

# Scholarly Publishing

## What's this all about?

Scholars (like your professors) create new knowledge through their research, and they want to share it. This tutorial will show you some of the ways they do so - from formal research articles to conference presentations to social media.

You will be asked to use "scholarly articles" or other scholarly materials in your classes. You need to know what forms they can take, how to find them, and when it's appropriate to use each one.

## Journal Articles

They're kind of a big deal

**Peer-reviewed** journal articles are the official scholarly record. That means, if it's an important development in research, it will probably turn up in a journal article...eventually.

Synonym alert: Peer-reviewed articles may also be called **refereed** articles

Why do scholars write them?

Having an article reviewed by peers before it's published helps the author catch errors and improve her\* research (and writing!). Also, peer-reviewed articles COUNT - towards getting a job, getting tenure at her university, and building her reputation as a scholar.

Note: Scholars can be women or men. I'm using an imaginary scholar to demonstrate the different ways to publish research, and she happens to be a woman.

How are they used?

People read journal articles when they want a precise, in-depth look at the research. Since peer-reviewed articles are the official scholarly record, they are also a good choice for citing someone's research in your paper or presentation.

- [PLOS One](#)

## But wait...how does "peer review" work??

It can take anywhere from a few months to a few years for a peer-reviewed article to be published after it is submitted to a journal. Here's why...

### Writing

The author writes up her research results in what's called a 'manuscript,' and submits it to a journal to be considered for publication. Some communities of scholars have special standards for formatting their manuscripts, but most of them are just regular Word documents. Like your class papers, but probably with more footnotes.

### Review

The editor of the journal looks over the manuscript and asks two or three scholars who do similar work to read and comment on it. This process takes around six weeks, because the peer reviewers have to find time to review between teaching classes and conducting their own research.

**THE TRICKY PART:** The reviewers don't know who the author is, and the author does not know who the reviewers are. This is called "blind" peer review and it keeps things from getting personal.

### Decision

The editor looks at the reviewers' comments and decides whether to publish the manuscript as an article in the journal. He could reject it, decide to publish it as is, or ask for some...

### Revision

The author can make changes to the manuscript and sends it back to the editor. This can take anywhere from a couple of weeks to a year, depending on how big the changes are. Eventually the manuscript is ready.

Even then, it may not be published for a while, depending on how often the journal comes out, and how many articles are waiting. In some fields, scholars can wait years to see their work in print.

But finally, we have...

### Publication

A published journal article

## Preprints (the shortcut)

If our scholar wants to make her article available sooner, she may post a pre-print online. A pre-print can either be the version she submitted to the journal, or the version that went through peer-review and was accepted by the journal (also sometimes called a 'post-print'). One of the biggest pre-print repositories in the sciences is [Cornell University Library's arxiv.org](https://arxiv.org/).

## Scholarly Books

What you need to know about scholarly books:

- They are reviewed and edited a lot like journal articles are, and are used in the same ways.
- They are more common in the humanities (like history) and social sciences (like anthropology) than in the physical sciences.

They take EVEN LONGER to publish than articles do.

Synonym alert: A scholarly book is also called a **monograph**

Example:

- [Evening's empire: a history of the night in early modern Europe](#) by Craig Koslofsky

## Conference Presentations

### Why do scholars create them?

Scholars present at conferences to share work that's not ready for publication, or to get feedback from their peers.

Synonym alert: A conference can also be called a **symposium**.

### What do the presentations look like?

Assuming you're not at the conference, there are a couple of ways you might find presentations.

- First, the presenter might [share her presentation slides](#) online.
- The conference might also publish [proceedings](#), which is like a journal issue, but made up of papers based on the presentations from the conference.

## How should you use them?

Proceedings can be cited just like journal articles or books. Presentation slides are less formal, so should mostly be used to learn about someone's research. If you find a presentation about a topic you are researching, though, it's ok to ask a librarian or contact the presenter to see if there's a published paper on the topic.

## Social Media

You might think it's only for keeping in touch with your friends and sharing pictures of cats, but social media can be a great tool for sharing research, as well. Lots of scholars write blogs about their research, and use social media to share ideas and citations with colleagues around the world.

## Blogs

Are useful to scholars in lots of ways...

### Quick publishing

If our scholar just can't wait to tell people about her research project, she might write up a blog post about it. It's not as fancy as a peer-reviewed article, but it can be written and published in a day or two.

### Making research accessible

Journal articles are great, but they can be a little...hard to read. Our scholar might write about her research on her blog in a way that students, or friends, or scholars from a different field, can understand. This means more people can benefit from her work.

### Getting help

Believe it or not, scholars sometimes ask their friends for help, too. They might write a blog post about a question they have, or a problem they are having with their research. Other scholars can then read and comment.

Example:

- [Ant Spider Bee](#)

## How should you use scholarly blogs?

You can read scholarly blogs to learn more about a topic, but you might want to ask your professor if it's appropriate to cite one in your paper.

You should definitely feel free to comment on the blog - to ask questions about the post or share your opinion. If the scholar is blogging, they are probably happy to hear from students!

## Twitter and more

Believe it or not, lots of scholars use Twitter and other social media sites. There's more news and research out there than anyone can keep up with by themselves, so scholars often rely on their colleagues to let them know about important stuff. They can also use their own social media profiles to draw attention to the articles and blog posts that they write. You can follow them to learn more about what you're studying.

Examples:

- [@heavencrawley](#)
- [@DrBobBullard](#)

## Data Sharing

There's one more type of publishing we're going to look at. Let's say a team of scholars does a research project on the reproductive habits of frogs. They write an article explaining their findings, but they are left with a bunch of data that couldn't be included in the article.

### Why would scholars publish their data?

- They might want to *show their work*, and let people see the data behind their paper.
- They might want to let other people use their data in future studies.
- If they got grant money for their research, the organization that gave it to them might require that they share their data.

### How can you use shared data?

If you find an archived data set when researching a topic for a paper or a presentation, you can cite it just like you would any other scholarly resource. Data sets are tricky to understand, though, so you might want to get your professor's input on how to work with them.

Example:

- [DRYAD](#)

## Cheat Sheet

So there you have it! But just in case, here's a cheat sheet on the ways scholars share their research:

### **Journal Articles, books, and conference proceedings**

- Slow, reviewed, good for citing

### **Conference slides**

- Informal, good for learning about a topic

### **Social media**

- Quick, accessible, good for learning and interacting with scholars

### **Data sets**

- Usually linked to an article, can be cited