

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

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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/>
- Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) — recently revised its criteria for inclusion: <http://doaj.org/>
- Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA) — carefully reviews potential members and holds members to their Professional Code of Conduct: <http://oaspa.org/>
- Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) — expects member journals to adhere to Code of Conduct for Journal Editors: <http://publicationethics.org/>
- Library Loon blog post about assessing publisher scamminess: <http://gavialib.com/2012/04/assessing-the-scamminess-of-a-purported-open-access-publisher/>
- Barbara Fister's summary of the conversation resulting from the "open access sting" in *Science*: <http://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/library-babel-fish/judging-journals>
- Beall, Jeffrey. "Unethical Practices in Scholarly, Open-Access Publishing." *Journal of Information Ethics* 22.1 (2013): 11-20.

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.commonsgc.cuny.edu/>