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Facing Predatory Journals in An Era of Open Access

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Profile

Associate Professor at the Center for License and Qualification, Doshisha University. His main teaching subject is education on the qualifications for librarians.

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Research keywords

altmetrics (3), public library (22), browsing (1), log analysis (2), information behavior (19), view line tracking (1), bibliometrics (24), outsourcing (6), organizational repository (7), academic information delivery (21), university library (27)

<http://researchmap.jp/min2fly/>

Today's Topic

Predatory Journals

or

Bad Academic Journals

The following article of Mainichi newspaper was shown on the screen on the day of the presentation.

<https://mainichi.jp/articles/20181215/k00/00m/040/219000c>

What is Predatory OA?

Predatory publishing

- Journals (predominantly OA journals) that accept submitted articles for publication without reviewing, editing, proofreading, or otherwise processing them, in order to gain article processing charges (APCs) from authors
 - Summarized from the Wikipedia article in English
- The designation “predatory” was used for the first time by a librarian Jeffrey Beall.
 - The Japanese “hagetaka” (literally meaning “vulture”) was used for the first time to mean “predatory” by Mr. Masamitsu Kuriyama at Tokyo Metropolitan University.

Essentially, “open access” means:

- A movement aiming to realize the free distribution of research achievements (mainly peer-reviewed achievements)
- There are two major approaches:
 - Publication of repositories (PMCs, institutional repositories, etc.)
 - Open access (OA) journals
 - Money for publication costs is raised by any means other than subscription fees.

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- There are two major approaches:
 - Publication of repositories (PMCs, institutional repositories, etc.)
 - Open access (OA) journals
 - Money for publication costs is raised by any means other than subscription fees.
 - **Predatory journals are of this kind.**

Spread of Predatory Journals

The following website was shown on the screen
on the day of the presentation.

<https://www.enago.com/academy/growth-predatory-publishing-predatory-journals/>

The change in the number and percentage of OA articles in predatory journals quoted from reference material 4 was shown on the screen on the day of the presentation.

The number and percentage of OA articles
in predatory journals (Brazil) (4)

Inclusion in Literature Citations and Elsewhere⁵⁾

- Survey of citations of articles appearing in journals published by OMICS International
- A total of 250 journals (54.5%) were found to have citations from other journals.
- There are 157 systematic reviews with citations from articles appearing in predatory journals.
 - And 137 of these reviews are also published in non-predatory journals.
- Some such reviews are even listed in PMC and hence are found in a PubMed search.

The following article of Mainichi newspaper was shown on the screen on the day of the presentation.

<https://mainichi.jp/articles/20180903/k00/00m/040/110000c>

Misunderstandings of Predatory OA Journals and True Problems

Misunderstanding 1: Are All Publishers that Collect Article Processing Charges Suspicious?

- APC (Article Processing Charge) is a common business model.
 - A total of **3,131** APC-collecting journals are listed in DOAJ (a list of OA journals considered not to be bad) (as of 2018).
- Many renowned highly evaluated journals are included in the list.
 - Nature Communications (IF 11.8~)
 - PLOS Medicine (IF 11.6~)
- **APC-type OA journals are unproblematic.**

Misunderstanding 2: Are “Bad Academic Journals” Problematic? (1)

- Bad = “low quality”
- What is the “quality” of a journal?
 - Quality of the articles published?
 - Quality of the editorial?

Misunderstanding 2: Are “Bad Academic Journals” Problematic? (2)

- Journals of “low” quality exist commonly.
 - Peer reviews are available but relatively lax.
 - Essential lack of peer reviews = transactions
 - No established management and editing system.
- Required as an option for publication destination.
 - Journals issued by developing countries and the like: Growth is attempted.
 - Fledging researchers having achievements they don’t consider wonderful but want to publish...

True Problems with Predatory Journals: False Statements of Peer Reviews

- A false statement of “peer review journal” in the absence of peer review.
 - Not “simply bad” but “evil”, hence fraud.
 - The court recognized this point in the OMICS lawsuit.
- Deceiving the contributor: A peer review was expected but not performed in reality.
- Deceiving the reader: The article was believed to have been peer-reviewed but not so in reality.
 - This includes the evaluators.

Background for the Issue of Predatory Journals: Decreasing Resources for Peer Reviews

- Intensified research competition and increasing pressure for article publication
 - What is wanted is the number of accepted articles in peer-review journals • • • Increasing contributions
 - Researchers are busy surviving with intensified competition • • • Increased reluctance to work as peer reviewers
 - Imbalance between contributors (increases in China and India) and peer reviewers
- Wish to undergo a peer review and want to quickly obtain results.
 - Not so good to be accepted by a leading journal • • • “My target is no more than a peer review journal.”
 - This gap was targeted by the “predators.”

Measures against Predatory OA Journals

Measure 1: Black List

- Listing predatory publishers and journals
 - Beall's list (disclosure suspended)
 - Successor versions updated by volunteers.
 - <https://beallslist.weebly.com/>
- Problem: Can it be identified accurately?
 - The experiment reported in Science: About 18% of the journals listed in Beall's list were removable.
 - A study suggested that 4% to 14% might not be predatory journals.⁶⁾
 - Another study stated that there was a bias for developing countries.⁷⁾
 - An error could become a major risk (just exemplified by the case of Beall).

Measure 2: White List

- List “acceptable journals.”
 - Create a list by yourself.
 - Require listing in certain databases and elsewhere.
- Problem: “Judgment” as by the black list.
 - Even a JCR-listed journal (with its own impact factor) was later considered a predatory journal
 - Even PubMed is not fully reliable.
 - One day, a non-predatory journal may become a predatory journal: “Hijacking”
 - A list with the simple statement “absolutely OK” alone may be too rigorous?

Measure 3: Checklist Method

- Ask individual authors to confirm by showing the phrases “Journals that meet these requirements are OK” and “Dangerous.”
- Think. Check. Submit.
 - <https://thinkchecksubmit.org/>
 - <http://thinkchecksubmit.org/translations/japanese/>
- **Problem: Essentially, the judgment is made at the discretion of each author.**

Measure 4: Peer Review Assurance and Proof System

- It is favorable that a system be available to allow authors to become confident about “the presence of peer review” (from before submission).
- Specific Measure 1: Open peer Review
- Specific Measure 2: Use of External Assurance Tool

Open Peer Review

- An attempt to disclose the peer review processes
 - Names of peer reviewers
 - Peer reviewers' comments and processes of their answers and revisions
- Example journals with open peer reviews: F1000, PLOS, PeerJ, Nature series (optional)
- The existence of peer reviews can be assured nearly completely.
- Only a few journals have such a system in operation.

Example: <https://gatesopenresearch.org/articles/3-1473>

The website of Gates Open Research was shown on the screen on the day of the presentation.

External Assurance Tools

- A third-party entity ensures the existence of peer reviews.
- Peer Review Evaluation Badge
 - Meta-data are collected from a peer review system, and a badge indicating a peer-reviewed status is displayed.
 - Not in operation • • • ? (existence cannot be confirmed)
- Publons
 - A peer review registration service (peer review reports can be registered)
 - The primary aims are to compile peer review information, and to facilitate search for peer reviewers.
 - This system also allows the existence of peer reviews to be demonstrated by a third-party entity.

Measure 4: Peer Review Assurance and Proof System

- It is favorable that a system be available to allow authors to become confident about “the presence of peer review” (from before submission).
- Specific Measure 1: Open peer Review
- Specific Measure 2: Use of External Assurance Tool
- **Problems: currently neither is widespread**

The best solution is
yet to come

Academic has just started
working on solutions

Definition of predatory OA journals (OSF ver.)

Predatory journals and publishers are entities that prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship.

Characteristics:

- False or misleading information
- Deviation from best editorial and publication practices
- Lack of transparency
- The use of aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation practices

Currently the definition is still being worked on!

Source: Nature 576, 210-212 (2019) doi: 10.1038/d41586-019-03759-y

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