



# Predatory Publications: What They Are and How to Avoid Them

Research Office, Telfer School of Management

# Predatory journals and predatory conferences: What you should know

As their numbers grow exponentially, predatory journals and conferences represent a threat to the integrity of scholarly work. Publishing in predatory journals and presenting at predatory conferences is harmful to the reputation of researchers and their institutions, and may have a negative impact on their ability to attract research funding.

The purpose of this guide is to help identify predatory conferences and predatory journals and to provide a list of available resources for making informed choices. Considering that methods and tactics of soliciting submissions to predatory journals and conferences change constantly and rapidly, this document should be seen as only a general guide and not an authoritative decision-making tool. Please do your homework before submitting research results.

## Definitions

A **predatory journal** is a journal that promotes itself as a legitimate open-access journal with very quick turnaround time and usually low publication fees. It promises a fast “review” process, and a high acceptance rate – both achieved through **questionable peer-review practices**. A predatory journal also masquerades as legitimate by having a **questionable editorial board** and by providing “**impact**” **measures** that **are not recognized** by, for example, Scopus, Web of Science or Scimago.

A **predatory conference** is an event set up to resemble a legitimate scientific conference, offering some form of refereed conference proceedings. It may offer publication of **papers in affiliated (predatory) journals**, but not always. A predatory conference is often part of a large multi-conference event featuring questionable keynote and invited speakers who may not be top researchers in their fields. The event is **marketed primarily for venue location**.

The above broad definitions were created using the following sources:

- Jeffrey Beall. [Criteria for Determining Predatory Open-Access Publishers](#)
- D. Moher et al. “Stop this waste of people, animals and money.” *Nature* 2017; 549(7670): 23-25.
- D. Moher and E. Moher. “Stop predatory publishers now: Act collaboratively.” *Annals of Internal Medicine* 2016;164(9):616-617.
- D. Moher and A. Srivastava. “You are invited to submit....” *BMC Medicine* 2015; 13:180.

## Main features

The features listed below are not exhaustive and should serve as a first checklist to be used when considering whether to attend a conference or to submit scholarly work to a journal.

It is important to note, however, that predatory outlets are becoming increasingly better at hiding or downplaying their predatory status. When submitting work to a lesser-known outlet, it is advisable to consult the librarian at the Telfer School of Management or the University of Ottawa and the Research Office at the Telfer School of Management.

### Predatory journal

- Solicits submissions via email campaigns
- Addresses email correspondence personally to a researcher and/or mentions recipient's past research in the body of the email
- Often proudly mentions that the journal is indexed by Cabell directory, Library of Congress, etc.
- Does not have transparent editorial and peer-review process
- Has non-professional web portal and submission guidelines
- Offers very quick turnaround time in accepting submissions
- Lists editorial board of made-up or unknowing members
- Provides contact information that is insufficient or very difficult to verify
- Makes false claims regarding impact factor or provides fake bibliometrics
- Has been publishing for many years, but is not indexed on Scopus, Web of Science or similar bibliographic databases
- Publication costs are not clearly indicated on the website or authors are only informed that cost is involved after acceptance

### Predatory conference

- Solicits submissions via aggressive email campaign
- Addresses email correspondence personally to a researcher and/or mentions recipient's past research in the body of the email
- Invites researcher to be an invited speaker, distinguished speaker, etc.
- Makes acceptance decision very fast or has a rolling acceptance decision policy
- Often run as a multi-conference event with diversified range of topics
- Has a scientific committee composed of fake or unknowing members, or people completely unknown in the conference's academic field
- Is promoted as a tourist attraction more than an academic event

## Resources

There are a number of different resources that should help identify predatory journals or conferences. Some of them are listed below.

- The Ottawa Hospital Research Institute [Centre for Journalology guide](#) can help in deciding where to submit a paper. This guide is focused on medical/clinical/health services publications but includes very useful information for other fields.
- The [SCImago Journal & Country Rank](#) is a publicly available portal that lists the journals and country scientific indicators developed from the information contained in the [Scopus database](#). This portal is maintained by a research group from the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, University of Granada, Extremadura, Carlos III (Madrid) and Alcalá de Henares.
- [Web of Science](#) is a database produced by Clarivate Analytics that lists academic journals and calculates their impact factor. It can be accessed for free through the University of Ottawa library.
- The [University of Ottawa library scholarly communications website](#) helps researchers be aware of predatory publishers. The scholarly communication librarian contact information is shown at the bottom of the web page.
- [Think. Check. Submit.](#) is a portal founded by a number of organizations to help researchers identify legitimate journals for publication of research results.

There are also a number of YouTube videos:

- [What Is Predatory Publishing?](#)
- [How to Determine if a Journal is a Predatory Publisher](#)
- [Identifying Predatory Publishers](#)

## Telfer School of Management policy

The Telfer School Research Grants program provides funding to full-time faculty members and graduate students to conduct research and present or publish results at legitimate, recognized scholarly conferences or in recognized academic journals. Funds cannot be used to pay for publishing in a predatory journal or to cover costs of attending a predatory conference. The Research Office is here to help with any questions regarding predatory conferences and questionable publishing practices.

## Appendix

Here are some examples of email solicitations from predatory journals or conferences.

### Example 1

Dear Dr. John Smith,

Greetings from Remedy Publications e-Books.

We hope you are doing well.

It will be an immense pleasure in contacting an eminent author like you. In view of your expertise and past publications in the field of "Surgery and Advanced Medicine", we would like to introduce our newly launched e-book "Clinical Aspects of Robotic Surgery" and entreating your association to make it successful.

For More Information: <http://www.emedbooksonline.com/book/clinical-aspects-of-robotic-surgery>

Currently we are in pursue of appointing enthusiastic experts in Editorial Board and seeking chapter submissions from qualified authors. Through this e-mail, we would like to know your interest in either of one or both as we have found your profile is suitable for both the options.

Kindly let us know your feasibility regarding the same and hope to hear from you positively.

Have a nice day..!

Regards,

### Example 2

**Subject:** Manuscript Submission Request-Inaugural Edition

Dear Dr. Jane Smith,  
Warm greetings from Chronicle Publishers!

We introduce ourselves as Chronicle Publishers we have initiated a Journal called Journal of Addiction and Therapy; Chronicle Publishers is an Open access journal that publishes peer-reviewed novel research related to Addiction and Therapy. The Journal is planning to initiate "**Inaugural Edition**" and "**Students Edition**" seeking quality submissions from qualified Scientists, Researchers and Experts of all fields of Clinical, Basic and Life Sciences for this Edition. The journal invites scientific work in the form of articles such as original articles, review articles, short communications, rapid communications, brief reports etc.

For more details kindly follow the link below  
<http://addictionandtherapy.chroniclepublishers.org/>

Kindly submit the manuscripts to  
[addiction@chroniclepublishers.international](mailto:addiction@chroniclepublishers.international)  
(or)  
[addiction@chroniclepublishers.org](mailto:addiction@chroniclepublishers.org)  
(or)  
[submissions@chroniclepublishers.org](mailto:submissions@chroniclepublishers.org)

Manuscript format details are available on the below Link  
<http://addictionandtherapy.chroniclepublishers.org/index.php/author-guidelines>

### Example 3

**Objet: Your professional interest - "Structuring the Fight Against Cancer in Quebec During the 20th Century: Imprinting and Organizational Rivalry"**

Honorable **Jane Smith,**

Respectful Greetings!

Sincere apologies for any cross posting. Your professional interests ( an example noted in the subject line ) have inspired this email. If our reading of your intellectual attention is appropriate, we invite you to send an abstract for 4th Conference: 'Asian Perspectives on Leadership, Learning and Social Enterprise: Sharpening Focus on Collaborative Research and Publications' (July 25-27, 2017) in collaboration with the Asian Institute of Technology(AIT), Bangkok (Thailand), Please see key questions and tracks of the conference here: [ellta.org/ellta-2017/call-for-papers/](http://ellta.org/ellta-2017/call-for-papers/)

You can submit your abstract by April 30, 2017 ( the link is available on the conference website).

ELLTA Conferences have a track record of attracting a diverse audience from across the globe (the last event attracted participants from 60+ countries). The conference has negotiated with Scopus indexed journals to publish high-quality papers, and is being housed in the most visited City of the year 2016!

PS: Please feel very welcome to notify us if you think this email does not relate to your current professional interests.

### Example 4

Dear Dr. John Smith,

It is our great pleasure to welcome you to join in **Part 2: Knowledge Economy Symposium** of GCKE-2017, which will be held in Qingdao, China during September 19-21, 2017. And we cordially invite you to propose a Speech on your recent research of **Determinants and consequences of employee attributions of corporate social responsibility as substantive or symbolic...** . Your prompt reply with a speech proposal (Speech Title and abstract preferred along with full CV) will be highly appreciated!

GCKE-2017 covers Keynote Forum and 8 Symposiums, totally 30 Sessions with 200+ Oral Speeches, Posters and Papers, and Diversified Social Events. Each day will include ten concurrent focus sessions, each focus session featuring speakers who will present cutting-edge research on a wide range of topics. We sincerely welcome you to submit presentation abstract, short paper and preliminary speech title. For more information, please visit the conference website at: <http://www.bitcongress.com/gcke2017/>

Qingdao (Tsingtao), is a beautiful seaside city with clear air and enchanting sea view. Autumn is the most pleasant season for a visit. Just walking on the sand and listening to the surf breaking on the beach becomes enjoyable.

Tsingtao is well known for its own brand of delicious beer, as one of three brands recognized by beer lovers over the world, Tsingtao beer win plaudits at home and abroad because of the pleasant aroma and well-balanced taste.

Looking forward to your participation in amazing Qingdao for a stimulating and enjoyable conference.

We expect your precious comments or suggestions; also your reference to other speakers will be highly appreciated.

We expect your participation.

Sincerely yours

## Example 5

**Subject: Conference invitation regarding Discovering the preferences of physicians with regards to rank-ordered medical documents**

Dear Professor,

This is \*\*\*\*\*, the conference secretary of the 2018 International Conference on Sensor Networks and Signal Processing (SNSP 2018)(Oct. 28-31, 2018, Xi'an University of Science and Technology, Xi'an, China). We have got to know that you have published paper with title "Discovering the preferences of physicians with regards to rank-ordered medical documents", it is quite inspiring and related to our conference topic, on behalf of SNSP 2018 organizing committee, we sincerely invite you to attend our conference.

1. With this invitation you can get 30%-OFF on the regular registration fee.
2. For regular speakers, winners of the Best Oral Presentation will be awarded a free registration to the next conference.
3. Attendees can enjoy a free tour of Terracotta Army in Xi'an.

If you are not available for attendance, could you please help us review one or two papers? Active Reviewers are candidates for Technical Program Committee next year.

It is highly appreciated if you kindly forward this conference information to your colleagues or friends in this field.

For more information, please visit  
<http://www.snsconf.org>

or contact  
[info@snsconf.org](mailto:info@snsconf.org)

Best Regards  
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