Predatory, Pseudo, or Deceptive Journals
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Trustee, WAME

What is a predatory/pseudo/deceptive journal?
Publishers and/or journals that
• intend to deceive readers, and sometimes authors
• publish scholarly content like peer-reviewed journals
• do not provide editorial services such as peer review and editing
• presumably for the primary purpose of making money

Why are they a problem?
• Deceptive for readers, authors
• Content not peer reviewed but not labeled as such
• Poor research reporting
• Ethics often not reported
• Duplicate publication, plagiarism goes unchecked
• Wasted research time, money
• Undermines promotion & tenure process
• If referred to and cited, contents will become part of the scientific literature with little knowledge of what it is or isn't peer reviewed

2002-2005: Merck pays Elsevier to publish Australasian Journal of Bone and Joint Medicine
• Marketing compilation designed to look like an independent peer-reviewed medical journal without disclosure that Merck paid for it
• Distributed to ~10,000-20,000 doctors in Australia

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/14/business/14vioxxside.html?_r=0

http://gunther-eysenbach.blogspot.com/2008/03/black-sheep-among-open-access-journals.html

2007: Elsevier’s traditional journal Applied Mathematics and Computation accepted and published a paper created by SCiGen

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.amc.2007.03.011

This article has been removed consistent with Elsevier Policy on Article Withdrawal (http://www.elsevier.com/faculties/withdrawalpolicy). The Publisher apologizes for any inconvenience this may cause.
Open Access Publisher Accepts Nonsense Manuscript for Dollars

Would a publisher accept a completely nonsensical manuscript if the authors were willing to pay Open Access publication charges? After being spammed with invitations to publish in *Pervasive Science* journals earlier this year, I decided to find out.

Using *Scraper*, a software that generates grammatically correct, "citizen-free" (i.e. nonsensical) papers in computer science, I quickly created an article, complete with figures, tables, and references. It looks pretty professional until you read it. For example:

In this section, we discuss existing research into red-black trees, vacuum tubes, and coursework [10]. On a similar note, recent work by Takakashi suggests a methodology for predicting robust modularisation, but does not offer an implementation [9].

http://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2009/06/10/nonsense-for-dollars/

The Open-Access Movement Is Not Really about Open Access

Jeffrey Beall

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Abstract: While the open-access (OA) movement purports to be about making scholarly content open-access, its true motives are not clear. The OA movement is an anti-corporate movement that wants to deny the freedom of the press (companies) it disagrees with. The movement is also actively imposing onerous mandates on researchers, mandates that restrict individual freedom. To boost the open-access movement, its leaders sacrifice the academic futures of young scholars and those from developing countries, pressuring them to publish in lower-quality open-access journals.

The open-access movement has fostered the creation of numerous predatory publishers and predatory journals, increasing the amount of research misconduct in scholarly publications and the amount of pseudo-science that is published as if it were real science.

Who’s Afraid of Peer Review?

John Bohannon

*See all authors and affiliations*

10.1126/science.1253503

"obviously scientifically flawed research manuscript" submitted to 304 journals with publication fees selected from Beall’s list and DOAJ

- 157 accepted the manuscript (including journals published by Elsevier and Sage)
- At least 4 published the article
- Bohannon referred to “wild west” of open access publishing, but non-OA journals weren’t studied

Beall’s list criteria

Editor and Staff

- Unclear editor or editorial board
- Editor or editorial board overlaps with other journals
- Editorial board has unclear academic credentials, phony names, little or no geographical diversity, few or no female members
- Editorial board members are unaware they’re listed or are figureheads

Beall’s list criteria

Business management

- Lack of transparency in publishing operations including author fees
- No policies or practices for digital preservation
- Launches large fleet of journals at once
- Locks PDFs, prevents web crawling of site

Beall’s list criteria

Integrity

- Name of journal incongruent with journal’s mission, does not adequately reflect its origin
- False claims of impact factors or indexing; lists fake “impact factor”
- Insufficient resources devoted to preventing and eliminating author misconduct
- Publisher [sic] uses author-suggested reviewers without sufficiently vetting their authenticity

Beall’s list criteria

Other

- Duplicate publications without appropriate attribution
- Exaggerates status
- Operates in a Western country yet functions as a vanity press for scholars in a developing country (e.g., US mail drop or PO box address only)
- Provides minimal or no copyediting or proofreading
- Publishes nonacademic essays by lay people, polemical editorials, or obvious pseudo-science
- “Contact us” page includes only web form or email

Beall’s author warning signs

Poor journal standards/practice that suggest authors should publish elsewhere

- Author guidelines are copied or similar to other publishers
- Journal is excessively broad
- Journal combines >2 fields not normally combined
- Author has to both pay APCs and transfer copyright
- Poorly maintained website(s)
- Unauthorized use of licensed images


Olivarez, JD. et al. Format aside: applying Beall’s criteria to assess the predatory nature of both OA and non-OA library and information science journals. College & Research Libraries, 2018; 79(1), 52. doi: https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.79.1.52.

Stop this waste of people, animals and money

David Nishir, Larissa Shaner, Kelly A. Colby, Monu M. Lalu, James Gulapa, Mark T. Avey, Nadeem Ahmadzai, Mohamed Akebou, Pauline Barty, Andrew Beck

- ~2000 articles in ~200 journals from Beall’s list compared with Medline-indexed journals
- > half from high or middle income countries
- Research, ethics reporting much worse in predatory
- 17% of articles listed a funding source—NIH #1
- Most articles published from India (27%), US (15%)
- Identified 13 characteristics of predatory journals—essentially Beall’s criteria [circular]

Are Beall’s criteria specific to predatory journals?

- WoS category “information science & library science”
- 81 journals, of which 7 were OA
- 45 journals failed at least 1 of Beall’s 2012 criteria (>2 of 3 YES votes by analysts)
- All categories of publishers (commercial, association, university) failed at least 1 criterion
- All journals that failed are at least 10 years old; median age of journals is 32 yrs

Obrecht, J. et al. Format aside: applying Beall’s criteria to assess the predatory nature of both OA and non-OA library and information science journals. College & Research Libraries, 2018; 79(1), 52. doi: https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.79.1.52.
Specificity of Beall's criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Failing Journals in the Top Five Failed Criteria</th>
<th>Criteria Used</th>
<th>Number of Failing Journals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>URL or journal policies</td>
<td>Author and staff</td>
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How specific are Beall’s criteria? Not

“...In this study, the analysts argue that the individual elements of Beall’s Criteria are so general in design that evaluators might broadly apply them as measures of illegitimacy to any refereed academic journal, regardless of publishing model. By applying Beall’s Criteria to a list of both OA and non-OA well-regarded refereed academic LIS journals, this study demonstrates the subjective nature of his Criteria. While the Criteria may serve as an aid to researchers’ selecting publication outlets, this Criteria is presently not adequate for making such determinations because its elements focus more on the publisher and/or journal attributes rather than the quality of articles published by the outlet.”

Best approach?

• Evaluate journal adherence to standards
• Contact editorial board members
• Contact authors
• Evaluate journal content
• Evaluate journal peer reviews
• How much evaluation is enough?
• How frequently?

Why do authors publish in predatory journals?

• Authors of 300 articles from 50 journals from Beall’s list (most journals from developing countries despite US/UK PO Box)
• Reasons authors gave for publishing in predatory journals
  o Unaware of the reputation of journals to which they submitted research
  o Pressure to “publish or perish” and journals provided fast turnaround
  o More comfortable publishing in developing world journal
  o Thought they lacked the knowledge to submit to a more reputable journal


Transparency Principles

- Web site
- Name of Journal
- Peer Review Process
- Ownership/mgmt
- Governing Body
- Editorial team/contact
- Copyright and Licensing
- Author fees
- Research Misconduct
- Publication ethics
- Publishing schedule
- Archiving
- Revenue sources
- Advertising
- Direct marketing

http://www.wame.org/about/principles-of-transparency-and-best-practice

Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)

DOAJ is the leading directory providing access to quality, open-access peer-reviewed journals. It aims to increase discoverability and visibility of articles in Open Access journals. Currently, DOAJ covers over 11,167 journals from 125 countries, with 3,005,842 articles. It works with publishers to provide quality journals, focusing on improving the quality of applications submitted.

- 11,167 Journals
- 125 Countries
- 3,005,842 Articles

http://doaj.org
Presented on 7 April 2018, NMJI-IAMJE meeting, New Delhi

**DOAJ Seal**

- Journals must use DOIs as permanent identifiers provided with article metadata.
- Deposit content with a long term digital preservation or archiving program.
- Embed machine-readable CC licensing information in articles.
- Allow generous reuse and mixing of content, in accordance with CC BY, CC BY-SA or CC BY-NC license.
- Have a deposit policy registered with a deposit policy registry.
- Allow the author to retain copyright without restrictions.

Green tick: evaluated after March 2014

http://doaj.org

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**For Authors**

**THINK**

Are you submitting your research to a trusted journal? Is it the right journal for your work?

**CHECK**

Use our check list to assess the journal.

**SUBMIT**

Only if you can answer 'yes' to the questions on our check list.

http://thinkchecksubmit.org

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**Think. Check. Submit.**

- Do you or your colleagues know the journal?
- Do you recognize the editorial board?
- Can you easily identify and contact the publisher?
- Is the journal clear about the type of peer review it uses?
- Are articles indexed in services that you use?
- Is it clear what fees will be charged?
- Is the publisher a member of a recognized industry initiative?

https://thinkchecksubmit.org

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**WAME’s Approach**

http://www.wame.org/identifying-predatory-or-pseudo-journals

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**WAME “Warning Signs”**

- Editorial board or staff unaware of journal affiliation.
- No info re author fees or peer review in I for A.
- Little or no information re editor or editorial board.
- Journal website is not easily found via search.
- Spamming emails.
- Promised turnaround times that fast for review.
- No response to e-mail or telephone messages.
- Journal name very similar to well-known journal.
- Author affiliation/contact info not published.
- Publishes small or large, or variable # of articles.
- Publication fees are atypical.
- Articles hard to find via Google Scholar.

http://www.wame.org/identifying-predatory-or-pseudo-journals
Predatory/Pseudo/Deceptive Journals

• The “gold standard” of identification would be assessment of publication quality and peer review
• Know the signs
• Protect your own reputation by avoiding publishing in predatory journals
• Avoid citing predatory journals in your own work
• Academic institutions should avoid giving credit for predatory journal publications and give credit for legitimate publications
• Protect your journal against predatory labels by adhering to quality standards as much as possible
• Caveat emptor

Thank you!

Margaret Winker, MD
Trustee, WAME
margaretwinker@gmail.com
-Views are my own