Identifying Credible References for High-Quality Research in Interior Design

Research in academia, as well as in the field of Interior Design is a crucial step in the development of ideas and concepts, as well as the most appropriate approach to investigating a solution to a given problem. With the internet being one of the main go-tos for research, being able to find reliable sources has become in itself a challenge. Reliable sources are essential for ensuring credibility, accuracy, and authenticity in your work. Reliable sources provide well-researched, peer-reviewed, and authoritative information that can affect the quality of your research. In this article, we will look at what it is that makes a resource reliable in interior design research, with examples from both a worldwide perspective and specific instances from the UK.

Characteristics of Reliable Sources

Let us look at particular types of sources and what makes each one of them reliable and credible, depending on the type of data you are looking at:

1. **Academic Journals and Publications**: The following characteristics of Academic Journals and Publications are directly associated with the use of reliable sources.

# Peer reviewed:

**Definition:** Peer review is a process where experts in the field evaluate the quality, relevance, and accuracy of an article before it’s published.

**Importance:** The process ensures that the research has been scrutinised by knowledgeable professionals, reducing the likelihood of errors, biases, and unsubstantiated claims or speculations.

**Example:** The [Journal of Interior Design](https://journals.sagepub.com/home/idx) is a peer-reviewed publication that provides rigorously vetted research on various aspects of Interior Design**.** You can find it [here](https://journals.sagepub.com/home/idx).



Fig 1. Pixabay (n.d.), Interior Designers Conducting Research

# Reputable Publishers

**Definition:** Established academic publishers are institutions or organisations, known for their high publication standards, and contributions to scholarly research.

**Importance:** Publications from reputable publishers are more likely to be credible, and widely recognised in the academic community.

**Example:** Wiley and Oxford University Press are examples of reputable publishers that produce high-quality academic journals and books.

# Books and Monographs

**Authored by Experts:**

**Definition**: These are books written by recognised scholars or experts in the field of Interior Design.

**Importance**: These authors typically have extensive experience and knowledge, and are acknowledged in the field, which lends credibility and depth to their work.

**Example:** "Interior Design Illustrated" by Francis D.K. Ching, a well-respected figure in architectural and interior design education. You can find a digital copy [here](https://www.academia.edu/45172805/Interior_Design_Illustrated_3rd_Edition?sm=b).

# Published by Renowned Publishers:

**Definition:** Books released by well-known and respected publishing houses.

**Importance:** These publishers often have a rigorous editorial process, ensuring that the content is reliable and of high academic standard.

**Example**: Books published by publishers like Thames & Hudson, and RIBA Publishing are known for their quality and reliability.



Fig 2. Pexels (n.d.), An Interior Designer Reading a Book

# Professional Organisations and Institutions

**Industry** **Associations:**

**Definition:** These are professional bodies that represent and support practitioners in the field of Interior Design.

**Importance:** These organisations provide resources that reflect current best practices, standards, and research in the industry.

**Example:** The International Interior Design Association (IIDA) offers research reports, guidelines, and case studies that are valuable for both practitioners and researchers.

# Academic Institutions in Higher Education:

**Definition:** Universities and colleges with strong design programs.

**Importance:** Research and publications from these institutions are typically peer-reviewed and conducted by experts in the field.

**Example:** The [Royal Institute of British Architects](https://www.architecture.com/search?Term=interior%2Bdesign) in the UK and Parsons School of Design in the US are institutions known for their contributions to design research.



Fig 3. Pexels (n.d.), image of an Interior Designer at their desk

# Government and NGO Publications

**Government Publications:**

**Definition:** Official publications and guidelines issued by government agencies. **Importance:** These documents often contain comprehensive guidelines, standards, and regulations that are essential for research.

**Example:** Publications from the UK’s Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities provide guidelines on design standards, such as the National Design Guide, which you can find [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide).

# Non-Governmental Organisations:

**Definition**: These are reports and studies that are published by reputable NGOs and focus on design, architecture, or urban planning.

**Importance**: These sources provide insights and data that are often based on extensive fieldwork and expert analysis.

**Example**: Reports from the Design Council in the UK offer valuable perspectives on design trends and impacts. You can find more info [here](https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/).

# Conferences, Exhibitions and Trade Shows

**Proceedings from Reputable Events:**

**Definition:** These are a collective of papers, presentations or videos, from professional conferences, and talks within exhibitions or trade shows.

**Importance:** All these events are platforms where the latest research and innovations are presented and discussed, often before being published in journals.

**Example:** Clerkenwell Design Week in the UK provides talks that include developments in interior design practice and developments in materials and product launches.



Fig 4. Pixabay (n.d.), image of an Interior Designer publications on a desk

# Worldwide Examples of Reliable Sources

* 1. [**Journal of Interior Design**](https://journals.sagepub.com/home/idx)**:** Currently published by Sage, previously published by Wiley, this peer-reviewed journal covers a wide range of topics in interior design and is a cornerstone for academic research in the field.
  2. [**International Journal of Architectural Research (IJAR):**](https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/journal/arch)This journal offers peer-reviewed articles on architecture and interior design, bridging the gap between practice and academia.
  3. [**Design Studies**](https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/design-studies)**:** An international journal for design research, offering peer-reviewed articles that address various aspects of design, including interior environments.
  4. **Books by Prominent Authors:** "I[nterior Design Illustrated](https://www.academia.edu/45172805/Interior_Design_Illustrated_3rd_Edition?sm=b)" by Francis D.K. Ching: A widely used textbook that provides comprehensive coverage of interior design principles.
  5. [**International Interior Design Association (IIDA)**](https://iida.org/articles)**:** Provides a wealth of resources, including research reports, case studies, and professional guidelines.

# UK-Specific Examples of Reliable Sources

1. [**Journal of Design History:**](https://academic.oup.com/jdh)Published by Oxford University Press, this journal includes scholarly articles on various aspects of design history, including interior design.
2. [**Interior Educators (IE)**](https://interioreducators.co.uk/studio)**:** A national subject association that promotes and supports the discipline of interior design in the UK, providing access to research and best practices.
3. [**The British Institute of Interior Design (BIID)**](https://biid.org.uk/welcome-resources-hub)**:** The professional body for interior designers in the UK, offering guidelines, case studies, and industry standards.
4. **"The Interior Design Handbook" by Frida Ramstedt:** Although originally Swedish, this book has been widely recognised and used in the UK for its practical approach to interior design.
5. **Government Publications:** Documents and guidelines from the UK government, such as those from the [Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide), the [Health and](https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/cdm/2015/designers.htm) [Safety Executive (HSE)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/cdm/2015/designers.htm),



Fig 5. Pexels (n.d.), image of an Interior Designer publication

In interior design research, relying on high-quality, credible sources is the only avenue for producing robust and authoritative work. Academic journals, professional organisations, books by renowned authors, and government publications are key types of reliable sources. By utilising these sources, researchers can ensure that their findings are well-founded and respected within the field. Whether you are accessing global resources like the Journal of Interior Design or UK- specific sources like the British Institute of Interior Design, the quality and reliability of your sources will significantly impact the validity of your research.