To Catch a Predator:
How to Recognize Predatory Journals and Conferences

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Sponsors: LACUNY Scholarly Communications Roundtable (http://commons.gc.cuny.edu/groups/lacuny-scholarly-communications-round-table/), CUNY Office of Library Services (http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/OLS.html), and Just Publics @ 365 (http://justpublics365.commons.gc.cuny.edu/)

Some Predatory Red Herrings
(in no particular order)

- Unsolicited come-ons (unless you actually belong to the society or organization contacting you or have published with the publisher)
- Publisher touts unusually rapid peer review and turnaround to publication
- The publisher is the editor of the journals and/or editorial boards repeat on multiple titles
- No editor, editorial board, or editorial staff is listed, or they lack affiliations
- Editor and/or editorial board email address(es) are not .edu but rather Gmail or Yahoo, or they use only web form for contact
- Website includes contradictions about editorial process, rights, or fees
- Poorly written, ungrammatical, typo-ridden text on website
- Dead links on website and other signs of a hastily created, poorly maintained web presence
- Poor website navigation and poor or no searchability of content — indicates no interest in reader experience
- Publisher has not been in business long — especially worrisome for publishers with a large number of journals
- Lack of transparency about the publisher’s location — may be difficult to find the physical address of the publisher, or given address may not be truthful
- Lack of transparency about fees (e.g., DOAJ indicates APCs but publisher doesn’t) — may use strange language about fees, such as “handling fee”
- Suspiciously few or many articles published
- Extremely broad or vague journal scope — e.g., Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal and British Journal of Science
- Journal title is extremely similar to a well-known journal title
- Journal website copies look and feel of well-known publishers’ website
Some Predatory Red Herrings (cont’d)

- Open access publisher that doesn’t use Creative Commons licenses
- Peer-review process not explained clearly or in detail
- Author receives no revisions post-submission
- Journal not in DOAJ (Note: inclusion does not necessarily mean the journal is reputable!)
- Claims indexing and abstracting in library databases and/or uses logos of well-known indexing and abstracting library databases as a come-on
- Advertises that it’s indexed by Google and Google Scholar (this is meaningless!)
- Links to, or uses logos of, established organizations or publishers even though there’s no actual connection
- Calls itself “American Journal of...” but is not based in the United States (true for other countries as well)
- Uses weird metrics to suggest impact factor such as “view factor”

Resources & Recommended Readings

- Jeffrey Beall’s site about predatory journals and publishers (includes his famous list of predatory publishers/journals, as well as his criteria): [http://scholarlyoa.com/](http://scholarlyoa.com/)
- Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA) — carefully reviews potential members and holds members to their Professional Code of Conduct: [http://oaspa.org/](http://oaspa.org/)

Keep Yourself Informed!

- There are more Information Interventions @ CUNY coming up: Stay tuned for spring events about open educational resources and the controversy around dissertations and open access!
- Stay up to date with open access and scholarly communications issues at CUNY – follow the Open Access @ CUNY blog: [http://openaccess.commons.gc.cuny.edu/](http://openaccess.commons.gc.cuny.edu/)