

# How to spot a PREDATORY PUBLISHER

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# Agenda

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What is a predatory publisher?

Why are they a problem?

Warning signs

Predatory publisher checklist

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# What is a 'predatory' publisher?

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“those that unprofessionally exploit the gold Open Access model for their own profit”  
Jeffrey Beall

“any publisher that operates on an exploitative business model” Peaches Udoma via International OA Week

“an exploitative open-access publishing business model that involves charging publication fees to authors without providing the editorial and publishing services associated with legitimate journals” Wikipedia

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# What is a 'predatory' publisher?

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Hard to define!

Solicits content via email

Charges an author for services it doesn't provide

Essentially a type of vanity press

# Open Access publishing

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Predatory publishers exploit the Gold OA model

OA fees pay for the added value of publication services

**But** predatory publishers don't provide these

# Importance of peer review

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Ensures quality of the research

Spots errors

Can raise concerns **before** publication



# Famous examples

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*Fuzzy Homogeneous Configurations* - Margaret Simpson,  
Kim Jong Fun & Edna Krabappel

*Get Me Off Your F\*\*king Mailing List*

*Cuckoo for Cocoa Puffs* - Pinkerton LeBrain & Orson G  
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# Why do people publish?

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Enhance their reputation

Increase visibility

Record research

Get recognised for their work

# Why are predatory publishers a problem?

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Limits publication with reputable publishers

Can negatively impact academic careers

Perpetuates bad research

# When are they **not** a problem?

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Depends on country context

Different reward systems lead to different behaviours

Are they a viable business model?

# Predatory conferences

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Target early career researchers

Offer speaking/chairing opportunities

Conferences with little or no academic merit

High charges to attend

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# Warning signs

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Overly flattering emails

Publishing on a vast range of topics

Asking for a submission (or other hidden) fee

Publication times which seem too good to be true

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# Transparency

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Is the publisher open about its practices?

Is contact information readily available?

Do they publish on a range of topics?

Assess the quality of the invitation to publish  
**BUT** remember cultural differences

# Fees

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Are the author fees clearly explained?

Are they easy to find?

Be wary of any potentially hidden fees

# Copyright

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Are the rights of the author clearly explained?

Open Access – does it have a Creative Commons licence?

Does the policy comply with funder requirements?

# Peer review

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Is the process clearly described?

Is the stated time frame for review realistic?

If an impact factor is given is it correct?

# Editorial board

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Are the Board members listed? Is there a named editor?

Do you recognise any of the names on the Board?

Do these people *know* they are on the Board?

# Association membership

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Is the publisher connected to a recognised institution?

Is it affiliated with a recognised association?



# Website quality

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Does the website look professional?

Are there spelling or other mistakes?

**CAUTION:** Be aware of cultural differences

# Indexing

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Is the journal indexed by typical databases in the field?

Are other journals by the same publisher indexed?

**CAUTION:** There may be legitimate reasons why a journal is not indexed

# Quality of previous publications

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Look at previously published work to assess quality

Look for basic errors in titles and abstracts – are the publishers familiar with the field?

# Use your judgement

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Above all – trust your professional judgement

**If something feels wrong it probably is!**

# Top tips

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If information is not easily accessible then ask *why*?

Remember that all publishers operate under different circumstances

Trust your judgement!

# Further information

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Predatory Publishers (Office of Scholarly Communication)

<http://bit.ly/OSCPredatoryPublishers>

Predatory Publishers as a Rational Response to Poorly Governed Academic Incentives

<http://bit.ly/RationalResponse>

Think, Check, Submit!

<http://thinkchecksubmit.org/>

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# THANKS FOR LISTENING

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