Evaluating Open Access Journals

Moving from Provocative to Practical in Characterizing Journal Practices

Instructors

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Goals for the course

Day 1: Understand the Evolution of Scholarly Publishing

- Explore the history of scholarly publishing, the development of open access, and the drivers that have contributed to the rise of predatory practices in open access scholarly publishing.

Day 2: Recognize and Address Predatory Publishing

- Develop an awareness of low-quality and predatory behaviors in scholarly publishing and understand their impact on researchers, institutions, and the public.

Day 3: Implement and Advocate for Best Practices

- Identify effective interventions to lessen the reach and impact of deceptive and low-quality journals and discuss strategies to prevent predatory practices in scholarly publishing.

Day	Date	Pacific Time (PT)	Mountain Time (MT)	Central Time (CT)	Eastern Time (ET)
Day 1	Tuesday, July 23, 2024	4:00 – 5:30 pm	5:00 – 6:30 pm	6:00 – 7:30 pm	7:00 – 8:30 pm
Day	Wednesday, July 24,	4:00 – 5:30 pm	5:00 – 6:30 pm	6:00 – 7:30 pm	7:00 – 8:30 pm

Introduction – Day 3

Day 1

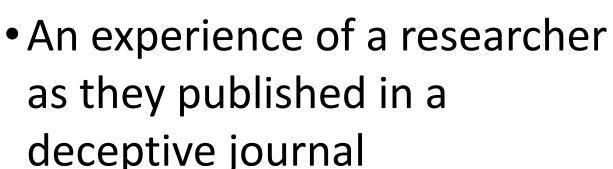- History of scholarly publishing through to the open access movement, including drivers for predatory publishing

Day 2

- The behaviors and impacts of predatory publishing

Day 3

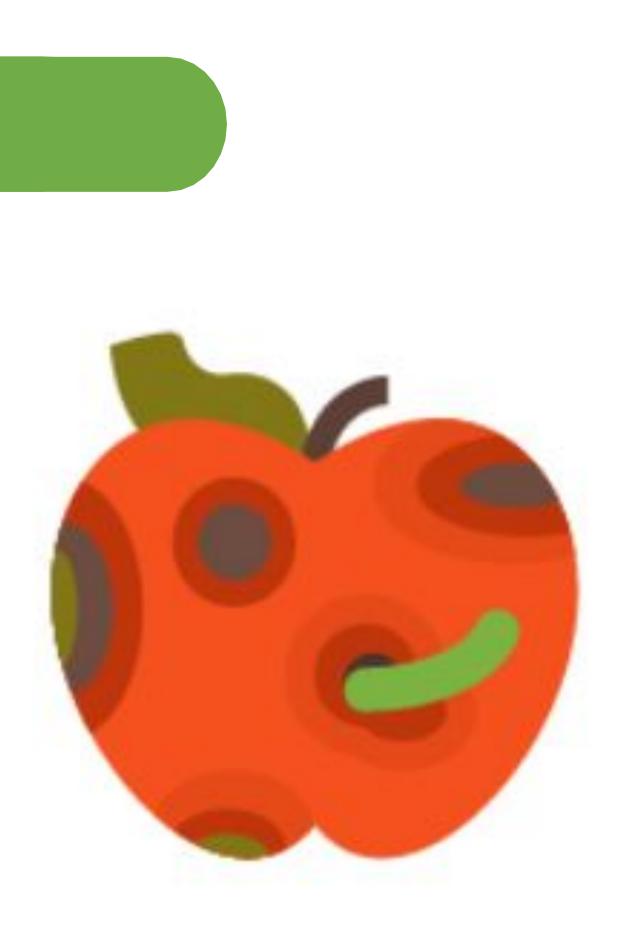- An experience of a researcher as they published in a deceptive journal

Deceptive Journals: spotting the bad apple

Deceptive Practices

- Emailing convincing invitations

- Mirroring editorial team email addresses

- Choosing names similar to reputable journals

- Mirroring reputable publisher websites

- Offering discounts on submission or author fees

Deceptive publishers: exploiting vulnerabilities

Scenario

Our researcher is early in his career and eager to publish the results of his registered clinical trial. He receives an email from a predatory publisher congratulating him on a recent publication. The predatory publisher has named their journal just one word different than the reputable journal that he published in as a graduate student. They invite him to publish again, and as he rushes in reading the invitation, he confuses the journal titles. He knows he can't afford the article processing fees and decides to directly email the publisher about a possible discount.

He doesn't know it yet, but he's just started an email thread with a predatory publisher. He uses the name of the reputable journal in his emails, but the fake editor fails to correct him. The fake editor tells him that he can receive a discount because his research focuses on patients in a developing country.

Our researcher thanks the editor and lets them know he'll be submitting through their online system very soon. The editor emails him that the online system is not able to flag his paper for the discount they've discussed. Instead, he should email the paper directly to the editor and the editor will handle the submission process for him and make sure he receives a discount. He replies that he understands and attaches his article to the email.

Deceptive publishers: red flags

Scenario

Within hours of sending his article to the editor our researcher receives a reply back that his paper has been peer-reviewed. He's dismayed at the quick turnaround for the peer-review. He opens the attachment and sees the predatory journal's branding splashed across the top of the page. Immediately he understands what has happened.

Our researcher now realizes he's been scammed by a predatory publisher. Within minutes he emails the fake editor demanding they withdraw his paper from their submission system. The editor sends an email back stating that since his article has already been peer-reviewed he owes them $300 before it can be withdrawn.

Our researcher doesn't have the money, and he's not sure it would help anyway. He's furious, ashamed, and scared. Normally he would talk to his mentor about difficult situations. But he's on a visiting fellowship and he doesn't want his mentor to send him home. He needs to publish the results of his clinical trial as a requirement of his funding; but now it seems that will never happen. He calls his co-author who works at a different institution. He asks if the co-author can talk to someone, but his co-author is going up for tenure and does not want a scandal.

It's been less than 24 hours since he's submitted his paper and he doesn't know what to do.

Behaviors of Deceptive Publishers

Scenario

Dear [Editor]

I firmly request immediate withdrawal of my manuscript from the submission process. Furthermore, I have not transferred my copyright; I retain all rights to my work. I do not give permission for my work to be published by [Publisher Name]. If my manuscript is published or disseminated online by [Publisher Name] in any part, I will send an official take down notice to your internet service provider; and any further infringement of copyright could result in legal action.

[Publisher Name] did not complete an ethical peer-review of my work (within 24 hours of submission, no less) as claimed on the journal's website and in accordance with the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) <u>peer-review standards</u>. If my work is not removed from the submission system, I will file a complaint with the United States Federal Trade Commission against [Publisher Name] for fraudulent practices.

Please immediately send official confirmation of my article's withdrawal from your system.

Sincerely,
[Author Name]

Deceptive publishers: withdrawal

Scenario

Dear [Author],

Your article has been withdrawn.

[Publisher Name]

Next Steps

- Monitoring for copyright infringement

- Track correspondence

- Reconsider any payments

- Set up a Google Alert

- Contact the Federal Trade Commission

Deceptive publishers: complications

Scenario

Dear [Author],

Your article has <u>not</u> been withdrawn.

[Publisher Name]

COPE. Withdrawal of Accepted Manuscript from Predatory Publisher: https://publicationethics.org/case/withdrawal-accepted-manuscript-predatory-journal

Consequences & Solutions

- Deceptive publishers could hold the un-published manuscript indefinitely

- If copyright has not been transferred, the author should be allowed to publish in a legitimate journal

- The publisher's internet service provider can be pressured to remove copyrighted material if the author sends them a "take down letter"

- The author should consider their university's office of general counsel to receive legal advice

Deceptive publishers: more complications…

Scenario

Dear [Author],

Your article has <u>not</u> been withdrawn. You have completed a copyright transfer.

[Publisher Name]

Consequences & Solutions

- If the author has signed a <u>copyright transfer agreement</u> with deceptive publisher, little can be done.

- If copyright has not been transferred, the author should be allowed to publish in a legitimate journal

- The author should consider their university's office of general counsel to receive legal advice

- The author may also consider contacting publishing ethics organizations about the situation (<u>COPE</u>, <u>WAME</u>, <u>ISMTE</u>, <u>SSP</u>).

How can we help?

Brainstorming

- Researchers, Authors, Supervisors and Mentors

- Higher Education Institutions

- Research funders

- Publishers

- Libraries and Indexing Services

- Societies, academies, associations, etc.

Day 3 Notes
Document: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1N0cifU0s23qkwXbe60yrtHAqV99Xdng9brbjdTAL0Sg/edit?usp=sharing

Wrap-up for Day 3

Take-aways

- Describe the history of scholarly publishing and the impact of open access on scholarly communication

- Become aware of the drivers that create space for predatory practices to flourish in scholarly publishing

- Adopt interventions to lessen the impact of deceptive and low-quality journals

Re-use of slides

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Researchers, Authors, Supervisors and Mentors

Actions

- Practice due diligence
- Use watch and safe lists
- Get to know traits of low quality and deceptive publishers
- Check reputable databases
- Check DOAJ (if open access)
- Keep a list

- Seek advice from colleagues and mentors
- Stop knowingly publishing in or citing predatory journals
- Take responsibility and support students so it won't happen again
- Ignore SPAM emails
- Familiarize yourself with peer-review practices
- Actively participate in committees

Higher Education Institutions (universities)

Actions

- Robust training and awareness programs
- Mainstream good publishing, conferencing, and review practices
- Exclude all papers published in predatory journals
- Revise recruitment and career progression criteria

- Reinforce value of evaluation and peer review
- Practice due diligence when negotiating institutional deals
- Reconsider/nuance policies that require research degrees
- Advocate for these changes in all universities

Research funders

Actions

- Review and reform metrics for evaluating grant applications
- Provide robust training courses
- Stipulate reliable citations when making awards/grants
- Discount any predatory journals and conferences

- Contact the Global Research Council about its Responsible Research Assessment Initiative
- Develop, implement and audit policies
- Fund or leverage funding for research into predatory journals
- Fund or leverage funding for more research into peer review

Publishers

Actions

- Waive APCs to publish in OA journals for all researchers in low-income countries
- Implement alternatives to the "author pays" or "pay to publish" model
- Avoid proliferating numbers and issues of journals

- Have an open and transparent policy on predatory journals
- Explore and implement more transparent peer review policies and processes
- Facilitate quality over quantity of papers through rigorous refereeing and review processes

Libraries and indexing services

Actions

- Provide training and raise awareness

- Conduct periodic reviews and strengthen the criteria for the incorporation of journals

- Work as a global consortium to produce a non-profit global list akin to the Latindex's Catalogue

- Offer professional training for doctoral students and early career researchers

- Advise university presses and their editors on best practices

- Share their experiences on predatory publishing

- As good practice, libraries could mark papers in their own bibliographies

- Make their open access funds and discounts available only for use with quality journals

Actions

- Highlight the dangers of predatory journals and sensitive their members
- Ensure that any academy-run grants programs disincentivize predatory publishing
- Ensure criteria for academy membership in future are consistent
- Advocate for the mainstreaming of publishing and peer review good practice
- Practice due diligence in allowing third parties to use academy names and logos
- Practice due diligence in allowing third parties to use academy names and logos

- Be advocates on the national and regional stage for the reform of research evaluation
- Lead by example and integrate other metrics/skills
- Lobby their regional and global academies' networks to take this issue seriously
- Implement or strengthen systems to minimize predatory behavior/infiltrationFund or leverage funding for research into predatory journals
- Contribute to the debate about alternative forms of scientific publishing in future
- Sign up to DORA and build active advocacy
- Prepare a statement on predatory practices