Predatory Journals, Publishers and Conferences

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It’s a minefield out there!
A few thoughts about publishing…..

- Publish *(or perish!)*
- In the academic sector, your publication record is critical for:
  - Promotion
  - NRF rating
  - Bonuses
  - Your national and international reputation
Academic publishing: the old and the new

• **Old** (restricted access)
  – Print copy
  – Online/print
  – Library and personal subscription model

• **New** (open access)
  – Online only
  – Author pays model (typically $500 - $2500)
Online publishing

• The development of the ‘open access publishing’ model has led to an explosion of new online journals, some of which are designated as ‘predatory’

• What do you need to start a new online journal?
  – An idea
  – A computer
  – A bank account

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of publishers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>923</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Number of predatory publishers, 2011-2016.
Who is most at risk from predatory journals?

- Young researchers
- Researchers in developing nations
- Researchers in institutions with publication criteria for graduation
Disclaimer

• There are many reputable online open access journals!
  – Committed to high standards of publication, peer-review, access and storage

• There are many more non-reputable “predatory’ publishers and journals
  – Committed primarily to making money
Omics International – one of the most successful online publishing houses

> 700 separate journals

> 600 conferences
Profitable?

- 100 titles x 20 articles per year x $200 per article

  = $400,000 p.a. (=R6million)

- Less cost of publishing (10%)

  =
What characterises a ‘predatory’ publisher?

- **Beall’s List**: From [https://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/](https://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/)

- Developed by Jeffrey Beall
- Associate Professor, Auraria Library, University of Colorado, USA
- Leads a team who investigate and analyse academic publishers and journals
- Has a lot of lawsuits!
Editor and Staff

- The publisher's owner is identified as the editor of each and every journal published by the organization.
- No single individual is identified as any specific journal's editor.
- The journal does not identify a formal editorial/review board.
- No academic information is provided regarding the editor, editorial staff, and/or review board members (e.g., institutional affiliation).
- Evidence exists showing that the editor and/or review board members do not possess academic expertise to reasonably qualify them to be publication gatekeepers in the journal's field.
- Two or more journals have duplicate editorial boards (i.e., same editorial board for more than one journal).
- The journals have an insufficient number of board members, (e.g., 2 or 3 members), have concocted editorial boards (made up names), name scholars on their editorial board without their knowledge or permission or have board members who are prominent researchers but exempt them from any contributions to the journal except the use of their names and/or photographs.
- There is little or no geographical diversity among the editorial board members, especially for journals that claim to be international in scope or coverage.
- The editorial board engages in gender bias (i.e., exclusion of any female members).
Business management

The publisher...

- Demonstrates a lack of transparency in publishing operations.
- Has no policies or practices for digital preservation, meaning that if the journal ceases operations, all of the content disappears from the internet.
- Begins operations with a large fleet of journals, often using a common template to quickly create each journal's home page.

- Provides insufficient information or hides information about author fees, offering to publish an author's paper and later sending an unanticipated "surprise" invoice.
- Does not allow search engines to crawl the published content, preventing the content from being indexed in academic indexes.
- Copy-proofs (locks) their PDFs, thus making it harder to check for plagiarism.
Integrity

• The name of a journal is incongruent with the journal's mission.
• The name of a journal does not adequately describe the journal with the word "Canadian" or "Swiss" in its name when neither the publisher, editor, nor any purported institutional affiliate relates whatsoever to Canada or Switzerland.
• In its spam email or on its website, the publisher falsely claims one or more of its journals have actual (Thomson-Reuters) impact factors, or advertises impact factors assigned by fake "impact factor" services, or it uses some made up measure (e.g. view factor), feigning/claiming an exaggerated international standing.
• The publisher sends spam requests for peer reviews to scholars unqualified to review submitted manuscripts, in the sense that the specialties of the invited reviewers do not match the papers sent to them.
• The publisher falsely claims to have its content indexed in legitimate abstracting and indexing services or claims that its content is indexed in resources that are not abstracting and indexing services.
• The publisher dedicates insufficient resources to preventing and eliminating author misconduct, to the extent that the journal or journals suffer from repeated cases of plagiarism, self-plagiarism, image manipulation, and the like.
• The publisher asks the corresponding author for suggested reviewers and the publisher subsequently uses the suggested reviewers, sufficiently vetting their qualifications or authenticity. (This protocol also may allow authors to create faux online identities in order to review their own papers.)

Authors requested to submit two reviews together with manuscript!

Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences lists an Amman (Jordan) address
Other

A predatory publisher may...

- Re-publish papers already published in other venues/outlets without providing appropriate credits.
- Use boastful language claiming to be a "leading publisher" even though the publisher may only be a startup or a novice organization.
- Operate in a Western country chiefly for the purpose of functioning as a vanity press for scholars in a developing country (e.g., utilizing a mail-drop address or PO box address in the United States, while actually operating from a developing country).
- Provide minimal or no copyediting or proofreading of submissions.
- Publish papers that are not academic at all, e.g. essays by laypeople, polemical editorials, or obvious pseudo-science.
- Have a "contact us" page that only includes a web form or an email address, and the publisher hides or does not reveal its location.
How to identify a predatory journal/publisher

- Online journal
- ‘Aggressive’ solicitation
- Request to submit identified as **Spam**
- Obscure title, publisher, source
- No journal impact factor*
- Listed on the ‘BEALL’ website

22 June 2016 * Beware bogus JIF values
Example: JSciMedCentral

****SPAM****

Odd style

Address (and names) not compatible with language

Grammatical errors

Listed in Beall’s List of Predatory Publishers

125 journals published

Odd style

Address (and names) not compatible with language

Grammatical errors

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Listed in Beall’s List of Predatory Publishers

125 journals published
Call for Papers
American International Journal of Biology
ISSN: 2334-2323 (Print) 2334-2331 (Online)

American International Journal of Biology is an international journal devoted to rapid publication of original research and review articles in all biology fields. The aim of this journal is to become the premier source of high quality research. Contributions are welcome from all over the world. The journal is published bimonthly. The aim of the editors is to publish timely, useful and informative results that will be of value to a general biological audience. Every article published in our journal is promoted to researchers working in the respective field. All research articles published in the journal have undergone rigorous peer review, based on initial editor screening and anonymized refereeing by at least two anonymous referees.

The journal is published by the American Research Institute for Policy Development that serves as a focal point for academicians, professionals, graduate and undergraduate students, fellows, and associates pursuing research throughout the world.

Payment Instructions

You have to pay the publication fee through Western Union/ XpressMoney / Placid Express/ IME/SpotCash

The payment is to be made at the address of Dr. Md. Mamin Ullah who is the director of the publishing company (Centre for Promoting Ideas), although the journal will be published from USA. Please make the payment through Western Union/ XpressMoney / Placid Express/ IME/SpotCash to his address.
A simple test.....

Greetings for the day!
Peertechz salutes you for your compendium of writings which immensely help the global society and their descendants understand and shed light on and about Peertechz Journal of Biological Research and Development. Your published manuscripts are evidence that you have innate ability and prodigies for research and writing.

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Watch out for……

• **African Journal of xxxxxxxxxx**
  – Published by Academic Journals (a Nigerian ‘fleet’ publisher, defined as a predatory publisher, with 112 journal titles)
  – No ISI JIF (withdrawn)
  – Very low publication standards
  – Editorial Board is partly bogus

• **Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences**
  – Published by the Mediterranean Centre for Social and Educational Research (on Beall’s list)

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**Important Announcement!**

Someone hijacked our letter of acceptance and is asking money to authors, specially in Iran. Please do not submit anything to third parties but send your papers directly to our email address: mjss@mcser.org. Only the letter of acceptance issued by us and send through our email is valid. Be careful, do not pay money to intermediary people but contact always the journal.
Misleading Metrics

JIFs (Journal Impact Factors) are assigned independently for journals by the Thomson-Reuters Institute for Scientific Information (ISI).

“a systematic, objective means to critically evaluate the world's leading journals, with quantifiable, statistical information based on citation data.”

Thomson-Reuters ISI publishes an annual Journal Citation Report (JCR), which lists JIF values for academic journals.

The widespread use of JIF values as a measure of journal (and paper) quality has led to the development of a plethora of commercial clones, who provide (for a fee) a metric purporting to be a valid JIF etc.
Hijacked journals

Hijacked Journals

Sometimes someone will create a counterfeit website that pretends to be the website of a legitimate scholarly journal. The website creators then solicit manuscript submissions for the hijacked version of the journal, pocketing the money. In some cases the legitimate versions of the journals are only published in print form and they may not have websites.

In the table below, the hijacked journal is listed in the left column; the corresponding authentic version of the journal is on the right. In cases where no website can be found for the original journal, a link is made to a bibliographic record for the journal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hijacked Journal</th>
<th>Authentic Journal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACADÉMIE ROYALE DES SCIENCES D’OUTRE-MER BULLETIN DES SEANCES</td>
<td>Bulletin des séances- Académie royale des sciences d’outre-mer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acoreana Journal (Journal of Acoreana)</td>
<td>Açoreana: revista de estudos açoreanos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acta Bioethica</td>
<td>Acta Bioethica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTA CIRURGICA BRASILEIRA</td>
<td>Acta cirúrgica Brasileira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afinidad</td>
<td>Afinidad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGROCHIMICA</td>
<td>Agrochimica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIMS Report Journal</td>
<td>AIMS report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Journal of Albertiana</td>
<td>Albertiana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amoeba Journal</td>
<td>Amoeba: NJN-mededelingenblad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anais da Academia Brasileira de Ciências</td>
<td>Anais da Academia Brasileira de Ciências</td>
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<td>Anare Research Notes</td>
<td>ANARE Research Notes</td>
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</table>
Genuine, or not?

From: Chamu Munna <mv1@cceeds.org>
To: sn1@pmme.co.in
BC: Don Cowan
Subject: *****SPAM***** Last date for paper submission to: 20th June 2016

Today is last date for paper submission: Elsevier Materials Today Proceedings and Material Science Forum.

Please forward the information to your students/colleagues/friends.

PACE, Ongole, Andhra Pradesh, India is going to organize International Conferences:

   Publication: Elsevier: Materials Today Proceedings,

2. International Conference on Materials and Power - 2016
   Publication: Materials Science Forum,

Further details can be at:

(PMME-2016): http://ow.ly/Xgwz301qyvN

(ICMP-2016): http://ow.ly/ahxH301qvDE

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Consequences.....

• Everyone can see your publication record (Scopus, ISI WoS, Google Scholar)
  – Reputation
  – Career advancement
  – NRF rating

• A list of low-ranked publications does NOT enhance your CV!
‘Predatory’ Conferences

• **Academic conferences**
  – Organised by ‘scientists’, for ‘scientists’, not-for-profit

• **Predatory Conferences**
  – Organised by commercial entities, for scientists, *purely for profit*
  – Poorly organised
  – Low merit, standards, no peer review
Recognising ‘predatory’ conferences

Conference series LLC invites all the participants across the globe to attend the World conference on Ecology and Ecosystems during, Sep 11-13, 2017 at Madrid, Spain that includes prompt keynote presentations, oral talks, poster presentations and exhibition. Ecology and Ecosystems 2017 provides a platform for researchers/scientists to share and globalize their research work while the participants from industry can promote their products thus facilitating dissemination of knowledge. The scope of Ecology and Ecosystems 2017 is to bring the advancements in the field of biodiversity, ecology, ecosystems, environmental sciences, forest sciences etc.

Recommended Sessions

- Acquatic ecology
- Animal ecology
- Biodiversity
- Chemical Ecology
- Coastal Ecology and Ecosystems
- Community and ecosystem dynamics
- Conservation and Management
- Ecosystems ecology
- Evolutionary Ecology
- Forest ecology
- Marine ecology
- Population Ecology
… and worse still…

• Bogus conferences
  – Pay registration fee
  – Submit abstract
  – Purchase expensive airline ticket
  – Book expensive hotel
  – Travel to venue, and discover…..

  – That no conference is scheduled at that site at that time.
Summary

• Use common sense, caution and web resources
• If something looks too good to be true, it probably is!
• If something looks (and feels) bad, it probably is!
• If in doubt, ask!
• Happy publishing