INFORUM TIPSHEET: About scholarly journals & peer-reviewed articles

Characteristics of scholarly journals
- Content written by academics, for a scholarly audience
- Assumes that reader is familiar with concepts and terminology in the field.
- Often contain presentation of original research: usually organized in a standard structure — abstract, intro, literature review, research methodology, findings, and results discussion
- Articles are usually lengthy, and often include charts & graphs of data (not photos)
- Always contains footnotes and/or list of references cited
- Peer-reviewed, for the most part

Where do scholarly journals come from?
Associations & other professional organizations; university presses; commercial publishers.

What does ‘scholarly journal' mean?
- A publication that is authored by academics for a target audience that is mainly academic and that is published by a recognized society with academic goals and missions — definition: Proquest (database provider)
- A journal may be scholarly, but not peer-reviewed.

What does ‘peer-reviewed’ (or refereed) mean?
- A publication in which articles go through an official editorial process that involves review and approval by the author's peers (experts in the same subject area) — definition: Proquest (database provider)
- Think of it as a type of scholarly quality-control mechanism. With peer-reviewed journals, articles are read and critiqued by experts in the same field, before being accepted for publication.

How can you tell if an article is from a peer-reviewed (a.k.a refereed) journal?
1. Check in Ulrichsweb — online version of Ulrich’s Periodical Directory: Covers 300,000 journals worldwide, from 90,000 publishers, in 950 subject areas. Look up the journal title in Ulrichsweb then check for this symbol which means ‘ refereed’. Ulrichsweb can be found in the catalogue as shown below.

2. Some journal repositories, e.g. Scholars Portals journals, will tell you in the journal information.
3. Limit to ONLY peer-reviewed articles when you search. Many databases have this feature.
4. Look up the journal’s website to see if says ‘peer-reviewed’ in the journal’s description.

Link to catalogue record for Ulrichweb: http://go.utlib.ca/cat/11688043
Click on the LINK in the catalogue record to get into Ulrichsweb. Use advanced search mode to look for journal title.

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