

Re: answer to Lloyd and Dylan. – definition artifact/artefact

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- *From:* Eric Stevens <eric.stevens@xxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Sat, 15 Jul 2006 11:02:09 +1200
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On Sun, 09 Jul 2006 22:39:39 +0100, Doug Weller
<dweller@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Sun, 09 Jul 2006 11:48:50 –0700, in sci.archaeology, Russell Sheptak
wrote:

In article <[GdTrg.8175\\$E02.2470@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:GdTrg.8175$E02.2470@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)>,
"Inger–Eleonora" <inger_e.johansson@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Lloyd and Dylan,
how about reading Oxford's definition instead of pick on me
because I, as
well as others here and elsewhere use same as Oxford??????

Artifact definition found here:
http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/artefact?view=uk

"artefact
/aartifakt/ (US artifact)

. noun a functional or decorative man–made object.

– ORIGIN from Latin arte 'using art' + factum 'something
made'."

In other word accept that definition. That's the one that's
valid. Your
personal views aren't.

Inger E

To elaborate a point that I think Tom M. made originally, different

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scientific fields often develop specialized technical vocabularies that aren't necessarily congruent with the dictionary definitions of the same word or words. These technical vocabularies often become a short hand way of referring to larger concepts. This used to be part of a basic intro to the History of Science when I was an undergrad.

The Oxford English dictionary definition isn't useful here, since we're talking about the discipline of archaeology with its technical vocabulary.

Exactly. Dictionaries are often very unhelpful, even misleading, when trying to determine the technical use of words in specific contexts.

In all fairness to the Oxford English Dictionary, its authors attempt to cover all usages of all words from the widest range of sources. This includes scientific publications.

A problem is that new usages are continually emerging and the dictionary must lag behind by a number of years. Another problem is that the technical scientific 'shorthand' meaning which is ascribed to a word today may not be the same as it was even ten years ago or will be ten years in the future. For this reason it is unwise to insist that particular words must carry specific meanings which are carved in stone.

Eric Stevens

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