Avoiding “Predatory” Journals

University Libraries

Rachel Caldwell, Scholarly Communication & Publishing Librarian
Jeffrey Beall
Librarian, CU Denver

Known for a defunct blog listing “potential, possible, or probable predatory scholarly open-access publishers,” known as Beall’s List

Jeffrey Beall in 2005, CC BY 2.0
Open Access

Anyone can read

$ from Article Processing Charges (APCs)

Subscription Access

Only subscribers can read

$ from Institutional and Personal Subscriptions

A Master Lock brand padlock by Thegreenj, CC BY-SA 3.0
Article Processing Charges (APCs)
a.k.a. Open Access Fees
a.k.a. Gold OA
a.k.a. Open Access (OA) Publication Charge
Article Processing Charges (APCs)

a.k.a. Open Access Fees

a.k.a. Gold OA

a.k.a. Open Access (OA) Publication Charge

UT’s Open Publishing Support Fund
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Bealls’ Claims about Predators

- Charge APCs
- Undergo little or no peer-review
- Solicit publications

Criticisms of Beall

- Narrow view
- Blacklist cited little evidence
- Unclear motivations
June 2017
Beall writes opinion
Jeffrey Beall, “What I Learned from Predatory Publishers,”

December 2017
His supervisor replies
Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals*

I. About the Recommendations
   A. Purpose of the Recommendations
   B. Who Should Use the Recommendations

A. Preparing a Manuscript for Submission to a Medical Journal
   1. General Principles
Directory of Open Access Journals:
Searchable list of fully OA journals
Journal Policies Reviewed
DOAJ.org

Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association:
List of publishers of OA journals
Publisher Policies Reviewed for adherence to CoC
OASPA.org
Committee on Publication Ethics
Sets standards and guidelines for editors’ reference and practice
Application Review Process
PUBLICATIONETHICS.org

Directory of Open Access Journals:
Searchable list of fully OA journals
Application Review Process
DOAJ.org

Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association:
List of publishers of OA journals
Application Review Process, adherence to CoC
OASPA.org
So, what’s the recommendation?
Choose the right journal for your research
• Do you or your colleagues know the journal?
• Can you easily identify and contact the publisher?
• 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?
• Do you recognize the editorial board?
  • Have you heard of the editorial board members?
  • Do the editorial board mention the journal on their own websites?
• Is the publisher a member of a recognized industry initiative?
  • Do they belong to/are they listed in COPE, DOAJ, OASPA?
  • Are they a member of another trade organization?
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  • Do they belong to/are they listed in COPE, DOAJ, OASPA?
  • Are they a member of another trade organization?
Open to the public versus open only to subscribers.
Open to the public versus open only to subscribers.

Who is left out?
“Please consider open access. I had access to all of your research while I was in school, but now when I could use it to support my work and maybe even change the lives of our clients I have to pay.”
“...it is imperative that we utilize research to guide our programming and interventions... Working in a non-profit setting and competing for limited grant funds, we need to rely on evidence-based practices. It is very challenging to try to remain informed when most of the essential studies and publications are not free use.”
“[We rely] heavily on foundation and government funding to run our programs. The application process is very competitive. As a grant writer I can tell wonderful and compelling stories about our programs and clients. However to add credibility to our applications I need to include the academic research that supports our interventions.

“…without easy, free access to your work we can’t possibly do our best work.”
What do we pay for access to these journals?

I’m not allowed to tell you.
To obtain information on big deal prices, we wrote to 55 university libraries and 12 library consortia, invoking state Freedom of Information acts and requesting copies of recent site-license contracts signed with each of the nine publishers listed in Table 1.
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Among the commercial publishers in our study, Elsevier’s prices per citation are nearly 3 times those charged by the nonprofits, whereas Emerald, Sage, and Taylor & Francis have prices per citation that are roughly 10 times those of the nonprofits.

doi: 10.1073/pnas.1403006111
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$1.9 million for Elsevier package
$1.7 million for Elsevier package
$1.2 million for Elsevier package
$1.5 million for Elsevier package
$450K for Springer package
$480K for Springer package
$490K for Wiley bundle
$500K for Wiley bundle

Bergstrom, Courant, McAfee, and Williams in PNAS 111, no. 26 (2014): 9425-9430. doi: 10.1073/pnas.1403006111
Nagging Questions

• Is this a responsible use of public funds?

• If more people had access to scholarly literature, would we have to defend the sciences as much as we do now?

• What’s most important? Where you publish, how many times you’re cited, or your impact on people’s lives?
How Beall Sees It

All Publishers

Open Access Publishers

“Predatory” Publishers
How Beall Sees It

All Publishers

Open Access Publishers

“Predatory” Publishers

How Many Other Librarians See It

All Publishers

Open Access Publishers

Publishers with Predatory Practices
Summary (1 of 2)

• Benefits in identifying publishers that follow good practices and community-established standards.

• Looking for a list? ThinkCheckSubmit.org
  • For all publishers, “Check” list includes links to COPE members.
  • For open access only, “Check” list includes links to DOAJ directory and OASPA members.
Committee on Publication Ethics
Sets standards and guidelines for editors’ reference and practice
*Application Review Process*
PUBLICATIONETHICS.org

Directory of Open Access Journals:*
Searchable list of fully OA journals
*Application Review Process*
DOAJ.org

Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association:*
List of publishers of OA journals
*Application Review Process, adherence to CoC*
OASPA.org
Summary (2 of 2)

• APCs (OA fees) are part of a business model, not a mark of low or high quality.

• Impact factors are just one mark of quality; consider: Scimago rank, Eigenfactor, author’s h-index, and community impact, too.

• Subscribers are in a place of extraordinary privilege.

• Open access can help improve equity. Be an informed open access author.
Predatory Conferences(?): 2 Case Studies

Douglas G. Hayes
Dept. Biosystems Engineering and Soil Science, UTIA
dhayes1@utk.edu
Case 1

- Professional-sounding conference name!
- Some enticing perks!
- Sender uses the conference name as his affiliation
- Email address: annualconferences.org; chemseries.com

Subject Line: FW: Honorary OCM Invitation: Euro Chemical Engineering 2018

From: Eurochem 2017 [mailto: eurochemicalengineering@annualconferences.org]
Sent: Monday, December 04, 2017 8:33 AM
To: Hayes, Douglas Gordon <dhayes1@utk.edu>
Subject: Honorary OCM Invitation: Euro Chemical Engineering 2018
Importance: High

Dear Dr. Doug Hayes,

Hope to find you in good Health.

The purpose of this letter is to formally notify you of the 5th International Conference on Advances in Chemical Engineering & Technology which will be held during October 04-05, 2018 at London, UK hosted by Conferences series LLC.

Euro Chemical Engineering-2018 will lay a platform for the interaction between experts around the world and aims to accelerate scientific discoveries and major milestones in the field of Chemical Engineering. The main theme of the conference is “Exploring latest trends in Chemical Engineering” Being a member of the “big leagues” with significant expertise in this area we would like honor you as an Organizing Committee Member for Euro Chemical Engineering-2018.

Privileges for Organizing Committee:

- Plenary speech Opportunity
- Chair/Co-chair for your session of interest
- Special discount on the registration fee and publication charges in OMICS GROUP journals
- Manage as a Evaluator of poster session
- 5 Speakers with your reference can avail themselves of attractive discounts on registration fee
- Provides a platform to organize symposia or workshops. Symposia on new research topics will be encouraged
- Special interactive sessions will be provided, if you are coming with your research team
- Promotion for your own labs will be feasible
- Your new research findings and Scientific Books can be released

For more information please visit our website: CHEMICAL ENGINEERING CONFERENCE

We appreciate your time and look forward to hear from you at the earliest.

Best Regards,

ROBERT DAWSON

[Logo and Address]

We appreciate your time and look forward to hear from you at the earliest.
Case 1 (continued)

- Professional looking website!
- When I scroll down ...

![Professional Website Screenshot]
Case 1 (continued)

• When I scroll down ...

- Coltharp Institute
  Appears to be a conference organizer/journal publisher that does not provide informed without editorial boards.
  - conferenceseries.com
  - Journals - Scientific Conferenceseries! Events with over 1000+ Conferences, 1000+ Symp.
- Congress of Future Science and Technology Leaders
  "... basically a three-day summer camp ... (will) have insignificant impact on applications C1 & C7.
- Congress of Petroleum and Chemical Engineers
  - CPE - Congress on Petroleum and Chemical Engineering
Case 2

• I was contacted about presenting at a Palm Oil Conference in Malaysia (this topic is related to my field; host organization had a fairly good publication record): 2013
• I responded that I would attend if travel money was provided
• 6 months later, I was contacted again; funding was available
• I attended the conference in Nov 2013. I helped with poster judging
• I was asked in 2014 to serve on the Advisory Committee for the Malaysian Palm Oil Board; I accepted, and now have a leadership role on the Committee
Predatory Conferences: Resources

• https://libguides.caltech.edu/c.php?g=512665&p=3503029

• http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/dr-madhukar-pai/predatory-conferences-academia_b_12467834.html

• https://libguides.ucd.ie/publishing/predatory