

Predatory publishing: A to Z elements



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.

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Affiliation

Reputable journals are established by academic and research institutions or organisations.

Beware

Use a tool such as [Think. Check. Submit.](#) to determine if a journal or publisher is legitimate or predatory.

Copyright

User and author rights and copyright information are clearly stated on the website of reputable publishers or journals.

Directory

The [Directory of Open Access Journals](#) is a good reference list for legitimate open access journals.

Editors/ editorial boards

Editors or Editorial Boards of reputable journals consist of recognised experts in the publication's subject field.

Fees

Information on publication fees for reputable journals is easy to find and understand.

Genuine

An approach from a reputable publisher will correctly identify your research area.

Hijacked journals

Hijacked journals are predatory journals which are created to look like reputable journals. [Access a list of hijacked journals.](#)

ISSN

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

Journal ranking and impact factor

Predatory journals may advertise a fake or inflated impact factor. Journal impact factors can be checked in the [Journal Citation Reports \(JCR\) Database](#).

Known

Reputable journals are well-known. Ask your peers if they have heard of the journal you are submitting to.

Landscape

Check if the academic publishing landscape is clearly defined (e.g. the publishing and access options and the editing and publishing services).

Mistakes

Beware of red flags such as incorrect or clumsy use of scientific terms and language, formatting errors and more.

Non professional

Predatory publishers will often contact you using non-professional email addresses (i.e. not linked to an institution or publication).

Open access

Open access publishers should have a clear Open Access policy and be a member of the [Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association \(OASPA\)](#).

Peer review

Predatory journals typically have poor or non-existent peer review processes.

Quality

Predatory journals tend to publish most, or all, the submissions they receive, regardless of quality.

Requirements

Reputable journals provide clear requirements regarding the submission of papers.

Scope

The scope of reputable journals is well defined and clearly stated on the journal's website.

Track record

Reputable publishers and journals have a good track record on quality publishing and have been working to a regular publishing schedule.

Unwanted solicitation

Predatory journals often send call-for-paper emails or other forms of solicitation to researchers individually.

Verifiability

Contact information of reputable publishers and authors are clearly provided on their website.

Workflows

Publishing options and workflows or stages, including the peer review process, are clearly indicated for legitimate journals.

Retraction policy

Reputable journals have clear retraction policies while predatory journals do not.

You

Legitimate publishers and journal editors want to help you! They are approachable and will answer publishing-related enquiries and clarifications.

Zero tolerance for plagiarism

Reputable publishers promote zero tolerance for plagiarism and have put steps in place to prevent plagiarism during the publishing process.

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