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Publishing Open Access: How to evaluate a journal's quality

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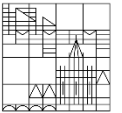network

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Agenda

- Open Access journals

- What is quality

- Quality criteria

- Quality assessment

- Predatory publishing

- Finding trustworthy Open Access journals

Open Access journals

- no difference to traditional journals apart from access model
- quality assurance (Peer review)
- availability and reputation vary greatly depending on subject
- Open Access journals often relatively new, less established
- existence of „predatory journals" with no or inadequate peer review

➡️ doubts about quality

What is quality?

- fulfillment of requirements
    - technical standards (e.g. assignment of DOIs, digital preservation...)
    - organizational framework
    - adherence to scientific standards (e.g. correct citations, no plagiarism...)
- subjective assessment
    - transparency and trustworthiness of the publication venue are relevant!

➡ The importance of specific requirements and procedures can vary greatly depending on the subject

Quality criteria of OA journals

- publisher is member of relevant associations
  - Open Access Scholarly Publishers' Association (OASPA)
  - Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) (also for non-OA journals)
- listed in quality-checked databases & directories
  - Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)
  - interdisciplinary, e.g. Web of Science, Scopus
  - for specific fields, e.g. Pubmed/MEDLINE

- new journals are often not yet listed in databases, not yet members of organisations
- further criteria have to be included

Quality criteria of OA journals

- journal is clear about its scope

- journal is recognised by the community

- editors are experts in their field

- journal is edited by a known publisher, a scholarly association or a known research institution

- transparent information on services and costs
  - details on quality assurance process (e.g. peer review)
  - use of persistent identifiers (e.g. DOI) and digital preservation
  - information on licencing (e.g. CC BY)

Quality assurance procedures

- OA journals use different procedures for quality assurance of articles, according to the practise in the discipline
    - **Peer review**: review by colleagues from the field
    - **Editorial review**: review by editorial board
    - **Open peer review**: publishing of a preliminary version or preprint, review open to everyone from the community

Predatory Publishing

- predatory journals publish scholarly articles for a fee
    - without quality control (peer review)
    - without adhering to standards of good editorial and scientific practise
    - without guarantee of long-term availability
    - with the sole purpose of making money

➡️ doesn't necessarily say anything about the quality of the articles

Characteristics of predatory journals

- unsolicited, often aggressive calls for papers
- very short times between submission and acceptance
- unclear about costs
- unclear about peer review process
- accept anything, including nonsense papers
- titles sometimes very similar to established journals
- fake information on editorial board members, impact factors
- website directed to authors, not readers

Caveats

- no sharp boundaries between „good" and „bad" journals, large grey area

- mediocre quality ≠ fraudulent intent

- predatory publishing ≠ „fake science"

- peer review is important, but not a 100% guarantee for quality

- publication and meeting cultures vary greatly between disciplines

Tools and services to help you find trustworthy open access journals

a small selection

Checking trustworthiness and reliability

How to check?

- whitelists provide good orientation

- we do not recommend blacklists

- go through checklist of [Think. Check. Submit.](#)

Keep in mind!

- ensure that your selected journal is compliant with institutional requirements or funder policies

- [Journal Checker Tool](#)for Plan S compliance check

The Directory of Open Access Journals

- browse the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) for an open access journal

- you can refine your search for no-APC-journals and journals with the DOAJ Seal, as well as filter by subject and other criteria

- provides data for several tools and services

Infos for different subjects at open-access.net

- provides subject-specific information on the topic of Open Access
- lists selected publication platforms and journals

Source: https://open-access.net/en/open-access-in-individual-disciplines/information-science

European Reference Index for the SSH

QUEST Open Access Journal Positive List

Source: http://s-quest.bihealth.org:3838/OAWhitelist/

Quality Open Access Market - QOAM

Source: **https://www.qoam.eu/journals**

Megajournals as alternative

- Open Access journals with broad disciplinary scope for original research → larger multidisciplinary audience
- fast publication process with peer review
- articles are not rejected for lack of novelty and significance
- examples:
  - PLOS ONE → natural sciences, medical research, engineering, as well as the related social sciences and humanities
  - Scientific Reports → natural sciences, medicine and engineering
  - IEEE Access → all IEEE's fields of interest
  - Open Library of Humanities → humanities
  - Sage Open → social and behavioral sciences, as well as humanities

What if questions arise?

- If you are not sure:
  - discuss with colleagues
  - ask a librarian → you might find further information on your library's website

- Share your experiences!
  - discuss your publication experience with peers and your local open access experts
  - you may start an internal knowledge base at your institute

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Thank you for your attention!

More information
https://open-access.net/startseite

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