Predatory Publishers: Welcome to the grey zone

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Learning objectives

- Understand what a predatory journal is
- Know how to recognize predatory publishers and protect the scientific value of your work
A very short history of academic publishing

Until the 80s
• Paper journals

Late 90s
• e-journals
• OA movement

00s
• Diffusion of OA Gold
• Appearance of predatory publishers
Almost 400 academic articles on predatory publishing published in the last 20 years [1] and still no simple definition.

“[Publishers] which publish counterfeit journals to exploit the open-access model […] They aim to dupe researchers, especially those inexperienced in scholarly communication. They set up websites that closely resemble those of legitimate online publishers, and publish journals of questionable and downright low quality. Many purport to be headquartered in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada or Australia but really hail from Pakistan, India or Nigeria.” [2]

“Predatory journals and publishers are entities that prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are characterized by false or misleading information, deviation from best editorial and publication practices, a lack of transparency, and/or the use of aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation practices.” [3]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Legitimate</th>
<th>Predatory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adherence to industry standards</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APC information</td>
<td>Upfront and clear</td>
<td>Unclear or absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact information</strong></td>
<td>Easily available</td>
<td>Difficult to retrieve or absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial board</td>
<td>Verifiable, renowned</td>
<td>Unverifiable, unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English quality (emails, website)</td>
<td>Well-curated</td>
<td>Sloppy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact metrics</td>
<td>Scopus</td>
<td>None or unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indexing</strong></td>
<td>DOAJ, PubMed, WoS</td>
<td>None or unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industry associations memberships</strong></td>
<td>COPE, OASPA</td>
<td>None or unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISSN</td>
<td>Ok</td>
<td>Missing or made up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer-review process</td>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of editorial work</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsolicited emails</td>
<td>None or rare</td>
<td>Common practice</td>
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</tbody>
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Ok, I get it. But I really need to publish...

Risk to undermine your CV

Diffusion of pseudoscience/alternative truth

Waste of public money
Tools

- Compass to Publish – Liège Université Library (https://app.lib.uliege.be/compass-to-publish/)
- Directory of Open Access Journals (https://doaj.org/)
- Think, Check, Submit (https://thinkchecksubmit.org/)
- Quality Open Access Marker (https://www.qoam.eu/journals)
- Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association (https://oaspa.org/)
- ISSN Portal (https://portal.issn.org/)

Still in doubt? Get in touch with the EPFL Library: publishsupport@epfl.ch


Thank you!

go.epfl.ch/coffee-lectures

Contact & credits

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