Identifying Scholarly Articles

Scholarly resources contain original research and disseminate new research among scholars. They are produced and reviewed by a team of experts in a particular field of study. Before being approved for publication the article is scrutinized. This means the article undergoes a process by the author’s peers. During this process they evaluate the article for quality, accuracy, and performance of the paper.

*In some cases trade journals which contain articles written by experts for experts are considered scholarly, but are not peer-reviewed.*

Electronic Resources or Databases have features that limit your search to peer-reviewed journals. This refinement feature is usually located on the Search page of a database.

Here are some tips to help identify a scholarly or peer-reviewed journal article:

1. **Author**
   - The author(s) are identified with credentials such as RN, BSN, or MSN (Nursing).
   - Is the article authoritative, that is, trustworthy?
   - Ignore if anonymous.

2. **Title**
   - Some are quite lengthy, very descriptive and use specialized or technical jargon.

3. **Length**
   - In most cases, the article is more than 5 pages. The article should include a list of sources cited.

4. **Content**
   - Determine the intended audience.
   - What is the level of information? Elementary or advanced?
   - Determine if the content is fact, propaganda or the author’s opinion.
   - Is the information being communicated objective?
   - What about the coverage? Is it comprehensive?

5. **References**
   - Look at the types of sources the author is using. Are they primary or secondary sources?
   - Check the list of citations/references used. Do some cross-checking. Are these references to related materials?

6. **Publishing**
   - Published by professional societies, academic associations, academic presses, or universities.

It is also important to know not all content within a periodical is considered scholarly:

1. Commentaries or letters to the editor
2. Reviews found in the journals
3. Magazine articles

**To locate articles and journals**

http://libguides.wvutech.edu/az.php