

What Every Librarian Should Know About Predatory Publishing



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What is “Predatory” Publishing?

There are several qualities to look for when determining whether or not a publication could be considered “predatory”

There is no one (or set) of criteria that makes a publisher “predatory”, high quality, or anything in between.



A Grey Area

- Grey publications are not “predatory”
- Publishing is not the primary activity of the producing body – they are works produced outside of traditional publishing and distribution channels (not journals or book publishers) and they usually do not go through a peer review process
- Quality can vary a great deal making source evaluation imperative
- Being “grey” does not mean it’s without merit or validity – just that it’s nontraditional
 - Examples of grey literature include:
 - Conference abstracts, presentations, or proceedings
 - Regulatory data
 - Unpublished trial data (ex: NLM)
 - Government publications
 - Reports (such as white papers, working papers, or internal documentation)
 - Dissertations/theses
 - Patents
 - Policies & procedures



Quality Indicators

- Quality indicators you should look for in any publication:
 - [GVSU libraries OA journal quality indicators](#)
- Clear and transparent information
- Peer review process/clear editing process
- Cannot just submit and instantly publish



Check a Journal's Credibility

- **Tools to check on a journal's credibility**

- Ulrich's Web (paid)
- Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) (free)
- Scimago (free)



- **You can find out who's really behind a website**

- [Free WHOISis Lookup](#) - search domain name registration records
 - [Domain WHOIS Lookup](#) - discover information about a domain name
 - You can also use [EasyBib's URL Evaluation tool](#), but still do your own evaluation since software can be tricked.
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- Retraction Watch (new Beall's list) <https://retractionwatch.com/>

But...Well Known Journals Can't be Predatory!

- Some established well known journals may also exhibit some signs of “predatory” behavior.
 - Ex: Making you pay high amounts of money to publish
- Megajournals – journals that do not focus on only one discipline
 - *PLOS One, Nature, Science, BMJ Open, Scientific Reports* and the *Journal of the American Chemical Society* are megajournals that all have stellar reputations
 - Just because it's a megajournal doesn't make it good or bad



Subjectivity

- We are using two examples that we found searching “library” in Ulrich’s.
 - Example 1: *The Library*, ISSN: 0024-2160
 - Example 2: *Annals of Library and Information Studies*, ISSN: 0972-5423
- Step 1: Look them up using their ISSN’s in a search engine
- Step 2: Tell me what you see.
 - What quality indicators are there?
 - Are there red flags?
 - Would you feel comfortable submitting an article here?

General Advice

- It's up to you if you want to create a guide for your community
 - Since the issue is surrounded by controversy you may want to check before doing so
- Some criteria may indicate that a publication is legitimate but you must do your homework and make an informed choices on your own
 - You cannot rely on indicators alone, you must look at the whole picture
- Go with your gut. If something seems off, look elsewhere
- If you decide to publish with someone you can ask for protections to protect yourself. If they do not agree, you can go elsewhere.
- You can ask for other opinions: at your campus, through listservs, etc.

References

- [GVSU libraries OA journal quality indicators](#)
- <https://guides.mclibrary.duke.edu/sysreview/greylit>
- <https://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/research-assistance/format-type/grey-literature/>
https://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/file/0006/42981/The_different_types_of_scientific_literature.pdf
<https://www.gvsu.edu/library/sc/open-access-journal-quality-indicators-5.htm>
<https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/library/academicpublishing/predatoryjournals#s-lg-box-wrapper-24244170>
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2010105817749602>

Thank you for your time!

- Contact us with any questions you may have about this presentation.
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