TLT

Checklist Predatory Journals

Recently, the terms *predatory journal* and *predatory publisher* have been much discussed in German as well as international media. *Predatory journals* are dubious, only feigned academic journals. Accordingly, their publishers are called predatory as well. These journals charge for publishing articles without implementing any quality assurance procedures.

This checklist tries to help you assessing a journal's academic respectability. If you can answer one of the following questions with a 'yes', you should become suspicious. Should you answer two or more questions with 'yes', you might want to consider choosing another publication.

	Yes	No	?
Were you contacted directly by the editors? Many predatory journals send out mass mailings (SPAM) to reach the greatest number of researchers with least effort possible.	☐	☐	☐
Does the journal's website contain many spelling or grammar mistakes or does it seem not to be written by a native speaker?	☐	☐	☐
Is information about the publisher's location missing or is it contradicting the journal's title?	☐	☐	☐
Is the contact address of the journal just a P.O. box?	☐	☐	☐
Does the journal use a free mail provider like Yahoo or Google?	☐	☐	☐
Is the website lacking detailed information about the editors?	☐	☐	☐
Is contact information missing or is the only way to contact the editors a web form?	☐	☐	☐
Is there little or no information about the peer review process on the website?	☐	☐	☐
Does the site promise a very quick turnaround for the submission and peer review process? Since a real (and time consuming) peer review process is omitted, predatory journals can often advertise a very prompt publication.	☐	☐	☐
Is information about the article processing charges missing or very hard to find?	☐	☐	☐
Is the journal advertising with misleading or questionable metrics?	☐	☐	☐
Does the journal cover a very wide range of topics that are defined only vaguely? (for example Humanities, Social Sciences, Public Health, Fine Arts)	☐	☐	☐
Is the journal's title obviously styled after another, very renowned journal in your area of expertise?	☐	☐	☐

Further Information

Should our checklist have made you suspicious of a journal, the University Library's Open Access Team would be happy to conduct more in-depth research. Among other things, we check the following criteria:

- Is the journal listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)?
  The DOAJ is a directory of open access journals that fulfil certain quality features and that are trustworthy.

- Is the publisher a member of the Open Access Scholarly Association (OASPA)?
  The OASPA is an association of publishers that have committed themselves to strict quality criteria. Publications by these publishers are implicitly trustworthy.

- Are the publisher and/or editor members of Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)?
  COPE advises publishers and editors on all questions of publication ethics. All members of COPE are expected to adhere to the COPE code of conduct as well as their guidelines.

Additionally, on the page Think, Check, Submit you can find further tips on assessing the trustworthiness of a journal.

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