

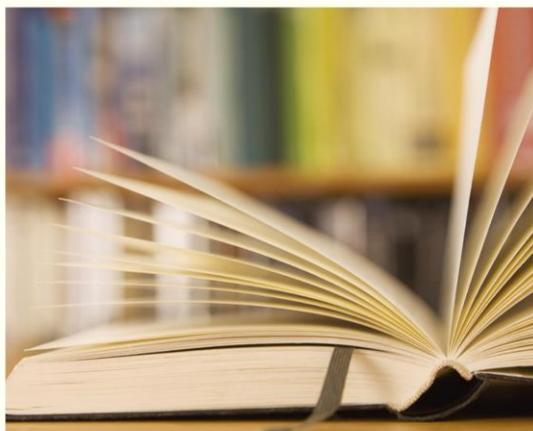
Predatory Journals:
How to spot them



Are you thinking about publishing your research and joining a credible academic conversation? Then you need to be aware of

PREDATORY JOURNALS:

How to spot them



This spotters guide to the predatory publishing world and its journals is intended for both new researchers, but also more established researchers.

Predatory publishers prey upon any unsuspecting researcher.

So it does not matter whether you are bombarded by journal editors who want you to submit your research for their publications, or if you are brand new to the research publication game: if you have no idea whether these publishers are:

- *Authoritative*
- *Qualifies you for government subsidy*
- *Open access*

Well then hopefully this spotters guide can assist you to make an informed decision.

Predatory journals?

- Money makes the world go round
- Time is money

So exactly what does a predatory journal look like?

The two main characteristics revolve around the ability of these journals to generate money for their publishers:

- Firstly your author fees are used to make money (remember predatory publishers are exploiting academic writings to make money)
- Secondly, no use is made of the peer review system, why? because it's a time consuming process and dragged out and will therefore cut into their profits.

Spot them: do your own investigating

- Go to their website – look and feel
- Check the scope of the journal for ambiguity
- Try to make contact with the editor
- What does an actual published article look like?
- Check the editorial board – qualifications

We have compiled a few guidelines that can assist you to spot a predatory journal.

This sounds obvious, but focus on details e.g. spelling errors, language (is it academic) and recent updates

How focused is the journal on a specific subject area. Be careful of journals with ambiguous titles e.g. International Journal of Research, that doesn't convey anything specific about the subject content. Peer reviewed academic journals have specific focus areas, with names to match e.g. Nursing Journal, South African Journal of Mercantile Law. The titles are clearly subject specific

Is the editor contactable. Preferably you would like to make personal contact with the editor to find out more about the journal and their interest in your research. Check for an academic email address that is connected to an institution Be wary of Gmail accounts, because there is no way to connect these accounts to academic institutions.

Again, this is important, because if there are mistakes, it could mean that the peer review system is either malfunctioning or there is none.

Where does the editorial board originate from; do you recognize their academic credentials e.g. qualifications and institutions.

Who can help to spot them and what are other warning signs?

Your faculty or subject librarian can help!

More predatory Journal warning signs:

- Abnormally quick turnaround time between submitting a paper and publication
- Imaginary peer reviewers
- Imaginary and inflated journal impact factors are quoted
- Vague indication of the ownership and location of publisher
- Authors fees are used to publish the document as 'Open Access'

<http://thinkchecksubmit.org/check/>

The first thing to do is consult with your faculty, subject or research librarian. These librarians are equipped to assist you to weed out predatory journals from the academic publishing jungle.

But, if its Saturday night and your librarian is nowhere to be found, check out these warning signs for predatory journals:

The turnaround time between submitting and publishing your chapter or article is insanely short. Remember the more articles published in the journals, the more money they make. Normally it can take months and even years for an article to be published in an academic recognized journal, because the peer review system is a long and thorough process.

Predatory journal publishers most probably have never heard of these or use imaginary ones – and remember without the expertise, knowledge (and lets not forget TIME) of peer reviewers – the turn around time is reduced!

You know about IF used by WoS and journal metrics on Scopus. Predatory journals use made up ones that look and sound similar to the real thing leading you into a false sense of security.

The harder predatory publishers are to find the easier it is for them to carry on with what they are doing and to get away with it.

If the promise of your valuable research will be free for all to read, sounds too good to be true, then it is. Yes, that's right, your authors fee pays for free access. The list is long, so please checkout this link for more warning signs.

For example... African Journal of Business Management



- Authors fee
- Increased self citations since launch
- Increase in articles published over short period
- Peer reviewers not mentioned
- No contact details for editorial board

<http://www.academicjournals.org/journal/AJBM>

We have selected a journal that exhibits certain predatory aspects to illustrate the before mentioned criteria.

Yes and what's more it's advertised on their website. \$550 per article.

This journal was indexed on WOS JCI, but due to an alarming number of self-citations, its coverage was suspended.

This aspect is directly connected with the previous point. Another reason why WOS suspended coverage on JCI

Usually journals are proud of their peer reviewers and therefor advertise their credentials prominently on their website. Not this one though. It's lack of mentionable peer reviewers is concerning.

Good luck to anyone who tries to find the contact details of editors. Physical addresses are supplied, editor's names are supplied, but no contactable number or email is supplied.

Please feel free to browse through their website – see if you can spot any other predatory publishing warning signs.

Additional resources

- [Predatory publishing in South Africa](#)
- [Scholarly publication ethics: practical problems from the South African experience](#)
- [We Now Know Why Jeffrey Beall Removed List of \(Allegedly\)](#)
- [The Ethics Blog](#)
- [Journal evaluation tool](#)
- [Scientific publications tips](#)

So, we hope that you will now be more aware of predatory publishing and journals. We have compiled a short reading list comprising ppt presentations, blogs and even a FB page for further reading.

These two presentations were delivered at the predatory workshop on 17 August 2017 at Stellenbosch University.

- The first presentation covers PP in South Africa, including practical case studies. It was undertaken by the Centre for Research, Science and Technology at SU
- The 2nd presentation by AOSIS, an Open Access publishing company, presents a framework for good governance in the South African publishing industry. It is a handy do's and don'ts for SA authors.
- The 3rd entry is a list of the famous or infamous predatory list compiled by American librarian, Jeffrey Beall. Please note that the last update was done in Jan. 2017. There are numerous articles and videos online to read on this list.
- The 4th entry is an up-to-date (and also keep up to date) blog published by the Centre for Research Ethics & Bioethics (CRB) at Uppsala University, Sweden. Anyone can sign-up to receive updates.
- The 5th entry is a comprehensive evaluation tool that measures academic credibility of journals. It was designed by academics at Loyola Marymount

University, in California.

- And the last link takes you to a Facebook page. Please don't be surprised, because, but it's a really handy page with general good guidance on academic publishing.

And that's it: we hope that this spotters guide will help you to avoid the dangers of predatory publishing. For assistance: never fear when your librarian is near.

Post script

The best way to avoid predatory publications is to ask yourself why you want to get published.

You get published in order to contribute to a knowledge conversation - and so you should select a publication which is credible and where that conversation is taking place.

If you're selecting journals on the basis of soliciting emails, rather than by the references you are using to build your argument, then you will be very vulnerable to predatory publications.

Sioux McKenna, 2018



See also

<http://postgradenvironments.com/2017/10/16/selecting-journal-publication/>

The final of the three videos in the link above addresses the issue of predatory publications

<http://postgradenvironments.com/2017/11/06/predatory-journals-identify-avoid/>

and

<https://theconversation.com/why-developing-countries-are-particularly-vulnerable-to-predatory-journals-86704>



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