

Academic Journals and the Web

Teaching staff occasionally state that Web-based content is not acceptable in assignments. The reason is that many sites on the Open Web contain misleading or inaccurate information.

Teaching staff generally do not mean to exclude journal articles from subscribed databases such as *SpringerLink* or *Wiley InterScience*.

Google Scholar

In theory, *Google Scholar* allows you to run a Web search restricted to high-quality, scholarly literature.

However, *Google Scholar* contains more than just articles from academic journals.

Some articles are from journals which are not peer-reviewed. For example, Google Scholar provides extended abstracts from the journal *Foreign Affairs*. This US publication is highly regarded, but it is not peer-reviewed.

Items in *Google Scholar's* index also include theses, books, preprints of articles submitted for publication (but which have not yet passed peer-review), abstracts, conference papers and scientific reports.

You therefore sometimes need to check carefully before assuming that an article in Google Scholar has actually passed peer-review.

Google Scholar is found at <http://scholar.google.com>.

If you are off-campus, go to *Google Scholar* using this special Web address:

<http://ezproxy.une.edu.au/login?url=http://scholar.google.com>

and you will be able to access many full-text articles in journals to which we subscribe.

When in Doubt

Check with your Unit Coordinator or Supervisor if there is any doubt about the acceptability of a journal article.

He or she is the ultimate judge of acceptability.

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Identifying Academic Journals University Library

What is an Academic Journal?

Teaching staff will often insist that you restrict your research to academic journals.

What does this mean in practice?

Academic journals are also known as scholarly journals. However, the correct terms are 'peer-reviewed' or 'refereed'.

These journals send articles to experts ('referees') for assessment. Articles must pass this review to be published. In most cases, the reviewers are outside the journal's editorial team. However, some journals use an internal review process rather than external. These are often journals in business and management, such as the *Harvard Business Review*.

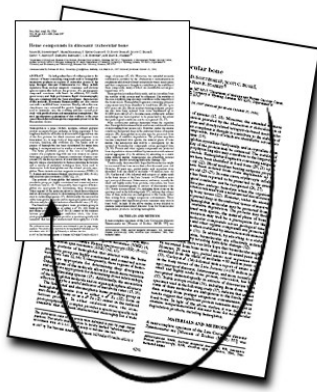
The process of review means that the articles in academic journals are generally of a higher quality than those published in other types of publications.

How Can I Tell the Difference?

In most cases, you can tell an academic journal just by looking at it. Use these guidelines:

- There is a list of editorial board members in the inside front cover or first few pages of an individual issue. To discover this, you might need to check the paper copies of the latest issues in the new journal display area on the First Floor of Dixson Library.
- Articles include the source of information, such as author/date references in the text, footnotes or bibliographies.
- Such journals often contain tables, charts, black-and-white line illustrations or photographs.
- Articles in an academic journal are never anonymous. The name and academic affiliation of the author are usually found at the beginning or end of the article.
- The language of academic journals is formal and sometimes highly technical. Sensational, highly-emotional language is almost never used.
- Most academic journals report original research to the exclusion of most other topics.

Most, but not all, academic journal articles on the Web are published in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format. Their online appearance is therefore the same as their appearance in print.



Online articles from academic journals in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) have a distinctive, formal appearance

What About Articles from Online Indexes?

Many databases (such as *ProQuest*, *Gale Databases*) give you the choice to limit your search to scholarly journals and/or peer-reviewed/refereed journal articles.

Most of our full-text only databases (*SpringerLink*, *Wiley InterScience*, *Emerald*, *Informaworld* and *JSTOR*) contain **only** peer-reviewed journals.

Sometimes, you need to check. The *Informit* full-text indexes include both peer-reviewed and non-academic journal articles.

How Can I Check if a Journal is Peer-reviewed?

The main source of information on journal titles is an online index: *Ulrich's Periodicals Directory* (often simply called '*Ulrich's*').

To discover if a journal is peer-reviewed using Ulrich's:

- Click on the **Find Resources** tab on the Library home page at <http://www.une.edu.au/library>.
- Click on the **Journal articles and databases** link.
- Click on the letter **U**, and then click on the link which reads **ulrichsweb**.
- Enter your UNE username and password if prompted.
- Enter the title of the Journal in the Ulrich's **Quick Search** box.

A screenshot of the Ulrich's Quick Search interface. It features a search box with a dropdown menu for 'Title (Keyword)' and a 'SUBMIT' button. Below the search box, there are two sections: 'Browse by General Subject:' with links for Art, Economics, Humanities, Law, Science, Medicine, and More...; and 'Browse by Index:' with links for Title, Subject, Electronic Vendor, Language, and More...

Ulrich's Quick Search is often all you need

- If there is a **Refereed** icon next to the title, the journal is an academic one.
- If the **Refereed** icon is missing, click on the journal title. Look to see if the journal is described as **Academic/Scholarly**.

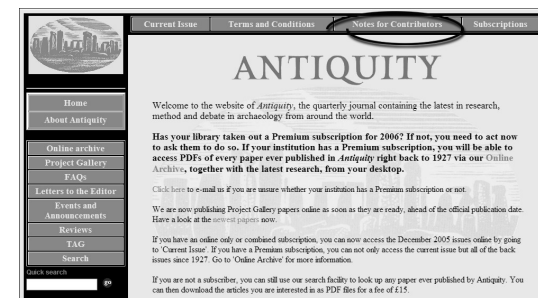
What if a Journal is Not in *Ulrich's*?

One option is find the journal's Web site. If you have a printed copy of the journal, the inside cover or back cover will probably contain a Web address.

Otherwise, you can search for the journal's home site using *Google* <http://www.google.com>.

If the journal's home page does not state that the journal is refereed or peer reviewed, look for headings such as "Notes for Contributors" or "Submission Guidelines".

If you read the Notes for Contributors carefully, you will usually be able to determine the status of the journal relatively easily.



Notes for Contributors will almost always indicate if a journal is peer-reviewed (This example is from <http://antiquity.ac.uk>).

The staff on the Service Desk can help with finding or interpreting a journal's home page. Contact details for the Service Desk are available at the end of this handout.