Identifying Scholarly Journals

In many university courses, it is important to be able to identify the appropriate type of resources to use in research. Depending on the course and/or assignment, scholarly journals are usually the preferred source of information. This handout outlines the basic differences between the various types of periodicals you will use in finding articles.

Scholarly Journals
In the academic world, scholarly journals are acknowledged as being of the highest importance when doing research. These types of journals are usually highly scholarly and technical. Scholarly journals are almost always **refereed** or **peer-reviewed**. According to the *word iQ* web site*, peer review (also known as refereeing) "is a scholarly process used in the publication of manuscripts and in the awarding of money for research. Publishers and agencies use peer review to select and to screen submissions. At the same time, the process assists authors in meeting the standards of their discipline. Publications and awards that have not undergone peer review are liable to be regarded with suspicion by scholars and professionals in many fields." You can determine if a journal is peer reviewed by checking the first few pages of a journal issue for a list of reviewers or an editorial board and the editorial policy.

Popular Magazines
Popular magazines can be used effectively in research when studying current affairs and social issues. The purpose of the articles is to communicate general information on a broad topic, current events coverage, and latest news.

Trade Magazines
These magazines are written for the members of a specific industry. The articles are to inform members of business trends, new products or techniques, and organizational news. They are a credible source if written by experts in the field. Characteristics of trade magazines include articles written by staff or contributing authors, advertisements related to the profession, and job postings.

Finding Peer-reviewed/Refereed Articles in CBU Databases
All the databases from EBSCOhost (*Academic Search Elite, Business Source Elite, Psychology and Behavior Sciences Collection, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, Religion and Philosophy Collection, Communication & Mass Media Complete, American Humanities Index, Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition, Newspaper Source, Alt HealthWatch, Health Source: Consumer Edition, Military & Government Collection, Clinical Pharmacology, and Regional Business News*) have within the Advanced Search a box that can be checked for "Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals." When this box is checked, your search results will only reflect those journals within the database that have been peer-reviewed. If you know the name of a journal and want to check if it is peer-reviewed, go to the main search screen and click on the "Publications" tab at the top of the screen and find the journal name. Click on the

journal name and then look for the "Peer Reviewed" portion of the publication details. This will tell you if the journal is peer-reviewed. You can only get to the "Publications" tab if you are searching one database and not multiple databases. If you find an article and want to view publication details, look in the "Source" section and then click on the journal title link. Remember, this only is for those journals that are in EBSCOhost databases. *WilsonSelectPlus* in Firstsearch does not have the capability to limit search results to peer-reviewed journals.

Scholarly Journals vs. Popular Magazines

Scholarly Journals	*Popular Magazines*
A journal contains specialized subject matter and written in the technical language of a specific field. Reports on original research and original interpretation of data or analysis.	A magazine contains more general subject matter on broad topics, current events, and/or the latest news. Written in simpler language.
Articles are written in a specific format, and include footnotes/endnotes and a bibliography.	Articles very rarely include footnotes/endnotes or a bibliography.
Articles are almost always refereed/peer-reviewed by a group of researchers and/or scholars in the field before being published.	Articles are almost never refereed/peer-reviewed, and are usually written by journalists after which they are evaluated by editors and then published.
Authors are usually experts in the field. They are always identified and their credentials are given.	Authors may or may not be identified. They are usually staff reporters or journalists.
Articles are usually lengthy, and address a specialized audience.	Articles are shorter, with general facts, and address a wider audience.
Articles often include abstracts (summaries) at the beginning.	Articles almost never include abstracts.
A journal is usually published by an organization, such as the American Psychological Association or a university, for the purpose of publishing research	A magazine is usually published by a company, and is generally for profit.
Graphics are used sparingly, usually for the purpose of illustration or to convey data in the form of graphs, maps, charts, or statistics. There are usually no photographs, and the general design is more sober and usually in black and white.	Graphics, photos, and glossy paper are common. They are used for impact and appeal as well as illustration. The general design is more appealing to the eye and uses lots of color.
A journal contains very little or no advertising.	A magazine is full of advertisements
Examples: • *Cultural Anthropology* • *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* • *Journal of American Studies* • *Social Work in Education* • *Journal of Family Issues*	Examples: • *Newsweek* • *Good Housekeeping* • *Business Week* • *Time*

*Definition retrieved 06/28/04 from *http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Peer_review*