



The Perils and Pitfalls of Predatory Publishers....

MedComms Networking Event
www.MedCommsNetworking.com
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Jan Seal-Roberts, Publishing Director, Adis

‘Predatory’ Publishers? What are they?

Those who unprofessionally exploit the author-pays model of OA publishing for their own profit*



**Jeffrey Beall (Academic Librarian at University of Colorado in Denver)*

These companies aim to attract article-processing charges and other revenues under false pretences, either by:

- **pretending to be what they are not, or**
- **pretending to be better than they really are**

They are the ‘bad guys’ of publishing....



So how do we recognise a predatory publisher?

It's often very hard!

- These companies may appear to have an editorial office somewhere that sounds reputable (e.g. W. Coast US) – but these addresses are usually false fronts (many of these enterprises seem to be set up in India or Asia)
- The company or society name may sound familiar – but not quite the same...
- There are often very few real contact names provided on the website – or if you keep looking, you often find that the same name occurs many times
- The email addresses are often non-professional (e.g. Google or Hotmail)
- The style of the company or journal website may look authentic at first glance – but on closer inspection the pictures often look fuzzy or inconsistent, and editorial board photos are often false or unprofessionally inconsistent
- The website may make false claims regarding PubMed indexing or high journal impact factors
- Publishing costs and timelines are often implausibly cheap or fast
- No policies or practices for digital preservation (NB: if such a journal were subsequently to close, all content would disappear)

So what's the big problem with predatory publishers?

These companies are sneaky – and are out to defraud...!

- Researchers are often shocked when first encountering these publishers: in recent years they have upped their game, and at first glance can appear quite credible – and often take the unaware by surprise
- They tend to recruit interest by widespread email scamming, expressing interest in research and offering attractive publishing options (cheap and fast)
- Many of the journals they publish also appear credible, with familiar-sounding names (and may occasionally have identical names to well-established journals)
- The websites can also look authentic (the fonts, illustrations and logos are often mimicked from reputable journals, and text may be duplicated)
- But with closer inspection, it's clear that these companies lack transparency – and usually have a very low article acceptance threshold despite their claims. They actually offer very little to scholarship, and instead allow pseudo-science to masquerade as real science
- Their business models are usually unsustainable – they take the money and run.

Authors are duped into thinking that they submitting to a reputable journal

- Authors may be flattered by an invitation to submit, or beguiled by the apparently attractive terms, e.g. high IF (false!), low cost, fast timelines
- But they are generally misled by the (usually false) journal reputations being offered
- Some companies simply pocket the APCs and do not publish
- Others will publish – but the author will often face hidden and unexpected costs (lack of transparency and ‘surprise’ invoices)
- An author will now be inexorably linked to the journal, and the citation may be used in subsequent marketing campaigns, leading to tarnished reputation in the eyes of the wise, and the impression of poor judgment
- And there is a big additional risk of the digital repository not being maintained beyond the short term – how then can this data be subsequently cited? (NB: Usually it can't.)
- And by the way: there are often no checks run for plagiarism protection – so everyone is vulnerable....



There are lots of examples in the press of predatory publishers who are clearly just keen to pocket the APC, irrespective of content!

(Sorry about the language!)

Journal Accepts Paper Reading “Get Me Off Your Fucking Mailing List”

November 23, 2014 | by Stephen Luntz

Get me off Your Fucking Mailing List

David Mazières and Eddie Kohler
New York University
University of California, Los Angeles
<http://www.mailavenger.org/>

Abstract

Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list.

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photo credit: David Mazieres and Eddie Kohler. Who says swearing is not scientific?



A paper that largely consists of the words “Get me off your fucking mailing list” repeated 863 times has been accepted by a journal that claims to be peer reviewed. The move might appear to offer hope to scientists struggling to get marginal work published, but really just exposes the extent of scam publications pretending to be contributing to science.

“Publish or Perish” is more than a catch-phrase for scientific researchers. With rare exceptions, such as those working for secret military projects, research scientists need to publish regularly if they hope to advance, or often just keep, their career. High impact journals such as *Science* and *Nature* help most, but getting into these is hard and even less

Reviewers are misled

- Reviewers may initially feel flattered to be approached – but are soon frustrated to discover that papers they have reviewed carefully, but rejected in good faith, still end up being published anyway
- Leads to sense of wasted time – and damaged reputation by association
- And it's hard to get off a predatory publisher's database once you're on it!

KOLs are often misrepresented

- Predatory publishers will often 'blanket email' society contacts time and again with invitations to join their journal editorial boards
- Recipients may be flattered at first, and agree – or decline, only to find that their names have been included anyway
- Some KOLs have reported that their names have been included on journal boards without any invitation being given (let alone accepted) – and that their names have not been removed without recourse to the threat of legal action

Might some of your rising stars be flattered by this type of approach?

SEP

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Science Journal SPAM of the Week: the Journal of HIV/AIDS from Sci Forschen

Well, got this email this AM. It is yet another spammy journal (I don't work on HIV/AIDS). I particularly like the part where I am called an "eminent personality".

Dear Dr. Jonathan Eisen,

Greetings from the [Journal of HIV/AIDS](#),

We take great delight in inviting you to join the **Editorial Board** for the [Journal of HIV/AIDS](#), which is an open access, peer reviewed journal managed by [Sci Forschen](#). Ensuring quality and accuracy for every submitted article is the top most priority for [Sci Forschen](#), and we genuinely believe that someone with the knowledge and experience, such as yourself, can really make a huge difference for us.

[Journal of HIV/AIDS](#), publishes cutting edge research work submitted by scholars from all over the world, and we believe that your presence will polished up with the help of illustrious experts in research field.

We are always striving to involve **eminent personalities** like you and your standing in the global community makes us confident.

Kindly let us know your valuable response and acceptance if possible within 48 hours.

Please kindly submit your following particulars to update in our journal website

1. Updated CV
2. Passport Size Photo
3. Short Biography
4. Research Interest

Looking forward for your valuable and soon response.

Regards,

Editorial Office
Sci Forschen Incorporation
913 Catkin Ct.

And many OA publishers can end up feeling that they are tarred by the same brush...

“You’re an OA publisher? Doesn’t that make you a predatory publisher?”

(Answer: no!)

So what is being done about this?

- **Self-defence:** Most of the major publishers are doing their best to battle these companies on a case-by-case basis to protect their own reputations and the societies they represent – but as fast as one disappears, five others emerge.
- **Education:** Several publishers (including ourselves) are doing all we can to educate others about the risks – but many of those we speak to seem to be failing to recognise the dangers until they encounter these companies first-hand.
- **Jeffrey Beall** (Academic Librarian at University of Colorado in Denver) has done more than most to raise the profile of this issue in recent years. He has a prominent online forum (Scholarly Open Access) and an email blog where people can approach him direct to ask about specific journal titles and publishers, and also re issues they have encountered.

jeffrey.beall@ucdenver.edu



Scholarly Open Access

Critical analysis of scholarly open-access publishing

Home

About the Author

Disclaimer

LIST OF PUBLISHERS

LIST OF STANDALONE JOURNALS

Other pages

Strange, New OA Publisher: BIOHOUSE

November 1, 2016



BIOHOUSE PUBLISHING GROUP INC(US)
42783 Macauley Place, Ashburn, VA 20148, USA

Home About Us Editorial Board Journals Call For Papers Current Issue Archives

INNOVATE

Innovating New and Better World.

Striving to bring innovation in research world and implementing changes Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower.-Steve Jobs

Outhouse.

BIOHOUSE PUBLISHING GROUP is a bizarre new open-access publisher that launched recently with ten broad-scoped open-access journals. The publisher's website makes it very clear that it's based in Ashburn, Virginia. It also tries to associate the publisher with the Library of Congress and other legitimate organizations, yet I still find it a complete imposter.

<https://scholarlyoa.com/>

 Search

RECENT POSTS

- o Strange, New OA Publisher: BIOHOUSE
- o Reviewer to Frontiers: Your Review Process is Merely for Show — I quit
- o Journal Offers Authors "Research Paper Royalty Scheme" for Getting Citations
- o Don't Use PubMed as a Journal Whitelist
- o Re-Launched Swedish Journal Takes the Prize

ARCHIVES

Select Month

CATEGORIES

Over the past 6 years he has developed 'Beall's list'

(Now actually two lists)

- The first includes publishers that he considers questionable.
- The second lists individual journals that do not publish under the platform of any publisher (essentially independent), which he considers to be questionable journals.

Publishers	
Year	Number of publishers
2011	18
2012	23
2013	225
2014	477
2015	693
2016	923

Standalone journals	
Year	Number of journals
2013	126
2014	303
2015	507
2016	882



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

And from 2014, Beall started two additional lists:

Misleading metrics:

This list includes companies that “calculate” and publish counterfeit impact factors (or some similar measure)

2016 = 38. Last year’s list had 26. (The list debuted in March, 2014.)

Hijacked journals:

This list includes journals for which someone has created a counterfeit website, stealing the identity of an established journal, and soliciting article submissions using the author-pays model

2016 = 101. Last year’s list had 30. (The list started in May, 2014.)

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

Jeffrey Beall's blogs are really interesting, and the related email correspondence well worth a look...

<https://scholarlyoa.com/>

Sarah says:

February 17, 2016 at 4:56 AM



Mr. Beall,

What can be done when a predatory journal is using your name and institution for calls for papers without permission? Repeated requests to cease and threat of legal response have not resulted in discontinued use.

Reply

Jeffrey Beall says:

February 17, 2016 at 5:02 AM



Follow through with the legal action.

Email all the members of the editorial board, alerting them to the abuse, suggesting they resign.

Samuel Handelman says:
February 17, 2016 at 12:36 PM



What about this publisher?
<http://scitechz.com/index.html>

They've been spamming me with requests to join their editorial boards – are they the same as one of the other scitech publishers?

They gave this contact info in their spam:

Shirley Setia
Editorial Office
SciTz Medical and Clinical Toxicology
1692 Coastal Highway
Delaware 19958, USA
Email: Toxicology@scitechz.com

Reply

Jeffrey Beall says:
February 17, 2016 at 4:45 PM



I had not heard of it before, so thank you for alerting me to it. I have analyzed it and added it to my list.

It launched with 15 broad medical journals and pretends to be based in Delaware. It matches the pattern of many other OA biomedical publisher startups. Most definitely, do not accept their editorial board invitation, and please don't submit any papers to them. Thanks again.

<https://scholarlyoa.com/>

Beall's recommendations....

- “That researchers, scientists, and academics avoid doing business with these publishers and journals;
- That scholars avoid sending article submissions to them, serving on their editorial boards or reviewing papers for them, or advertising in them.
- Also, tenure and promotion committees should give extra scrutiny to articles published in these journals, for many of them include instances of author misconduct.”

<https://scholarlyoa.com>

Reputable vs Predatory Publishers/ Journals

A quick checklist for a professional publishing operation:

- It is clearly an established publisher and/or society
- There is a professional and courteous interface, and communicative staff
- The Instructions to authors are accessible and clear
- There is evidence that submissions are checked for plagiarism
- There is an electronic submission and tracking system
- The company has a good reputation for using good referees
- There is a clear and timely procedure for decision-making and publication
- The content is indexed
- The publication fees are clearly displayed

Check the Directory of Open Access journals! DOAJ: <https://doaj.org/>



Some take-home messages....

- Make sure your staff and clients are informed and aware of the existence of predatory publishers
- Be aware of the dangers of lost data as well as damaged reputations
- Predatory publishers are getting harder to spot – but if the website looks dodgy, it probably is!
- Do not be beguiled by seeing editorial board names that you recognise! Blurred photos, or pictures presented in an inconsistent style, are indicators that these people's names may have been hijacked.
- If you aren't sure, check out Beall's list: <http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/>
- And keep checking – this list is continually updated and continues to grow rapidly.
- And finally: the next big thing seems to be **bogus conferences** – either falsely accredited, or total scams.

And finally.....

Stay alert – and make sure your clients stay alert too!



Thank you!



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