What is a ‘Peer-reviewed,’ ‘Scholarly,’ ‘Juried’ or ‘Refereed’ Source?

What does ‘peer-reviewed,’ ‘scholarly,’ ‘juried’ or ‘refereed’ mean?

• That the articles or websites go through a professional editorial process which includes an impartial review and approval by peers who are recognized experts in that field.
  • This helps to ensure academic quality.
  • This allows peers to scrutinize the article or website to ensure it meets the standards of excellence and that no information is distributed with unwarranted or scientifically unsupportable claims.

• Generally speaking, the terms ‘juried,’ ‘refereed,’ and ‘peer-reviewed’ are all used interchangeably.
• The majority of scholarly publications are juried by peers – BUT not all!
  • A scholarly publication is authored by academics for a primarily academic audience.
  • Typically it is published by a recognized educational entity, society, or organization with academic goals and missions.

How can you ensure that your article or website is ‘juried’ or ‘refereed’?

• Use the scholarly databases in the NAU Online Library to find articles.
  • Most databases have a method to narrow the search to only articles that are ‘peer-reviewed,’ ‘juried,’ or ‘refereed.’ Look for an ‘Advanced’ search option or tab.
  • Look in the database for a field that allows you to limit, narrow, or restrict your search further and look through the limiters for terms similar to:
    o Juried
    o Peer-reviewed
    o Refereed
    o Review Articles
    o Evidence-based or Cochrane (typically found in nursing or healthcare literature)

• Evaluate any website with the guidelines in Finding Quality Websites.
  o This is a list of questions to consider to help identify an authoritative site.
  • Generally speaking, you will be more likely to find a qualifying website if you look for websites ending in:
    o .gov (governmental sites)
    o .edu (education related sites)
    o CAUTION: .com (commercial) sites will require more scrutiny to ensure they meet the necessary criteria.

• Google Scholar & Wikipedia are NOT juried or peer-reviewed sites! However, they can be a good starting point for uncovering some potentially useful sources.