Skills Boost: Predatory Publishing

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Session outline

- Definitions: what do we mean by 'predatory publisher?'
- Why are they a problem?
- Finding a 'home' for your work
- Warning signs: what to look out for
- Predatory publisher checklist
- Avoiding predatorily published research

Learning outcomes

- Understand what is meant by the terms 'predatory publishing' and 'predatory publisher'
- Be aware of why predatory publishing is considered to be a problem
- Be aware of tools you can use to find a suitable 'home' for your work
- Recognise the warning signs of a predatory publisher
- Apply a checklist of criteria to determine whether a publisher is predatory or problematic

Definitions

"Those that unprofessionally exploit the gold Open Access model for their own profit" – Jeffrey Beall

"Any publisher which operates on an exploitative business model" – Peaches Udoma

"An exploitative open-access publishing model that involves charging publication fees to authors without providing the editorial and publishing services associated with legitimate journals"

- Wikipedia

A clear definition?

"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"
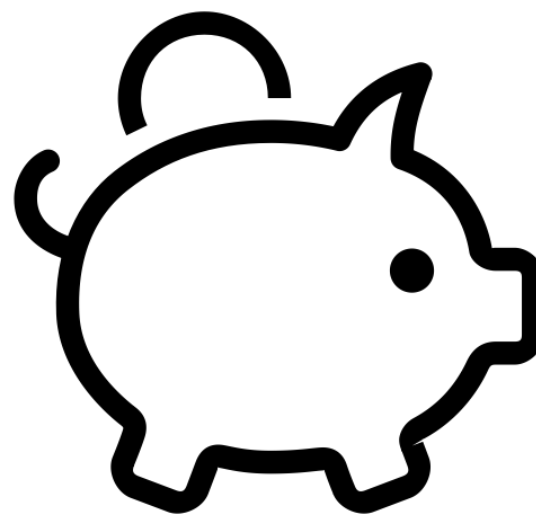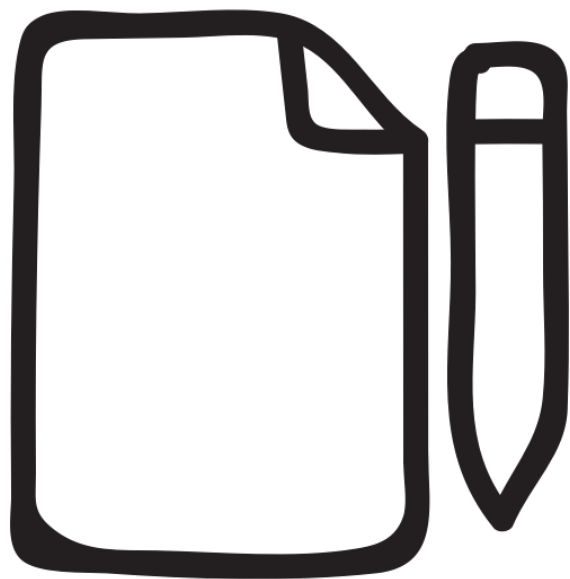
- Nature

Characteristics

- Solicit content via email

- Charge for non-existent services

- Misrepresents itself

- Lack of transparency

- Lists of predatory publishers can be unhelpful

What's the problem?

Open Access Recap:

"Fuzzy", Homogeneous Configurations

Margaret Simpson, Kim Jong Fun and Edna Krabappel

ABSTRACT

The Ethernet must work. In this paper, we confirm the improvement of e-commerce. WEKAU, our new methodology for forward-error correction, is the solution to all of these challenges.

I. INTRODUCTION

Unified perfect symmetries have led to many unproven advances, including Markov models and write-ahead logging. perform functions such as Force sensitivity, cell differentiation.

II. RELATED WORK

A litany of related work supports our use of pseudorandom epistemologies [6], [7]. Thomas and White [3] and N. Sasaki presented the first known instance of the understanding of web browsers [8]. Further, the original approach to this obstacle by Scott Shenker was good; on the other hand, it did not completely accomplish this purpose. Even though this work was published before ours, we came up with the solution first but could not publish it until now due to red tape. Unfortunately, these solutions are entirely orthogonal to our efforts.

Academic/societal impact

- Bad research is given undeserved credibility
- Other researchers may build upon poorly conducted or even false research
- Questionable articles may mislead the public who find the information online, potentially reducing public trust in science

Individual impact

- Legitimate work is presented next to poor-quality research

- Lost chance to publish

- Negative impact on reputation

When are they **not** a problem?

- Think about the country context

- Different reward systems mean different behaviours

- Are these publishers just meeting a need?

There is a 'home' for your work

- who/where do you read?

- where do they publish?

- Where do your colleagues or researchers in your field publish?

Image by slinky2000 on Flickr (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Some tools to help you find a 'home'

- **Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) -** https://doaj.org/about/.

- Many publishers provide journal finder tools. For example, IEEE - https://publication-recommender.ieee.org/home (there are lots more!)

- **Jane** - https://jane.biosemantics.org/.

- **Sherpa Romeo** - https://v2.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/

- Institutional 'Read and Publish' agreements Check with the Open Access team to see which journals are covered (openaccess@strath.ac.uk).

Warning signs: what to look out for

- Overly flattering emails, asking for a fee and promising very fast publication times

- Publishing on a vast range of topics

- Website quality – poorly written or unprofessional looking (bearing in mind cultural differences)

- Lack of transparency – difficult to find information, e.g. editorial processes or contact details

- Misleading or false information, e.g. the editorial board

- Previous publications are of poor quality

- A new conference with little information available about it

A to Z Predatory Publishing Checklist

Predatory Publishing A-Z Elements

Monash Health Library

Predatory journals have no clear-cut definition and may be hard to identify. There is no single checklist for determining if a publisher or journal is predatory. However, reputable publishers and journals share some common qualities and features. Consider these A-Z elements when evaluating publishers and journals.

A uthors
The authors are affiliated with, or the journal is established by academic and research institutions or organisations. This information is easily found in the publication or on their website.

B e vigilant
Use a tool such as Think. Check. Submit. to determine if a journal or publisher is legitimate or predatory. It is good practice to thoroughly research the journal before submitting a paper.

C opyright
User and author rights and copyright information are clearly stated on the publisher or journal website. See the Copyright section of our Compliance guide for more information.

D irectory/DOI
Open access journals are listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals. Articles have a unique Digital Object Identifier (DOI).

E ditors/editorial boards
Editors or Editorial Boards consist of recognised experts in the publication's subject field.

F ees
Publication fees are clearly explained and easy to find on the publisher's website. They should not be hidden.

G oogle
Google Research offers quality research and Google has collaborated with industry and university researchers to publish research. Google Scholar Metrics is an option for locating health and medical sciences journal rankings and impact factors.

H ijacked journals
Hijacked journals are predatory journals which are created to look like reputable journals. Reputable journals have no connection to these hijacked journals. A list of hijacked journals can be found here.

I SSN
Every journal has its own unique and regular ISSN. Hijacked journals typically use the ISSN of a legitimate journal.

J ournal ranking & impact factor
Predatory journals may advertise a fake or inflated impact factor. For more information about journal ranking and impact factor, visit the Journal Ranking section of our Publishing guide.

K een on research
Reputable publishers in medical and science fields invest resources in research outcome and innovation, promoting current research and participating in professional development events. See an example of this from the BMJ.

L andscape
The academic publishing landscape is clearly defined, e.g. the publishing and access options and the editing and publishing services that are included with each product line or brands. Here is an example from publisher Springer Nature.

M ethodology
Evaluate the quality of the papers in the journal, i.e. methodology, use of language, formatting, authors etc. Predatory journals may copy or translate English and non-English articles from reputable journals. Beware of red flags such as incorrect or clumsy use of scientific terms and language, formatting errors and more.

N avigation
Website navigation is well designed and maintained. The language used is at the standard expected of an academic publication.

O pen access
A publisher who provides open access options should have a clear Open Access Policy on its website. They should be a member of the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA). For more information about open access and open access policies, visit the Open Access section of our Publishing Guide.

P eer review
Peer review processes play an important role in quality control. It must be rigorous and explained clearly on the publishers' website. Predatory journals typically have poor or non-existent peer review processes.

Q uota
Reputable journals and publishers will have a quota for republishing the same or modified version of a paper. They may not accept a paper which has already been submitted to other journal(s). Predatory journals tend to publish most, or all, the submissions they receive.

R equirements
Reputable journals provide clear requirements regarding the submission of papers. Predatory journals may prefer email submissions.

S cope
Journal scope is well defined and clearly stated on the journal's website. Published articles align with the scope of the publication or the expertise of the editors and editorial board.

T rack record
Publishers and journals have a good track record on quality publishing and management within their scope and have been working to a regular publishing schedule.

U nwanted solicitation
Reputable publishers and journals typically do not send call-for-paper emails or other forms of solicitation to researchers individually. These methods are often used by predatory journals. Use caution!

V erifiability
Contact information of the publishers and authors are clearly provided and available on the website and/or publications.

W orkflows
The publishing schedule and publication frequency is clearly stated. Publishing options and workflows or stages, including the peer review process, are clearly indicated.

X (Retraction policy)
Reputable journals have clear retraction policies while predatory journals do not.

Y (Why and how?)
Publishers and journal editors are approachable and will answer publishing-related enquiries and clarifications.

Z ero tolerance for plagiarism
Publishers promote zero tolerance for plagiarism and have put steps in place to prevent plagiarism during the publishing process. See Elsevier, Nature and Springer for examples of prevention policies.

Further reading

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Berger, M. (2017). Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Predatory Publishing but Were Afraid to Ask. CUNY Academic Works. https://academicworks.cuny.edu/ny_pubs/141/

Menon, V. (2019). Hijacked journals: what they are and how to avoid them. https://clarivate.com/blog/hijacked-journals-what-they-are-and-how-to-avoid-them/

Avoiding predatorily published research

- Search using an authoritative source, rather than a general search engine
- See A-Z list of databases: http://guides.lib.strath.ac.uk/az.php

- Commercial databases/search tools - e .g. Web of Science – evaluate the journals that they index, which must meet published criteria

- Limit searches to peer reviewed content only

- Be critical: examine author's credentials, review other articles from issue / other issues, review journal's homepage and information about the editorial board

What to do next?

- Skills Boost workshops
  - **Evaluating information:** https://bookings.strath.ac.uk/Home/Course/5513 (Wed 5 October)
  - **Literature searching:** https://bookings.strath.ac.uk/Home/Course/6124 (17 and 19 October)

- ALS topic

Acknowledgment

Please note that this presentation is adapted from slides created by Claire Sewell (available under a CC BY licence):

- Sewell, C. (2020) 'Know Moore About: Predatory Publishers' [PowerPoint presentation]. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.17613/7jam-7z37 (Accessed 17 August 2022)

Some material is also adapted from:

- Stephan, K. 'How to support researchers in identifying trusted journals and publishers for their research' [PowerPoint presentation]. Available at: https://www.uksg.org/event/free-uksg-webinar-predatory-publishing-how-support-researchers-identifying-trusted-journals (Accessed 22 August 2022)

References

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- Sewell, C. (2020) 'Know Moore About: Predatory Publishers' [PowerPoint presentation]. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.17613/7jam-7z37 (Accessed 17 August 2022)
- Strinzel, M. et. al. (2019) 'Blacklists and whitelists to tackle predatory publishing: a cross sectional comparison and thematic analysis' mBio 10(3). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1128/mBio.00411-19 (Accessed 24th August 2022)

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- www.strath.ac.uk/library
- help@strath.ac.uk (IS and Library Services enquiries)
- Openaccess@strath.ac.uk (Open Access enquiries)
- Support portal: https://helpdesk.strath.ac.uk/

Skills Boost sessions
 https://www.strath.ac.uk/library/skillsboost/

Academic Library Skills on Myplace:
https://classes.myplace.strath.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=25507
Or search 'Academic Library Skills' in Find a class.

Thank you for joining us!