A FORENSIC EXAMINATION OF A POSSIBLY QUESTIONABLE JOURNAL

JACKIE MARCHINGTON
DIRECTOR OF GLOBAL OPERATIONS, CAUDEX
The views and opinions expressed today:
- are not necessarily those of my employer
- are based on personal experience

The subject of the forensic examination has been de-identified
POSSIBLY QUESTIONABLE?

- Predatory journals, phrase coined by Jeffrey Beall
  - (Now removed) blacklist of possible or probable predatory journals and publishers

- Questionable/deceptive – Scholarly Kitchen¹
  - Attempting to deceive authors into paying for nonexistent or shoddy editorial services
  - Publishing journals or books that are presented to the marketplace as rigorous and scholarly, but consist in fact of whatever nonsense or garbage authors may wish to submit

¹ https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2015/05/11/should-we-retire-the-term-predatory-publishing/
The DOAJ Seal highlights features related to accessibility, openness, discoverability, reuse and author rights and have nothing to do with the scholarly quality of the papers published.

- have an archival arrangement in place with an external party
- provide permanent identifiers in the papers published
- provide article level metadata to DOAJ
- embed machine-readable CC licensing information in article level metadata
- allow reuse and remixing of content in accordance with a CC BY, CC BY-SA or CC BY-NC license
- have a deposit policy registered in a deposit policy directory
- allow the author to hold the copyright without restrictions
THE SCIENCE EXPOSÉ

Who’s Afraid of Peer Review?
A spoof paper concocted by Science reveals little or no scrutiny at many open-access journals

http://www.sciencemag.org/content/342/6154/60.full
Are you submitting your research to a trusted journal? Is it the right journal for your work?

Use our check list to assess the journal

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

Reference this list for your chosen journal to check if it is trusted.

- Do you or your colleagues know the journal?
  - Have you read any articles in the journal before?
  - Is it easy to discover the latest papers in the journal?

- Can you easily identify and contact the publisher?
  - Is the publisher name clearly displayed on the journal website?
  - Can you contact the publisher by telephone, email, and post?

- 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?
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- Do you recognise the editorial board?
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- Is the publisher a member of a recognized industry initiative?
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  - If the journal is open access, is it listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)?
  - If the journal is open access, does the publisher belong to the Open Access Scholarly Publishers’ Association (OASPA)?
  - Is the publisher a member of another trade association?
CASE STUDY: PROPOSED JOURNAL

- Manuscript rejected without review 4 times...
- Vendor agency had published there before
- Reported good (easy) experience
CASE STUDY: PROPOSED JOURNAL

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- Low APC compared with previous journals ($1000 – so not suspiciously low...)
- Rapid publication times
CASE STUDY: PROPOSED JOURNAL

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- Rapid publication times

- Simplistic website
- Really basic submission process
- Aggressive copyright agreement
TAKE A LOOK…
TAKE A LOOK…

Journal of

Featured Articles

Characterization of Geriatric Fracture Risk Factors. Major Sustained and Death in a Geriatric Center

Authors: Joseph J. Szekely, Valerie P. Buiten, Jeffrey C. Tollefson, William A. Reichenbach

2015, 8(1), 181-196

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Submission to Publication

Manuscripts submitted to are reviewed within 1 week. Accepted manuscripts are published as early as 24 hours after acceptance.

Mission

The mission of the Journal of CAUDEX is to combine the highest academic standards using peer review and a speedy publication process commensurate with the productivity of the industry.

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TAKE A LOOK…
COPYRIGHT TRANSFER AGREEMENT

Reads oddly compared with other publisher agreements

Unusually hung up on graphic images

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Searched, not found
Couldn’t check
Searched, not found
Couldn’t check
So what
Inside EBSCO, couldn’t check
Inside EBSCO, couldn’t check
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So what
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Part of ProQuest, so not found
Provider of Academic OneFile
Searched, not found
Kind regards,

Liz
Kind regards,
Liz

Publication Manager
Suite 2A

Phone: 
Email: info@...org
www.jose.org

JOURNAL OF...

ISPOR 18TH ANNUAL EUROPEAN CONGRESS
7-11 NOVEMBER 2015 - MILAN, ITALY

CAUDEX
Vendor agency in Suite 2B at same address as publishing house (Suite 2A)
Vendor agency owned by journal editor-in-chief
## SO WHOIS...?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registrant Contact</th>
<th>Admin Contact</th>
<th>Tech Contact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Name: Bluehost Inc</td>
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<td>Organization:</td>
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<td>Organization: Bluehost.com</td>
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Registrant email domain = law firm at Suite 2A (journal address)
Coincidentally same name as editor-in-chief
Conflict of Interest Declaration: The author declares that there are no competing interests.
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- Also
  - No other publications by publisher, despite “XXX aims to offer a portfolio of open and semi-open access journals covering all disciplines.”
  - Not really open access (registration required, or email requests), not CC and odd copyright transfer

- Nails
  - Editorial office co-staffed by for-profit agency in same sector
  - Editor-in-chief publishes in own journal without mentioning COI
OUTCOME

- Turnaround times not rapid at all
- The paper was accepted. The only peer review comment was a request to explain a common contraction

- We needed to amend the copyright transfer agreement – completely submissive to our requests
- As a non-CCC/CLA journal, we requested (and received) equivalent rights for internal use under licence
  - Either they didn’t understand the questions, or they didn’t care
THE MORAL OF THE STORY…
IF IT LOOKS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE
THEN IT PROBABLY IS!
THANK YOU

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