

# Predatory publishing: Concepts, causes and consequences

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# Predatory publishing – matters of definition

# A definition: The watchdog – Jeffrey Beall



- Predatory journals are OA journals that exist for the sole purpose of profit
- These predators generate profits by charging (excessive) author fees, also known as article processing charges (APCs).
- These journals typically solicit manuscripts by spamming researchers (especially Yahoo and Gmail accounts)
- These journals engage in highly suspicious editorial practices, such as promising very short turn-around, declaring fake information on journal indexing, and so.

<https://scholarlyoa.com/2016/01/05/bealls-list-of-predatory-publishers-2016/>

# Black sheep / predatory / “grey” / fake / opportunistic journals


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- In 2008, Gunther Eysenbach called Bentham Publishers, Dove Medical Press and Libertas Academica the “black sheep” of OA that aggressively spams academics for articles
- Jeffrey Beal introduced the term “predatory” to describe exploitative OA journals (2010)
- Walt Crawford coined the term “grey” OA journals for gold OA journals not included in the DOAJ list, but on the Beall’s list (2014)
- “Fake” journals focus on profit without adequate peer review (Mehrpour and Khajavi, 2014; Hemmat Esfe et al., 2015)
- Greenblatt and Bertino labelled the journals as “opportunistic” (2018)

# The Ottawa declaration

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*"Predatory journals and publishers are entities that prioritise self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are characterised 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." (Grudniewicz et al., 2019)*



# Characteristics of predatory journals

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Seeking profit over contribution to scholarship	Characteristics related to article processing fees (APCs) and other sources of income
Misrepresentation of abstracting, indexing and metrics	Characteristics related to inappropriate inclusion in fake databases, indexing in sham services, fake metrics and the manipulation of metrics
Aggressive advertising and solicitation of articles	Characteristics related to indiscriminate and aggressive solicitation of publications, as well as inappropriate advertisements on websites
Inappropriate journal title and scope	Characteristics related to broad, indiscriminate coverage of disciplines
Lack of transparency in governance, editorial and publication practices	Characteristics related to the holding company, publisher, editorial board and editorial staff, as well as misinformation and unprofessional (or lack of) contact e-mail addresses. Characteristics related to article processing time, manuscript submission, publication policies, copyright retention and archiving

# Seeking profit over contribution to scholarship

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Predatory journals are characterised by:

- The deliberate deception of authors by either hiding or not disclosing fees (APC, handling fees, fast-track fees, etc.)
- The omission of any revenue-related information
- The simultaneous launch of a large number of journals, for example, in 2009 OMICS launched 200 journal titles

*"Predatory journals and publishers are entities that **prioritise self-interest at the expense of scholarship** and are characterised 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." (Grudniewicz et al., 2019)*


# Misrepresentation of abstracting, indexing and metrics

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Predatory journals are characterised by:

- False claims of indexing in Web of Science and/or Scopus
- Claims of inclusion in databases of companies that provide fake and misleading services
- Claims and listing of fake metrics

*"Predatory journals and publishers are entities that prioritise self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are **characterised 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." (Grudniewicz et al., 2019)*





So, I Nasim AHmed (CEO of EAS Publisher) would like invite you that Published your Valuable Research work in Our Journal which

### **East African Scholars Multidisciplinary Bulletin**

**Website:** <http://www.easpublisher.com/easmb/>

**Frequency:** Monthly

**ISSN:** 2617-4421 (Print) & 2617-717X (Online)

**Publication Fee:** USD \$25 or INR 1700

**Manuscript Submission:** [easpublisher@gmail.com](mailto:easpublisher@gmail.com)

Note: Please mention the **Journal name** to which manuscript is submitting.

**Immediate acknowledgement, urgent review and publication within 48 Hrs. after payment**

### **Indexing and Abstracting**

Google Scholar, Index Copernicus, Research Bible, World Cat, Eurasian Scientific Journal Index (ESJI) Citefactor, SHERPA/RoMEO, Scientific Indexing Services (SIS), Road-Directory of Open Access Scholarly Resources, Directory of Research Journals Indexing (DRJI) and others in Progress

# Examples of fake indexing listed on a predatory journal website

American Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development is stick to explore all publish content worldwide. For this purpose editorial board is planning all papers in following indexing:



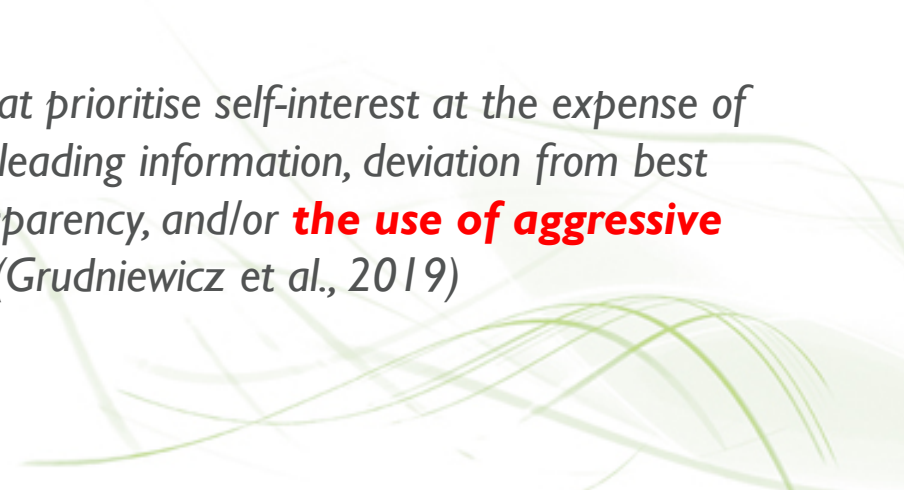
# Aggressive advertising and solicitation of articles

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Call for papers by predatory journals are characterised by:

- Daily indiscriminate e-mails to prospective authors
- Increasingly familiar and flattering language
- The use of business marketing language, for example submit two articles and pay for one

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# Example of spam e-mail

To  
2020-10-16 15:12:25 b

Subject: **Polite Calls for Paper from an International journal**

**Dear Colleague,**

Thank you for cooperation and support. Your kind attention is requested for the following announcement.

Language

**Journal:** Journal of Scientific Research and Reports (<https://tinyurl.com/journal-22d>)

**Frequency:** 15 days

Unknown journal title

**Publication model:** Online as well as Hard copy option

**Discounted Publication Charge:** 75 USD (4575 INR) (Up to the end of this month)

**Original Publication Charge:** 500 USD

Business marketing language

**Ongoing volume:** vol 21

**Transparent and High standard Peer review:** This journal follows highly respected OPEN peer-review system (Example: <https://tinyurl.com/review-22d>).

**Time Schedule:**

Submission to review decision: 10-12 days

Submission to publication: 12-15 days

Inappropriate indexing and metrics

**Indexing:**

NAAS score: 4.44, ProQuest, HINARI (United Nation's Database), EBSCOhost (USA), Google scholar, Ulrich's, CrossRef, Chemical Abstracts Service ("CAS"), CNKI (China), Qualis.

# Flattery

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Example: *First of all we would like to congratulate you for your consistent and incessant efforts till now in the field of ... Being aware of your eminence in the related field, we cordially invite you for your valuable contribution towards our journal (Geoinformatics & Geostatistics)*

‘Predatory conferences’ use even more bombastic phrasing, when calling for speakers; an invitation to the 3rd World Congress on Cell Science & Stem Cell Research includes the following text:

“Dear Dr... Greetings. First of all, our Organization wants to honor you for your achievement and Awards. Your path and experience may guide many young researchers to be a successful scientist in the world. With your majestic presence which will take the conference to a supreme level and also will support to harness the current and future research in Cell Science & Stem Cell Research.”

# A recent invitation I got...

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Dear Dr. Johann Mouton,

Greetings!!

Hope this email finds you in best of health & spirit

We take the privilege to invite you to address as **Honourable Chief Guest** at the "International Conference and Expo on Biotechnology and Healthcare (Biotechnology-2017) held during October 26-27, 2017 in Prof. Jayashankar Telangana State University, Hyderabad, India. In this conference participants, will have direct access to core biotechnology & health care professionals and decision makers providing a platform to increase their professional network, idea generation and learning opportunities.

Biotechnology field has great impact and scope in India, most of the young researchers attending the conference will be enlightened with your introductory speech at the conference. Hence, we have chosen the Hyderabad as suitable venue to organize this biotechnology congress.

Your Contributions in this field are remarkable, unforgettable & inspirational to young scientists. Also, it would be an opportunity for you

- to educate and motivate current generation biotechnology research holders and students by sharing your ideas
- to guide start-up companies by sharing your innovative ideas
- to meet international biotechnology & healthcare related scientists and students.
- to meet other laureates

# Inappropriate journal title and scope

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Predatory journals are characterised by:

- A broader disciplinary scope
- A combination of scientific disciplines with very little in common
- Copying the titles of acclaimed journals, for example *Science and Nature*
- Bolshete (2018) found that terms such as ‘Modern’, ‘Innovative’, ‘Green’, ‘Progressive’, ‘Ingenious’, and ‘Standard’ are frequently used in predatory journal titles

*"Predatory journals and publishers are entities that prioritise self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are characterised 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." (Grudniewicz et al., 2019)*

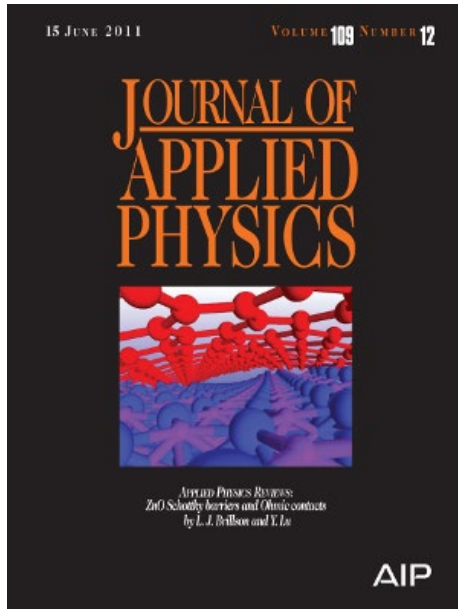
# Examples of inappropriate journal titles/ hijacked titles

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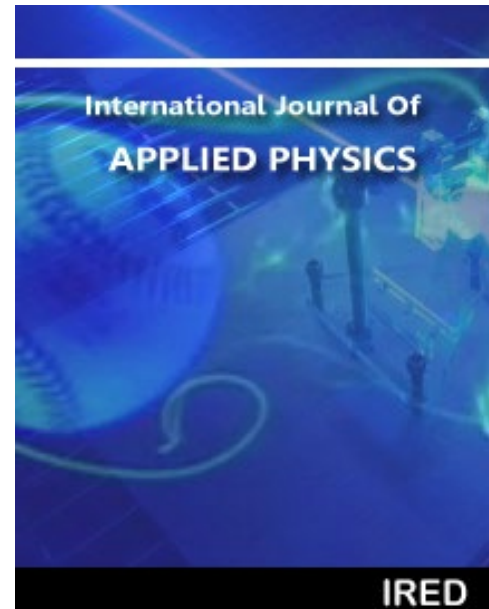
Several words are common to many titles: 'advanced', 'scientific', 'scholarly peer-reviewed', 'leading publisher'. Furthermore, Crawford (2014) found out that there are 74 'Indian Journal of...', 247 titles starting with 'Global', 300 with 'Open' (176 'Open Journal...' and 228 'The Open...'), 114 'Research Journal of...', 131 'Research Open Journal of...', and 2,208 'International Journal...'. Titles often repeat or overlap: Scientific Research and Essays, Standard Scientific Research and Essays, or International Journal of Scientific Research and Essays. Emerging common words are 'Modern', 'Innovative', 'Green', 'Progressive', 'Ingenious', and 'Standard'. Relatively recently, famous journals were hijacked by creating fake predatory websites or online sites for journals which exist only in print form: Wulfenia, Archives des Sciences, Jökull, Bothalia, Pensée, Sylwan, Ciencia e tecnica vitivinicola, or CADMO.



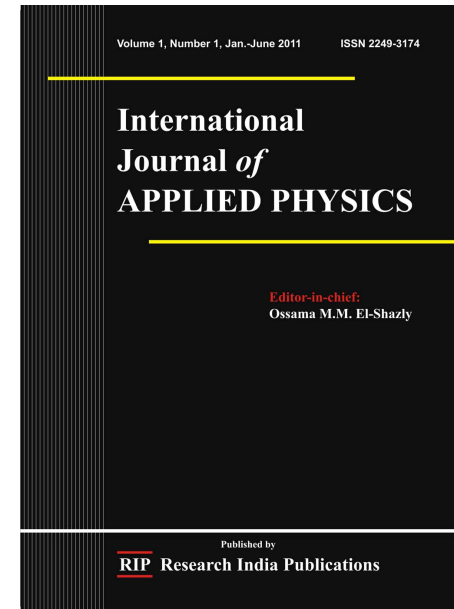
# Example of copied / mimicked journal titles



Legitimate journal



Predatory journals



# Lack of transparency in governance, editorial and publication practices

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Predatory journals are characterised by a lack of transparency in governance by:

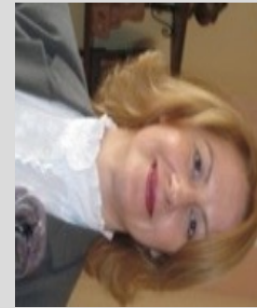
- Adding academics as editorial members without their knowledge or permission
- Listing one editorial board for a suite of journals regardless of the discipline/s of the individual journals (Beall, 2013)
- Inventing editorial board members
- Providing no information on a contact person and/or address
- Providing no information on the editor and listing an e-mail address from a free internet service provider such as Gmail
- The use of inappropriate publication office locations, for example either in residential areas or in an “office-for-hire” building with no discernible tenants

# Example



Prof Popova-Koskarov - the biographical information listed on the St. Kliment Ohridski Faculty of Pedagogy website at the SS Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje does not mention an editorial position at JERR

## JERR - Editorial Board



**Editor-in-Chief**

**Prof. Rozalina Popova**, *Skopje, Macedonia*.  
University SS Cyril and Methodius Pedagogical faculty,  
Skopje Partizanska bb, Skopje.

**Research Interest:** Marginalization of the upbringing function in schools, School violence and offences, aggression, classroom management, Intercultural education, overcoming stereotypes and prejudices, cultural sensitivity, cross cultural communication as well as teacher's professional development.

### Editorial Board Members(International)

**Prof. Monica Iulia Stănescu**, *Bucharest, Romania* / Didactics of Physical Education, Integrated Education.  
**Prof. Soonhwa Seok**, *Korea University* / Learning disabilities, moderate disabilities, Special education.  
**Dr. Marianna Tzekaki**, *Thessaloniki, Greece* / Preschool and early school age.  
**Prof. Eugenia Maria Pasca**, *Iasi, Romania* / Intercultural Education, Pedagogical Practice.  
**Dr. Teresa J. Kennedy**, *Texas, USA* / Teacher Education/Curriculum and Instruction  
**Dr. Janet Presnilla-Espada**, *Leyte Normal University, Phillippines* / Professional and Preschool Education.  
**Dr. Sheyin Adejoke Olabisi**, *Ogun State, Nigeria* / educational planning, computing in education.  
**Dr. Gordana Nikolić**, *Belgrade, Serbia* / strategy planning in area of inclusive education and sign language.  
**Dr. Manolache Viorella**, *Bucharest, Romania* / political philosophy, cultural studies and political modernism.  
**Dr. Adebola Ifamuyiwa**, *Ogun State, Nigeria* / test and measurement in education, evaluation in education.  
**Dr. Stavroulia Kalliopi**, *Athens, Greece* / education, ICT in education.  
**Dr. Jack Gladys U**, *Jalingo, Nigeria* / science education (chemistry).

When you rely on incentives, you undermine virtues. Then when you discover that you actually need people who want to do the right thing, those people don't exist.—Barry Schwartz, Swarthmore College (Zetter, 2009)

How did we get to this point?

# A combination of factors

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At least three, mutually reinforcing, drivers have contributed to the current state of affairs:

1. A culture of performance management that pervades every aspect of our academic culture
2. Incentive and reward systems that increasingly result in perverse, unintended consequences
3. And – in the specific case of scholarly publishing – the opportunities for fraudulent and unethical practices that have been made possible through the digital and OA movements.

One should also add that these factors thrive in a climate of financial austerity in HE that in itself fuels unhealthy competition amongst academics and scholars and force universities to focus on quantity and volume rather than quality and value.

# An all pervasive culture of performance management

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Arithmomania: Academic performance or success is now regularly equated with some score or a metric. And perhaps more specifically – metrics that privilege counts, outputs and numbers. Qualitative aspects of academic work – which by definition cannot be reduced to simple measures such as publication counts, h-indices of journal impact factors – are conveniently ignored. We are typically not asked – in our universities – to report on our contribution to scholarship, practice or policy OR the relevance of our work for society OR whether our research is interesting and attractive to emerging scholars. Only: how many articles we have published in the past year and how many subsidy-bearing outputs we have produced

**Arithmomania** is a mental disorder that may be seen as an expression of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).<sup>1</sup> Individuals suffering from this disorder have a strong need to count their actions or objects in their surroundings.

## Contemporary Campus Life: Transformation, Managerialism and **Academentia** (Keyan Tomaselli)



*Nowadays, publishing has become a treadmill. Everyone is expected to do it: professors, lecturers, university executives and even students. Well and good, except that much publishing is just rubbish – a niche so beguilingly exploited by the so-called predatory online publishers. Journals now are expected by many authors simply to offer the equivalent of product displays, and few have the time, inclination, or are rewarded, for engaging in debate, for writing book reviews or commentaries any more, there being no institutional rewards for this kind of work. .. Sadly, universities have become factories and academics incorporated into the publication conveyer belt. Universities are ranked, researchers are rated and sometimes roughed up by managerialism. We are turned into cogs who must meet pre-set outputs, and be counselled by line managers who may have themselves failed to meet their targets, and who may be lower ranked, with less publications and fewer degrees.*

<https://ndabaonline.ukzn.ac.za/UkzndabaStory/Vol9-Issue9/Publication%20and%20Debate>

# Perverse (unintended) consequences

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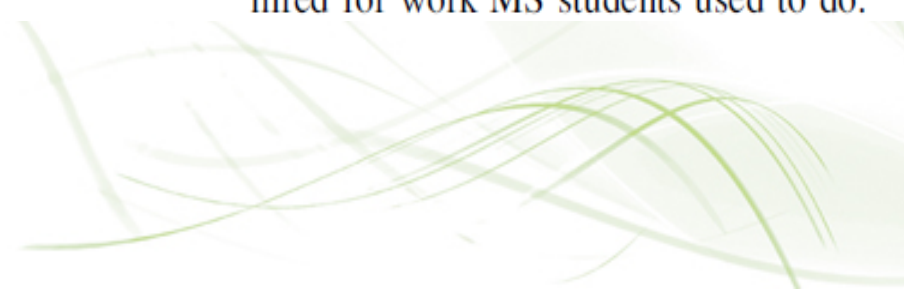
Academics are (also) human beings that respond to incentives. In universities across the world, academics are incentivized to work hard in order to get their PhD's, achieve tenure and get promoted. In South Africa we have two additional incentive schemes that further drive these behaviours: the NRF rating scheme and the DHET research subsidy scheme.

In recent study on the effect of incentives in American academia, Edwards and Roy (2017: *Academic Research in the 21st Century: Maintaining Scientific Integrity in a Climate of Perverse Incentives and Hyper competition*) the authors (see overleaf) show how good intentions very often give way to bad behaviour.



TABLE 1. GROWING PERVERSE INCENTIVES IN ACADEMIA

<i>Incentive</i>	<i>Intended effect</i>	<i>Actual effect</i>
“Researchers rewarded for increased number of publications.”	“Improve research productivity,” provide a means of evaluating performance.	“Avalanche of” substandard, “incremental papers”; poor methods and increase in false discovery rates leading to a “natural selection of bad science” (Smaldino and McElreath, 2016); reduced quality of peer review
“Researchers rewarded for increased number of citations.”	Reward quality work that influences others.	Extended reference lists to inflate citations; reviewers request citation of their work through peer review
“Researchers rewarded for increased grant funding.”	“Ensure that research programs are funded, promote growth, generate overhead.”	Increased time writing proposals and less time gathering and thinking about data. Overselling positive results and downplay of negative results.
Increase PhD student productivity	Higher school ranking and more prestige of program.	Lower standards and create oversupply of PhDs. Postdocs often required for entry-level academic positions, and PhDs hired for work MS students used to do.




# How digital publishing and the OA movement have “enabled” unethical behaviour

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It is important to emphasize that the digitization of publishing and the advent of OA journals and books are in and by themselves progressive forces. These “movements” have greatly increased access to knowledge, improved participation in and even the democratization of publishing through more transparent peer-review processes.

However, as is often the case, they also contain(ed) in themselves the potential for misuse and abuse by unscrupulous publishers, editors and other actors who are intent only on profiting from these through whatever means of deception and misrepresentation.



# Consequences and impact

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# Individual impact

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A first obvious negative consequence of frequent publication in predatory journals is that a (young) scholar builds a CV which is later shown to consist mainly or predominantly of articles in predatory (or at least questionable) journals. This can have a long-term negative impact that affect an academic career and possibilities for promotion, advancement and fund-raising

- Case example from Ghana PhD candidates

But this is not only confined to young and emerging scholars

- Case example of NRF rating applicant


# Institutional and systemic impact

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Where it becomes clear that academics at certain universities consistently engage in unscrupulous forms of unethical research and publication practices – whether these are predatory publishing, the deliberate pursuit of publication and citation cartels, plagiarism, assignment of fake authorship and so on – the reputation of these universities will increasingly become tainted. And the unchecked tolerance of such practices by university management will lead to an erosion of trust in the standing and reputation of the university not only by other academics, but also key roleplayers (alumni, funders) and ultimately the general public. Unless we remain vigilant about these kinds of behaviour and act decisively to root it out, public confidence and trust in science will wane to the long-term detriment of the scientific enterprise.

# Finally, what advice do we give to a student or young scholar?

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- Your default position when approached to submit a paper to any journal is to be suspicious!
  - Consult a senior colleague/scholar for advice on the selection of scientific journals
  - Look for the telltale signs as outlined above and check Beall's list (the *Paripax Journal* is listed by Beall)
  - As a general rule aim to publish in the top journals in your field. These are typically indexed in the *Web of Science* and/or *Scopus/DOAJ*. There are more than 26 000 journal titles in these two indexed combined. There are more than sufficient high-quality journals in your field to publish in.
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**Additional resources and references**

# Lists of predatory journals

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An anonymous postdoctoral researcher retrieved a cached copy of Beall's list of predatory publishers & journals is available <https://beallslist.net/> on 15 January 2017.

There is an update section below the list (in order to preserve the original list's integrity), where he/she adds new predatory publishers/journals <https://beallslist.net/#update>



# Lists of predatory journals continued

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- Cabells International launched Cabells' Predatory Reports (previously called the Blacklist) in June 2017, and the Predatory Reports database is available on a subscription basis <https://www2.cabells.com/about-predatory>
- The Dolos list is maintained by Prof Alexandre Georges, a theoretical physicist based in France. According to Georges, the list includes “predatory, parasitic or pseudoscientific” journals and publishers <https://www.professeur-alexandre-georges.info/dolos-list>


## Lists of predatory journals continued

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- The Kscien Organization for Scientific Research, a not-for-profit organisation, based in Kurdistan, maintains the Kscien list <http://kscien.org/predatory.php>
- An anonymous group of scholars and information professionals maintain a list of possibly predatory journals that is based on an archived version of Beall's list <https://predatoryjournals.com/>

# Resources on predatory journals

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- Download the Journal Evaluation Tool  
[https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/librarian\\_pubs/40/](https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/librarian_pubs/40/)
  - Use the Think.Check.Submit checklist  
<https://thinkchecksubmit.org/>
  - Is the journal a member of COPE  
<https://publicationethics.org/members>
  - Consult the Directory of Open Access Journals  
(<https://doaj.org/>)
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Scientometrics and Science,  
Technology and Innovation Policy

Thank you

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