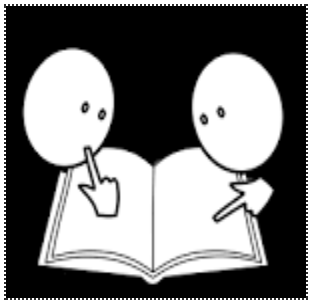
Predatory Journal Checklist



There have been an increasing number of journals that do not adhere to best practices in publishing. Infractions can range from minor to severe. It can be challenging to know if a publisher who is soliciting you to contribute to their journal is reputable. Here are some steps to help you decide.

Note: While NOAA Librarians are not at liberty to make a specific determination as to the predatory nature of a journal, **I am always available to do this research and provide my findings to you. Librarian: Gloria.Aversano@noaa.gov**

How do you tell if a Journal is Credible?

a) **See if it is considered predatory in Cabells predatory journal list.**
b) **Find its journal impact factor.**
c) **See what, if any, databases index the journal.**
d) **Look for any articles for or against the journal or publisher.**
e) **See if you know any person on the journal's editorial staff or board.**

Is it Predatory?

The Library subscribes to Cabells. Cabell's provides Journalytics Predatory Reports (formerly White and Black Lists). Publishers are also searchable. **Cabells Predatory Journal List** is found at https://noaa.cabells.com. Searches may be done by title, ISSN or discipline. The site provides in depth criteria for various levels of predation (severe, moderate and minor) here: https://noaa.cabells.com/predatory-criteria. Topics considered include, integrity, peer review, publication practices, fees, copyright, business practices and website presentation and function.

Beall's list of potentially predatory journals and publishers found at https://beallslist.net/. This is a freely accessible site available for confirmation of findings on Cabell's. (The names are similar but not related). This site too may be searched by publisher or standalone journal title. It also offers a 'questionable conferences' link and a discussion page by Andy Nobes (2017) on how to avoid predatory conferences.

Additional Predatory Characteristics -

The article cited here contains the attributes listed below as predatory red flags: *American Medical Writers Association, European Medical Writers Association & International Society for Medical Publication Professionals (2019) AMWA–EMWA–ISMPP joint position statement on predatory publishing, Current Medical Research and Opinion*, 35:9, 1657-1658, DOI: 10.1080/03007995.2019.1646535

- "Publishers or journals sending emails that aggressively solicit researchers.

- A journal name that sounds somewhat familiar—but is actually a devious permutation of a legitimate journal name.
- A website that appears unprofessional, with poor graphics, misused language, dead links and aggressive advertising.
- No street address or in-country telephone number noted on the journal or publisher's website, or a fake address/ phone number provided.
- A lack of journal indexing in a recognized citation system such as PubMed13 or within a legitimate online directory such as the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)14.
- Promises of unrealistically quick peer review, or no information provided about a journal's peer-review process.
- Article processing charges that are not transparent (and may be either very high or very low) or are payable on submission (that is, not dependent on the outcome of peer review).
- Claims made of broad coverage across multiple specialties in medicine or across multiple subspecialties in a particular discipline.
- A large stable of journals that have been started very recently and/or that contain no or few published articles, are inaccessible or are of obviously poor quality.
- An editorial board consisting of members from outside the specialty or outside the country in which the journal is published, or board members who are unknown to someone experienced in publishing in the field.
- Submission system that is overly simple with few questions asked and no conflict-of-interest or authorship qualification information requested."

The University of Washington – Health Science Library – elaborated on conditions related to 'best practices' you should look for:

- Peer review may be poor or non-existent.
- Editorial board membership information may be incorrect or people may be listed there without their knowledge.
- Information about publishing costs or article processing charges may be misleading.
- Websites might refer to non-standard impact factors or misrepresent where articles are indexed.
- Content might not be digitally preserved."

What is the Journal's Impact Factor?

Journal impact factors are quantitative measures used to rank journals within a subject field. The higher the impact factor the higher the rank. It is **the average of the sum of the citations received in a given year to a journal's previous two years of publications, divided by the sum of "citable" publications in the previous two years**.

The NOAA Libraries subscribes to *Web of Science* which offers a product called, **Journal Citation Reports** (JCR) https://tinyurl.com/yab5tdo4. **JCR** tracks the number of citations various articles in a journal receive over time. Use the search box to enter the journal title. Note, that the impact factor of a journal may not have anything to do with the worth of an individual article and so other criteria should be considered.

This excerpt, from a Web of Science Group article, describes what is taken into consideration for the Impact Factor, https://clarivate.com/webofsciencegroup/essays/impact-factor/

"*The impact factor is useful in clarifying the significance of absolute (or total) citation frequencies. It eliminates some of the bias of such counts which favor large journals over small ones, or frequently issued journals over less frequently issued ones, and of older journals over newer ones. Particularly in the latter case such journals have a larger citable body of literature than smaller or younger journals. All things being equal, the larger the number of previously published articles, the more often a journal will be cited.* [4] [5]

"The impact factor can be used to provide a gross approximation of the prestige of journals in which individuals have been published. This is best done in conjunction with other considerations such as peer review, productivity, and subject specialty citation rates. "

There are other journal ranking portals such as, SCImago Journal & Country Rank. SJR is a free portal with "scientometric indicators" however, they review journals indexed in Elsevier/Scopus as opposed to Web of Science. The scientific and technical information services

What Databases Indexes the Journal in Question?

Journal indexing databases, also called bibliographic databases, vet journals according to subject and or type of publication. The purpose of these indexes is to identify high quality journals. The Library's Web of Science subscription offers a feature that lists the databases a journal is indexed in. Go to URL http://mjl.clarivate.com/, type in the journal name or its ISSN number (International Standard Serial Number is a unique identifier for the journal).

A publisher will often list what databases index their journal. I've listed some reputable indexing services below.

Biological Abstracts
Chemical Abstract Service
Current Contents
EBSCO Publishing
Elsevier BIOBASE
Ingenta Connect
ISI Web of Knowledge (this includes Web of Science)
OCLC (this is a large international database we use for cataloging)
Science Citation Index
Scopus

Use free databases to find information about a journal's position on open access.

- SHERPA/RoMEO database - search to find permissions that are normally given as part of each publisher's copyright transfer agreement and degree of open access for a journal.

  "Works of the U.S. federal government are generally not protected by copyright in the United States and are automatically in the public domain (17USC§ 105); however, there are numerous exceptions and refinements to this rule. For a detailed explanation of how copyright law is applied to government publications, see Frequently Asked Questions About Copyright: 3.0 U.S.Government Works and 4.0 Works Created Under a Federal Contractor Grant on the CENDI Web site."

  Note: **CENDI** refers to a 1986-87 memorandum of understanding between the scientific and technical information services departments of **C**ommerce, **E**nergy, **N**ASA and **D**efense **I**nformation. CENDI's purpose, " is to develop ways to improve productivity of Federal research and development through responsive technical information programs and improved R&D information management systems."

  - **Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) -** https://doaj.org/ - **"***DOAJ is a community-curated online directory that indexes and provides access to high quality, open*

access, peer-reviewed journals. DOAJ is independent. All DOAJ services are free of charge including being indexed in DOAJ. All data is freely available. DOAJ operates an education and outreach program across the globe, focusing on improving the quality of applications submitted."