Peer Reviewed." These are scholarly journals that have a rigorous approval and editing process in which experts in the field evaluate journal articles before acceptance for publication. Many scholarly journals are refereed or peer reviewed, but not all. If you know your journal is already refereed or peer reviewed, then it is a scholarly journal.

How can I determine if my periodical is scholarly?

- 1. Consult the Chart:** The chart on the back of this sheet lists the general criteria for determining what type of periodical article you have. Keep in mind that some journals do not meet all the criteria, so use some common sense in conjunction with the information on the chart. (for example, consider, the name of the publication, the look and feel of it, who is the publisher).
- 2. Check these Reference Books:**
Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory
Call number: Z6941 U5 (Reference)
This 5-volume set is kept in the Reference Collection. Entries list basic information about the periodical, including the **Document Type**. Look for document types that are "academic/scholarly publications." The designation **Refereed Serial** will appear in entries for titles that are peer reviewed. Vol. 5 contains an alphabetical list of Refereed Periodicals.
Magazines for Libraries
Call number: Z6941 M23 (Reference)
This volume is located in the Reference Collection and lists basic information similar to Ulrich's. Entries that are peer reviewed contain the designation "Refereed."
- 3. Ask a Reference Librarian:**
If you still have questions please come to the Reference Desk on the 1st floor of the library and talk to a reference librarian. Bring your periodical or article with you and we'll help you determine whether or not it's scholarly.

Tips for Electronic Full-Text Database Articles

You may be getting many of the articles you are using from some of the library's full-text databases (such as Academic Search Premier). How can you tell if your article is scholarly or not? You can still use steps 1, 2, and 3 above, but also keep the following in mind:

- 1. Who is the author?**
Is there an author listed? If not, chances are it's not a scholarly article. Most electronic full-text databases will include brief biographical information about the author. If the author is an academic researcher or professor, the article is often considered scholarly.
- 2. What is the name of the publication?**
Most publications that include the word **Journal** tend to be scholarly. For others, it can be difficult to tell.
- 3. Does this article have a bibliography, reference list, or footnotes?**
This is the most important criterion for determining whether or not your article is scholarly. Check the article; if it has bibliography or footnotes, it is fairly lengthy, and if the author is some sort of researcher or professional, then this is probably a scholarly article.

Distinguishing Scholarly Journals from Other Periodicals
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	Scholarly Publications	Trade Publications	News or Opinion Magazines	Popular Magazines	Sensational Publications
Examples	Financial History Review Journal of Abnormal Psychology	Advertising Age Nation's Restaurant News	Newsweek Scientific American Time	Cosmopolitan Rolling Stone Us	Star Globe National Enquirer
Appearance	-Serious format -Plain cover, plain paper -Articles generally structured and may include these sections: abstract, literature review, methodology, results, conclusion, bibliography Quite often if "Journal of" appears in the title, it is a scholarly publication	-Glossy -Lots of illustrations -Appealing to the eye	-Aesthetically Appealing -Glossy pages -Short articles with little depth -Usually appears on the newsstands	-Aesthetically appealing -Glossy pages -Short articles with little depth -Usually appears on the newsstands	-Cheap feel -Newspaper format -Outrageous headlines -Usually appears on the newsstands
Graphics	-Charts and graphs may be included -Few photographs -Little color, mostly black and white	-Usually color	-Generally lots of photographs, illustrations, and graphics -Usually in color	-Lots of photos, illustrations, and drawings designed to catch the readers eye	-Sensational or dramatic photographs
Advertising	-Very little, what advertising there is, generally pertains to the discipline	-Advertising is aimed at users familiar with the industry	-Does contain advertising	-Extensive advertising	-Advertising designed to be as shocking or dramatic as the stories
Audience	-Professionals and researchers	-Geared for the specific business, industry, or organization	-Caters to varied audience	-Non-professionals -Broad audience	-Readers who are very impressionable
Authors	-Scholars and researchers in the discipline	-Educators or those working in the industry	-Staff or freelance writers	-Staff or freelance writers	-Staff or freelance writers
Language	-Technical -Geared for those knowledgeable in the field	-Specific to that particular industry	-Geared for an educated readership -Assumes some expertise in the subject	-Designed to meet a minimal education level	-Simple and easy to read -Inflammatory or sensational
Purpose	-Inform, report, and make research available for the rest of the community	-To provide news and information for that specific industry	-Provide information for the layman	-To entertain or persuade -Designed to sell products or services	-Arouses curiosity by stretching or twisting the truth -seeks sales based sensationalism
Sources	-Cite sources with footnotes or bibliographies	-Some citations -Some footnotes or bibliographies	-Occasionally cites sources	-Sources rarely cited	-Sources rarely cited