Short Introduction to „Predatory Publishing”

Workshop “Predatory Publishing EAHIL Conference, Basel, June 20th 2019
Definition “predatory publishing”

- 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
Examples: International Journal of Advanced Computer Technology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paper Title</th>
<th>Get me off Your Fucking Mailing List</th>
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**REVIEW FORM**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Appropriateness to publish in IJACT</td>
<td>Option: Excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Accuracy</td>
<td>Option: Excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Innovation</td>
<td>Option: Very Good</td>
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<td>4. Relevance</td>
<td>Option: Very Good</td>
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<td>5. Presentation</td>
<td>Option: Good</td>
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<td>6. Quality of writing</td>
<td>Option: Very Good</td>
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<td>7. Application of paper as introductory study material for revolutionary new concepts</td>
<td>Option: Very Good</td>
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<td>8. Overall Recommendation (Mark the right option):</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Accepted</td>
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<td>Accepted</td>
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<td>Accepted with minor changes</td>
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<td>Marginally Accepted</td>
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<td>Rejected</td>
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Examples: The International Journal of English Language, Literature & Humanities

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/
What is not meant by the term “predatory publishing”?

- publishers/journals that charge publication fees that are considered as too high
- publishers/journals that charge subscription fees that are considered as too high
- publishers that do not offer good services to their authors
- hybrid journals with “double dipping”
- journals that are not considered as “high-impact journals”
- authors who forge or plagiarise (although they might use predatory venues deliberately)

To sum up: Anything else that goes wrong in the publication industry!
Business practices of predatory publishers

- 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
- wrong indicators or indicators that resemble “Journal Impact Factors” but actually never exist – at least not officially
- fast publication – no time for rigorous peer review
First set of criteria

set of criteria by J. Beall – examples:

- composition of the editorial board
  - country bias
- business practices
  - mass founding of new journals
- lack of integrity
  - journal title and journal’s aims & scope do not seem to fit
- neglecting common business practices
  - use of addresses from freemail providers; no ISSN or DOI

in most cases: combination of different criteria

To agree upon a set of criteria is the aim of this workshop

Approaches

blacklists

– Beall’s list (offline, accessible on the web https://beallslist.weebly.com/ and as anonymous continuation: https://predatoryjournals.com

– Cabell’s International: commercial product: https://www2.cabells.com/about-blacklist

disadvantage: journals maybe do not lose the label although their intentions are respectable

highly debatable: pay subscription fees for a blacklist database?
Approaches

- whitelists
  - Directory of Open Access Journals: [https://doaj.org/](https://doaj.org/)
  - subject-specific journal lists or rankings

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

- 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 PMC, Web of Science, Scopus

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.
Approaches

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


Why can predatory publishing be considered as a problem?

- waste of public money
- honest protagonists in the science system are discredited
- naivety of young researchers is used
- results that were not subject to a peer review process are perpetually accessible
- dishonest authors get an opportunity to publish
- predatory publishing is also used to discredit the open access movement
- the “publish or perish“ – paradigm and questionable reward systems in some countries indirectly support such practices
Need for caution

- predatory journals usually contain articles that are not peer reviewed which means that they also might contain articles of good quality
- there is a huge grey area: journals that have clear intentions to cheat but also journals that are serious and not yet familiar with common business practices

Key question: How to identify predatory journals without “penalising” others?
This workshop

discussion:

- How can a list of criteria look like?
  - Which criteria can be applied to identify “predatory journals”?
  - Are there “hard” criteria and “soft” criteria?
Thank you very much!

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