



# Jasmin Schmitz: How can research libraries deal with „predatory publishing“?

**ZB MED – Information Centre for Life Science**

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# Definition

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- ▶ activities of publishers or journals charging “article processing charges (APCs)” without providing proper services:
  - hardly any or no peer review
  - hardly any or no editorial processing
- ▶ content, the advancement of science and quality assurance are not in their focus

# Example 1: American Journal of Applied Mathematics

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## American Journal of Applied Mathematics

2014; 2(4): 111-126

Published online August 10, 2014 (<http://www.sciencepublishinggroup.com/j/ajam>)

doi: 10.11648/j.ajam.20140204.12

ISSN: 2330-0043 (Print); ISSN: 2330-006X (Online)

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## Mathematical proof of the Law of Karma

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**Abstracts:** The Buddhist teachings assume that all living creature ordinary people – but even scientists still do not believe and accept this say the Buddhist religion makes people simpleminded and some religious related to the absence of a scientific verification for the Law of Karma

doi: 10.11648/j.ajam.20140204.12

### 6. Conclusion

In mathematics, a theorem is a statement that has been proven on the basis of established and accepted statements. The theorem of the Law of Karma becomes effective as soon as

*Firstly*, the existence of all things, objects, happenings and acts of the universe can be differentiated into three categories – material, spiritual and imperfect cluster of elements, *Secondly*, after the death of animals and human beings their bodies and minds will be separated. These two requirements of the theorem are true and evident, is proved, verified and described in book [5].

Therefore, the law of Karma is true and exist. In other words, the law of Karma is law of nature. So, all human beings have to take guidance the law of the Karma in their own life, not just only Buddhist and Hindus religion's believers.

### Acknowledgements

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### References

- [1] The Third Dalai Lama. *Essence of Refined Gold. Explanation of the 1<sup>4th</sup> Dalai Lama*. Ulaanbaatar. 2003. 237 pages.
- [2] Rupert Gethin. *The Foundations of Buddhism*. Oxford New York. 1998. 333 pages.
- [3] Herbert B. Enderson. *Elements of set theory*. Academic press. 1977. 294 pages
- [4] Jamba Tinley. *The Bright Light*. (Translation from Russia to Mongolian language). Ulaanbaatar. 2002. 161 pages.
- [5] Jargal Dorj. *The Scientific Verification of Buddhist Teachings*. (Mongolian language). Ulaanbaatar. 2009. 252 pages.

## Example 2: The International Journal of English Language, Literature & Humanities



Quelle: J. Beall: Christmas-Themed Call for Papers Promises Publication in Four Days: <http://scholarlyoa.com/2014/12/23/christmas-themed-call-for-papers-promises-publication-in-four-days/>



# Business practises

- ▶ aggressive emailing
  - asking for submission of articles
  - asking to join editorial boards
- ▶ journal titles or websites that are very similar to existing journals (likelihood of confusion) → “journal hijacking”
- ▶ concealing information (e.g. about APCs)
- ▶ editorial board is made up or names are put on the website without consent; journals refuse to delete names when asked to
- ▶ indicators that resemble “Journal Impact Factors” but actually do not exist – at least not officially
- ▶ fast publication – no time for rigorous peer review

# Why can predatory publishing be considered as problem?

- ▶ waste of public money
- ▶ articles by honest but unaware researchers do not contribute to the career and reputation
- ▶ results that were not subject to a peer review process are perpetually accessible
- ▶ dishonest authors get an opportunity to publish
- ▶ predatory publishing is used to discredit the open access movement
- ▶ the “publish or perish” – paradigm and questionable reward systems in some countries indirectly support such practises
- ▶ analysis by Shen/Björk (2015) for 2014: there are 8.000 questionable journals with 420.000 articles: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-015-0469-2>

# Why is this an issue for libraries?

- ▶ research libraries have a long term experience in curating content
- ▶ question of self-concept: research libraries that consider themselves as partners for researchers should therefore provide their expertise to support them
- ▶ chance to foster the partnership with researchers
- ▶ libraries should have a professional interest that questionable journals do not enter the library's catalogue and get the opportunity to spread their content
- ▶ research libraries that manage institutional open access publication funds need to check the journals to make sure that the money is spent responsibly

Yes, it should be part of the students' education!  
But libraries have a self-interest as well!

# Approaches - blacklists

## ▶ blacklists

- Beall's List (offline, accessible on the web

<https://beallslist.weebly.com/> and as anonymous continuation:

<https://predatoryjournals.com>

- Cabell's: commercial product: <https://www2.cabells.com/about-blacklist>

## ⊘ Stop Predatory Journals

About Contribute Hijacked Journals Metrics Publishers

### Are predatory journals all bad?

Feb 10, 2017

This week's update comes to us from Jan Velterop, who asks, "Are 'predatory' journals completely negative, or also a sign of something positive?"

[Continue reading...](#)

### This week in predatory journals

Jan 27, 2017

There have been a few blog posts from around now that it has been taken offline. But all is not Beall began and singlehandedly supported will

[Continue reading...](#)

### Welcome to Predatory Journals

Jan 24, 2017

advantage: easy to apply

disadvantage: journals maybe do not lose the label although their intentions are respectable – "grey zone"

debatable: how can one trust anonymous providers?

debatable: pay subscription fees for a blacklist database?

The screenshot shows the CABELLS website with a navigation bar at the top containing 'Products', 'Support', 'Who We Are', and 'Connect With Us'. Below the navigation bar, there is a section titled 'The Journal Blacklist' with a sub-header 'Specialists analyze over 60 behavioral indicators to keep the community aware of the growing threats and to keep academia protected from exploitative operations.' A 'Get a quote' button is visible below the text. To the right of the text is a small image of a document or interface.



# Approaches - whitelists

- ▶ whitelists
  - Directory of Open Access Journals: <https://doaj.org/>
  - subject specific journal lists or rankings



advantage: easy to apply

disadvantage: lists do not contain all journals and “penalise” journals that are new to the market

# Approaches – neutral lists or databases

- ▶ lists that are neutral or were set up for other purposes, example: Quality Open Access Market: <https://www.qoam.eu/>

- ▶ lists with journals that are indexed by discovery systems such as PubMed Central, Web of Science, Scopus



advantage: “neutral” information collected for other purposes

disadvantage: lists do not contain all journals; QOAM: depth of information varies

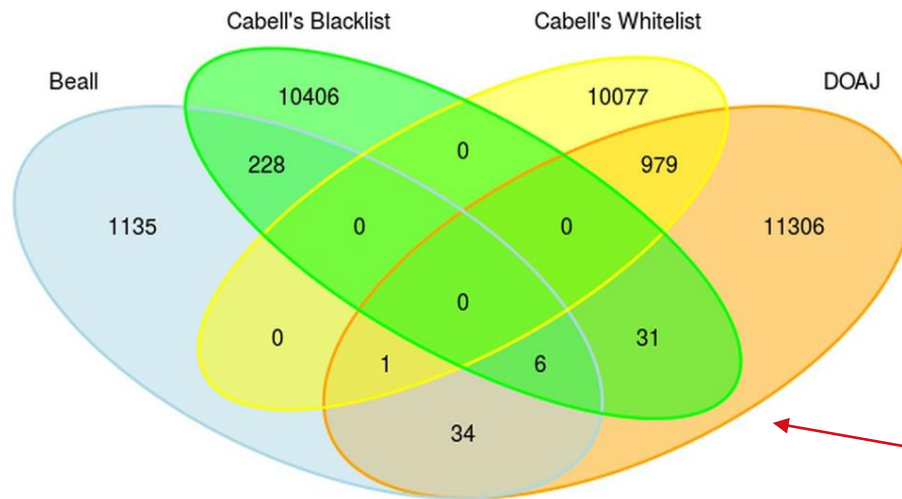
disadvantage: there are hints that they might contain articles from predatory journals as well: Manca et al: The surge of predatory open-access in neurosciences and neurology <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroscience.2017.04.014>; Perlin et al: Is predatory publishing a real threat? Evidence from a large database study <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-018-2750-6>; Demir: Scholarly databases under scrutiny: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961000618784159>.

# Need for caution

▶ there is a huge grey area: journals with clear intentions to cheat but also journals that are serious but are not yet familiar with common business practises

Venn diagrams of journal overlaps between Beall's list, Cabell's blacklist, the DOAJ, and Cabell's whitelist (as of December 2018).

<https://mbio.asm.org/content/mbio/10/3/e00411-19/F2.large.jpg>



Key question: How to identify predatory journals without "penalising" others?

journals that appear on blacklists AND whitelists

Michaela Strinzel et al. mBio 2019; doi:10.1128/mBio.00411-19

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# Approaches – lists of criteria

- ▶ lists of criteria by
  - awareness initiatives which address researchers such as Think – Check – Submit: <https://thinkchecksubmit.org/>
  - by learned societies or other research communities (more subject specific):

Shamseer et al. (2017). Potential predatory and legitimate biomedical journals: can you tell the difference? A cross-sectional comparison. *BMC Med*, 15(1), 28.

Misra, D. P., Ravindran, V., Wakhlu, A., Sharma, A., Agarwal, V., & Negi, V. S. (2017). Publishing in black and white: the relevance of listing of scientific journals. *Rheumatol Int*, 37(11), 1773–1778.



Choose the right journal for your research

Shamseer and colleagues <sup>*</sup>	Misra and colleagues <sup>**</sup>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scope of interest includes nonbiomedical subjects alongside biomedical topics.</li> <li>• The website contains spelling and grammar errors.</li> <li>• Images are distorted/fuzzy, intended to look like something they are not, or which are unauthorized.</li> <li>• The homepage language targets author.</li> <li>• The index Copernicus value<sup>*</sup> is promoted on the website.</li> <li>• Description of the manuscript handling process is lacking.</li> <li>• Manuscripts are submitted back to the journal via email.</li> <li>• Rapid publication is promised.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journals that solicit or accept articles from many unrelated specialties.</li> <li>• Journals that are entirely online; claiming to be open access.</li> <li>• Journal indexing details are unclear or have nonstandard indexing.</li> <li>• Process of manuscript submission and handling is poorly outlined or inferiorly handled (ie, lacking peer review).</li> <li>• Repeated email solicitations for manuscripts from persons with whom you have no prior professional contact.</li> <li>• Very short deadlines for articles solicited from unknown journals.</li> <li>• Journals offering a reduced author's publication fee—if the paper is submitted within a very narrow timeframe (weeks).</li> <li>• Unprofessional language in an email soliciting an article that seems intended only to please or inflate the ego of the author.</li> </ul>

Umlauf et al: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/ijn.12656>

# Approaches – lists of criteria

- ▶ lists usually focus on
  - transparency with regard to business practices (e.g. length of peer review, APCs)
  - impression of professionalism (e.g. website, memberships)
  - trustworthiness of information (e.g. with regard to indexing, Journal Impact Factor)

advantage: single criterion can be weighted

advantage: list can be adjusted to subject areas

disadvantage: workload – not one single criterion alone is the decisive factor but a combination of criteria

disadvantage: Think – Check – Submit list of criteria is rather short; some experience is needed to apply criteria properly

# Approaches – lists of criteria: Journal Evaluation Tool

## Journal Evaluation Rubric

Criterion	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)
<b>Step 1. Journal evaluation</b>			
<b>Web search for the journal</b>	The journal is within the top 5 entries on the first page of search results and there are no scam alert postings.	The journal is on the first page of search results but not within the top 5 entries and there are no scam alert postings.	The journal is not on the first page of search results or there is at least one scam alert post about the journal.
<b>Journal name</b>	The journal name cannot be confused with another journal.	The journal being evaluated has a name similar to another journal but is able to be distinguished between the two.	The journal being evaluated is unable to be distinguished from another with a similar name.
<b>Editorial board</b>	The editorial board is listed with their full names and institutional affiliation.	The editorial board is listed with their full names only (no affiliation).	There is no editorial board listed.
<b>Review process</b>	The journal review process		Do not state whether it is peer reviewed/edited and by whom.
<b>Conflicts of interest</b>	The journal policy, including editors, authors, and reviewers.		Do not state a conflicts of interest policy.
<b>Journal website</b>	The journal website (example: information)		Not well designed and is not functional. (examples: navigation, missing information)
<b>Revenue sources</b>	The journal revenue sources (reprints, etc.)		Do not state its business model.
<b>Journal archive</b>	The journal full text archive		Do not have an archive of its past issues.
<b>Publishing schedule</b>	The journal year and issue frequency		Do not state how often its issues will be published or how long it has been published.
<b>Author fees</b>	The journal to have a fee		Do not state whether or not there are any author fees.
<b>Copyright information</b>	The journal on the journal published		
<b>Journal index</b>	The journal (example)		

Journal Evaluation Scoring Sheet				
Criterion	Rationale	Rating (3, 2, 1)	Notes/Comments, URL where the information is found	
Web search for the journal	We want the popular reputation of the journal to be credible.			
Journal name	We want the journal name to be easily distinguishable from any other journal.			
Editorial board	We want to be able to know the names and affiliations of the members of the editorial board.			
Review process	We want to know if the journal is peer reviewed/edited and what the review policy is.			
Conflicts of interest	We want a clear conflicts of interest policy, including how a journal will handle potential conflicts of interest of editors, authors, and reviewers.			
Journal website	We want the journal website to be competently designed and functional.			
Revenue sources	We want to know if a journal is sustainable by its stated business model and sources of revenue.			
Journal archive	We want to be able to access the full text of published articles.			
Publishing schedule	We want to be able to determine the consistency of the journal.			
Number of articles published	We want to determine how long the journal has been in existence.			
Web search for the publisher	We want the popular reputation of the Publisher to be credible.			
Publisher information	We want to be able to contact the Publisher and verify ownership/management.			
			0	Rating total
Guide to interpretation 48-38 Good: Within this range the journal meets many of the evaluation criteria defined for credibility. At the higher end of the range the journal would have the fewest credibility concerns. 37-27 Fair: Within this range the journal meets some of the evaluation criteria defined for credibility. The author would need to decide whether or not to publish in the journal. 26-16 Poor: Within this range the journal meets the fewest of the evaluation criteria defined for credibility.				

Developed by librarians in the US

Rele, Shilpa; Kennedy, Marie; and Blas, Nataly, "Journal Evaluation Tool" (2017). *LMU Librarian Publications & Presentations*. 40. [https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/librarian\\_pubs/40](https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/librarian_pubs/40)

This rubric and scoring sheet is released under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>).



# Approaches – lists of criteria: lessons learned from a workshop held at ZB MED in December 2018



Workshop documentation:  
<http://zbmedblog.de/bericht-zum-vernetzungsworkshop-zu-predatory-publishing-bei-zb-med/> (German only)

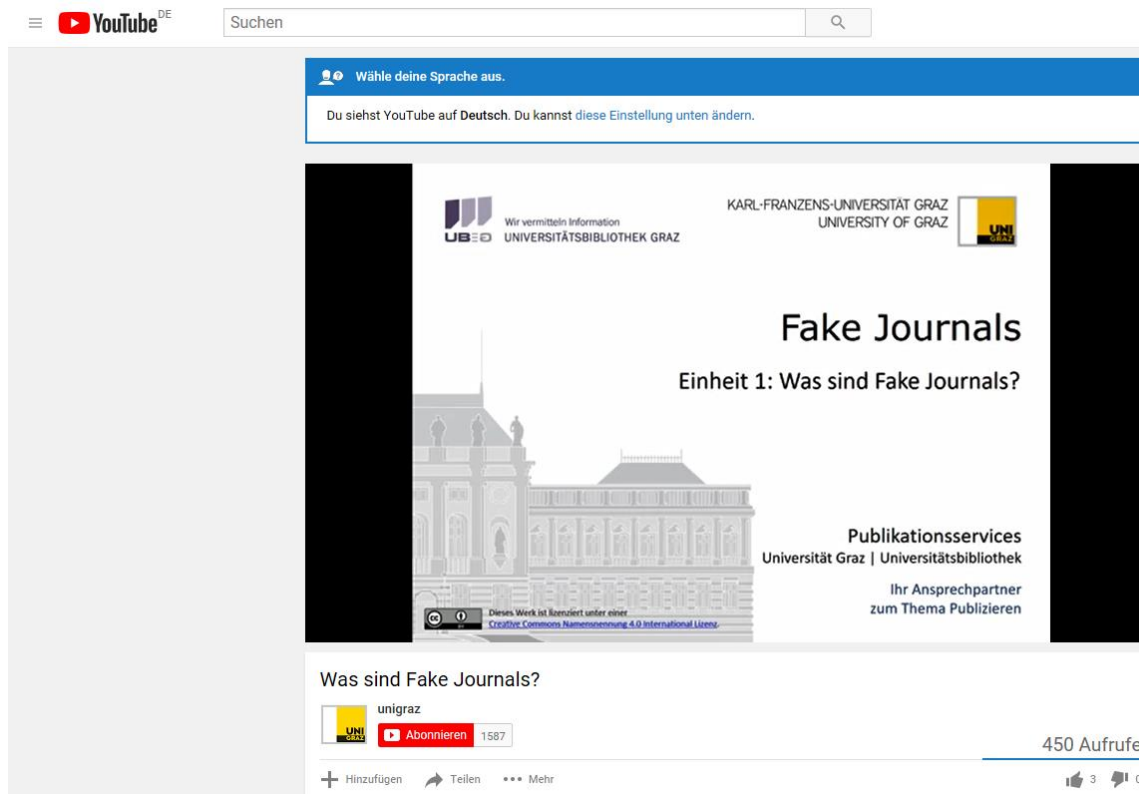
Photo credit: U. Arning (ZB MED)

# Approaches – lists of criteria: lessons learned from the workshop

- ▶ decide on the purpose a criterion should be used for: to identify reputable journals or to detect questionable ones?
- ▶ being listed on a black or white list should be only one criterion among others
- ▶ criteria can be separated into weak and strong criteria – weak criteria just work in combination with others; strong ones indicate quite clearly whether a journal is reputable/questionable
- ▶ criteria and assignment weak/strong both depend also on the subject area
- ▶ indexing: build your own knowledge base: document all critical cases, the criteria applied and the conclusions drawn from it – also to see developments
- ▶ consultation: provide a documentation; final decision should be made by the researchers

# Potential services offered by research libraries

- ▶ Awareness campaign by the university library of the University of Graz



Videos are just one element of the awareness campaign; further information:  
[https://opus4.kobv.de/opus4-bib-info/.../Ginther\\_Lackner\\_Predatory\\_Publishing.pdf](https://opus4.kobv.de/opus4-bib-info/.../Ginther_Lackner_Predatory_Publishing.pdf) (German only)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fUKCje7Aa0&list=PLm-qGn7rbCuh9fkUBG70gkUcqpZraoDXp>

# Potential services offered by research libraries

## ▶ Information on library's website – example: ZB MED

The screenshot shows the ZB MED PUBLISSO website. The header includes the PUBLISSO logo, a navigation menu with 'PUBLISHING', 'ADVICE', and 'WORKING FOR YOU', and a search bar. The breadcrumb trail is 'PUBLISSO > Advice > Publishing Advice: FAQs > Predatory Publishing'. The main heading is 'Predatory publishing is the “black sheep” of open access journals'. The content is divided into two columns. The left column is titled 'What is predatory publishing?' and contains three paragraphs of text. The right column is titled 'Contact' and features a photo of Dr. Jasmin Schmitz, his name, title 'Open Access Advisory Services', phone number '+49 (0)221 478-32795', and a 'Send mail' button. Below the contact information is a 'Related links' section with a link to 'Open Access Scholarly Publishers'.

- also offering personal advice and workshops
- address issue in a doctoral student's course at medical faculty
- target groups in general: researchers and information disseminators

<https://www.publisso.de/en/advice/publishing-advice-faqs/predatory-publishing/>

# Potential services offered by research libraries – further suggestions

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- ▶ list (a selection of) criteria
- ▶ provide general information: where can researchers find advice?
- ▶ raise awareness among members of faculty (or even among the executive board of the university)
- ▶ ...

Further suggestions?

**Thank you very much!**

**Dr. Jasmin Schmitz**

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