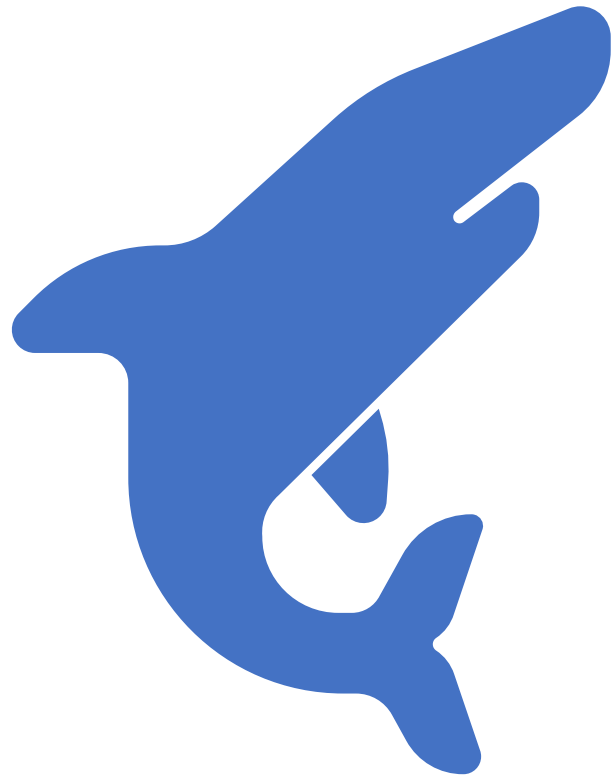


# Predatory Journals

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What is a Predatory Journal?

# What is a predatory journal?

- The consensus definition reached was: “Predatory journals and publishers are entities that prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are characterized by false or misleading information, deviation from best editorial and publication practices, a lack of transparency, and/or the use of aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation practices.”
- This was the definition agreed upon by leading scholars and publishers from ten countries

Grudniewicz, A., Moher, D., Cobey, K. D., Bryson, G. L., Cukier, S., Allen, K., Ardern, C., Balcom, L., Barros, T., Berger, M., Ciro, J. B., Cugusi, L., Donaldson, M. R., Egger, M., Graham, I. D., Hodgkinson, M., Khan, K. M., Mabizela, M., Manca, A., ... Lalu, M. M. (2019). Predatory journals: No definition, no defence. *Nature*, 576(7786), 210–212. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-019-03759-y>

# Characteristics of predatory journals?

- False or misleading information on their website
- Deviation from best editorial and publication practices
- Lack of transparency: peer review process is either weak or absent
- Aggressive, indiscriminate solicitation like asking for huge publication fees, sending emails to researchers for publications etc

Grudniewicz, A., Moher, D., Cobey, K. D., Bryson, G. L., Cukier, S., Allen, K., Ardern, C., Balcom, L., Barros, T., Berger, M., Ciro, J. B., Cugusi, L., Donaldson, M. R., Egger, M., Graham, I. D., Hodgkinson, M., Khan, K. M., Mabizela, M., Manca, A., ... Lalu, M. M. (2019). Predatory journals: No definition, no defence. *Nature*, 576(7786), 210–212. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-019-03759-y>

## Some past exposés: Phil Davies Crappy Paper

In 2010, Cornell University graduate student Phil Davis submitted a manuscript consisting of computer-generated a crap paper which was accepted for a fee by a journal published by the Bentham Science Publishers<sup>1</sup>

Davis pulled the stunt after he started receiving unsolicited emails from the publishing house which publishes more than 200 open access journals

The editor of the journal later resigned<sup>2</sup>

1. <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn17288-crap-paper-accepted-by-journal/>
- 2: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2009/jun/18/science-editor-resigns-hoax-article>

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## CRAP paper accepted by journal



11 June 2009

By [Peter Aldhous](#)

At *New Scientist* we love a good hoax, especially one that both amuses and makes a serious point about the communication of science. So kudos to [Philip Davis](#), a graduate student at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, who revealed yesterday on [The Scholarly Kitchen](#) blog that he got a nonsensical computer-generated paper accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

Earlier this year, Davis started receiving unsolicited emails from [Bentham Science Publishers](#), which publishes more than 200 “open-access” journals – which turn the conventional business model of academic publishing on its head by charging publication fees to the authors of research papers, and then making the content available for free.

As the emails stacked up, Davis was not only encouraged to submit papers, but was also invited to serve on the editorial board of some of Bentham’s journals – for which he was told he would be allowed to publish one free article each year. “I received solicitations for journals for which I had no subject expertise at all,” says Davis. “It really painted a picture of vanity publishing.”

# Some past exposés: Who's Afraid of Peer Review

- In 2013, John Bohannon, a staff writer for the journal *Science* and for popular science publications, targeted the open access system by submitting to several such journals a deeply flawed paper and published the results in the *Science*.
- The article was titled, "Who's Afraid of Peer Review?".
- About 60% of the journals accepted the faked medical paper, and 40% rejected it.

# Some past exposés: Dr Fraud applied for an editor's position

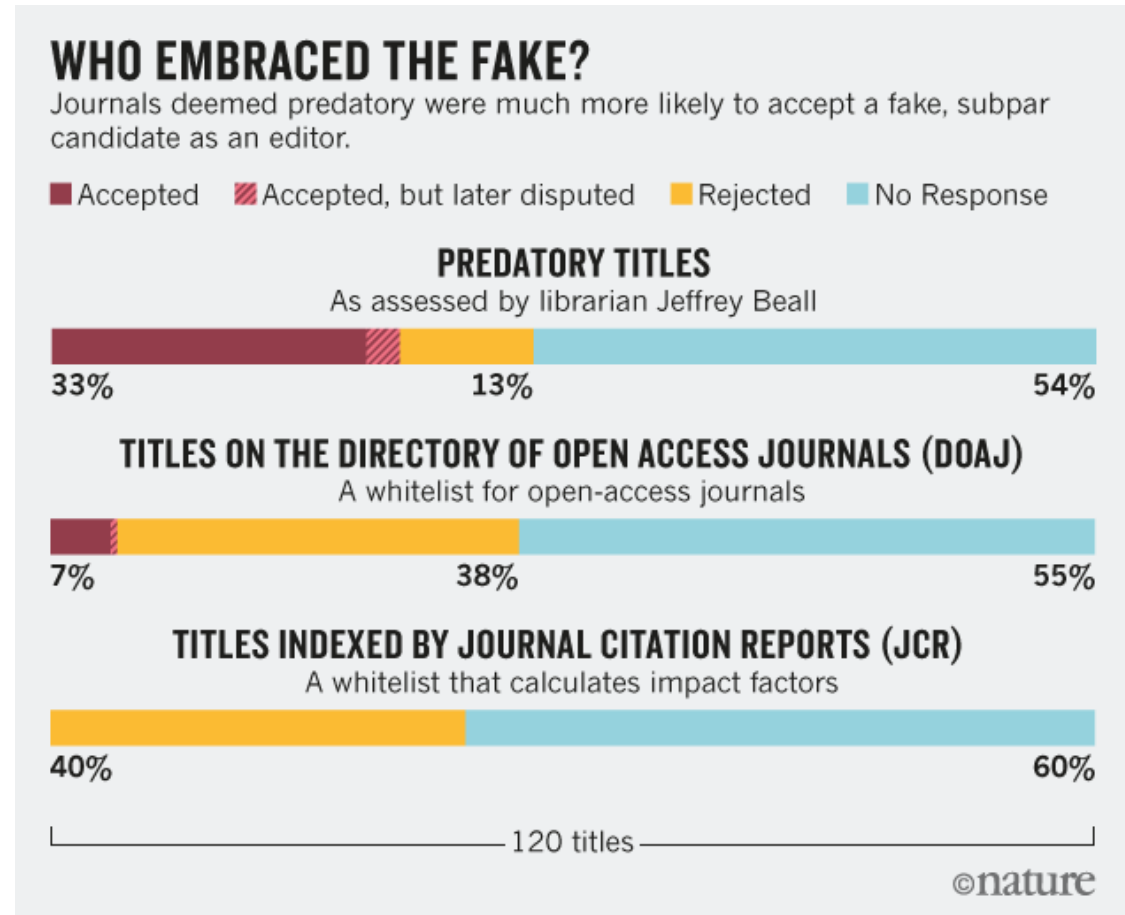
- In 2015, four researchers created a fictitious subpar scientist named Anna O. Szust
- *oszust* is Polish for "fraud",
- They applied on the behalf of the fictitious Szust for an editor position to 360 scholarly journals.
- Szust's qualifications were dismal for the role of an editor; she had never published a single article and had no editorial experience.
- The books and book chapters listed on her CV were made-up, as were the publishing houses that published the books.





# The result of Dr Fraud's experiment

- One-third of the journals to which Szust applied were sampled from Beall's List of 'predatory' journals.
- Forty of these predatory journals accepted Szust as editor without any background vetting and often within days or even hours.
- By comparison, she received minimal to no positive response from the "control" journals which "must meet certain standards of quality, including ethical publishing practices."

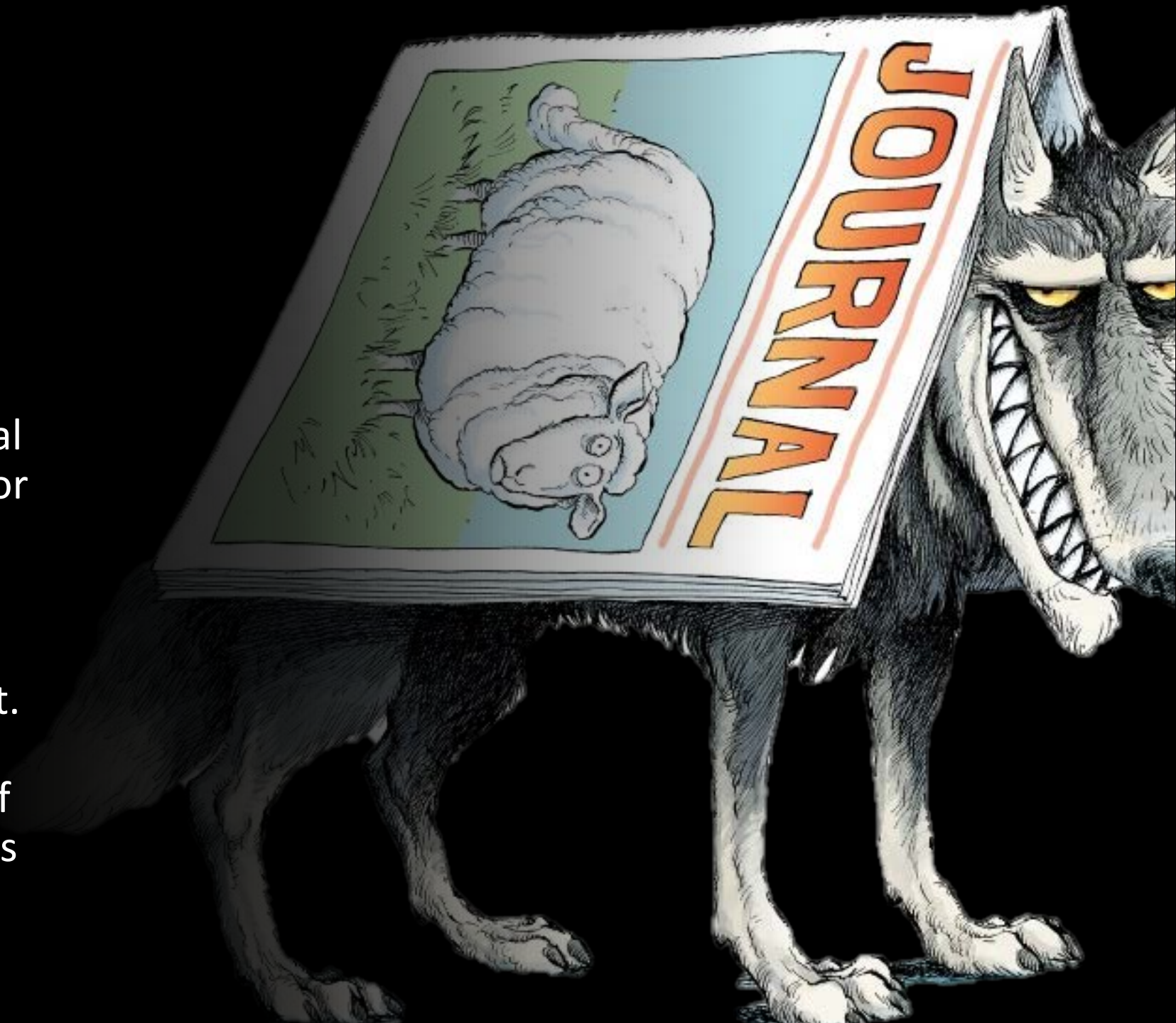




## How would you know if a journal is predatory?

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- Some people think any journal from an unknown publisher, or a journal that charges for publication, is necessarily predatory.
- That is not necessarily correct. The important thing is to dig deeper and find the quality of submitted manuscripts and its standards,”



## Beall's Criteria for identification of predatory journals and publishers

Table 1: Beall's Criteria for Identification of Predatory Journals and Publishers\*

### Editor and Staff

- The publisher's owner is identified as the editor of each and every journal published by the organization.
- No single individual is identified as any specific journal's editor.
- The journal does not identify a formal editorial / review board.
- No academic information is provided regarding the editor, editorial staff, and/or review board members.
- Evidence exists showing that the editor and/or review board members do not possess academic expertise to reasonably qualify them to be publication gatekeepers in the journal's field.
- Two or more journals have duplicate editorial boards (i.e., same editorial board for more than one journal).
- The journals have an insufficient number of board members (e.g., 2 or 3 members), have concocted editorial boards (made up names), name scholars on their editorial board without their knowledge or permission or have board members who are prominent researchers but exempt them from any contributions to the journal except the use of their names and/or photographs.
- There is little or no geographical diversity among the editorial board members, especially for journals that claim to be international in scope or coverage.
- The editorial board engages in gender bias (i.e., exclusion of any female members).



In addition

- The name of the journal is unrelated with the journal's mission.
- The name of the journal does not adequately reflect its origin (e.g., a journal with the word 'Canadian' or 'Swiss' in its name when neither the publisher, editor, nor any purported institutional affiliate relates whatsoever to Canada or Switzerland).



# Importantly:

**Is the publisher a member of a recognized industry initiative (COPE, DOAJ, OASPA)?**

# Checklist to identify predatory Journals

Predatory publishers are characterized by the following deceptive practices:

- Phony Journals with titles that may be similar to respected journals
- **Fake editorial boards**--these may be real researchers whose names are used without their knowledge.
- Editorial boards that are identical across all of a publishers titles
- Fees to withdraw an article
- Display **fake impact factors**
- No clarity of its peer-review process and/or submission – publishing time
- Displays **false claims** of its content indexed in legitimate indexing services



Also

- The publisher publishes journals that are excessively broad (e.g. Journal of Education) or combine two or more fields not normally treated together (e.g. International Journal of Business, Humanities and Technology) in order to attract more articles and gain more revenue from author fees.
- Use boastful language claiming to be a 'leading publisher' even though the publisher may be a small organization.
- Provide minimal or no copyediting or proofreading of submissions.
- Publish papers that are not academic at all, e.g. essays by lay people, polemical editorials, or pseudo-science.

# Hall of Shame of Predatory Journals

Repositories of Lists of Predatory Journals

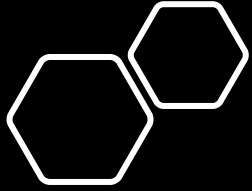


## Beall's List

- Beall's list was first published his list of predatory publishers in 2010.
- Jeffrey Beall was a librarian at the University of Colorado
- Beall's list of potential, possible, or probable predatory scholarly open-access publishers attempted to identify scholarly open access publishers with questionable practices.
- In 2013, *Nature* reported that Beall's list and web site were "widely read by librarians, researchers, and open access advocates, many of whom applaud his efforts to reveal shady publishing practices."

# What happened to Beall's List?

- It was shut down in 2017 due to:
  - Frontiers Media, a well-financed Swiss open access(OA) publisher, angry about being listed
  - Beall's university under pressure from various parties
  - OA proponents
- It was moved to a new site (<https://beallslist.net/>) and has been maintained by an anonymous person since 2017.
- The new Beall's List site has two parts:
  - Beall's original list and
  - a new list added below the original list by Beall's successor.



# Beall's List's website

<https://beallslist.net/>

## BEALL'S LIST

### OF POTENTIAL PREDATORY JOURNALS AND PUBLISHERS

- PUBLISHERS
- STANDALONE JOURNALS
- VANITY PRESS
- CONTACT
- OTHER

#### Potential predatory scholarly open-access publishers

**Instructions:** first, find the journal's publisher – it is usually written at the bottom of the journal's webpage or in the "About" section. Then simply enter the publisher's name or its URL in the search box above. If the journal does not have a publisher use the [Standalone Journals](#) list.

**All journals published by a predatory publisher are potentially predatory unless stated otherwise.**

#### Original list

This is an archived version of the Beall's list – a list of potential predatory publishers created by a librarian [Jeffrey Beall](#). We will only update links and add notes to this list.

- [1088 Email Press](#)

#### Useful pages

- [List of journals falsely claiming to be indexed by DOAJ](#)
- [DOAJ: Journals added and removed](#)
- [Nonrecommended medical periodicals](#)
- [Retraction Watch](#)
- [Flaky Academic Journals Blog](#)

[GO TO UPDATE](#)



# Cabell's List

- Offered by the Cabell Corporation
- Designed to address some of the perceived shortcomings of the Beall's List
- Is a subscription-based service
- See <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00987913.2019.1694810> for a comparison of the two lists

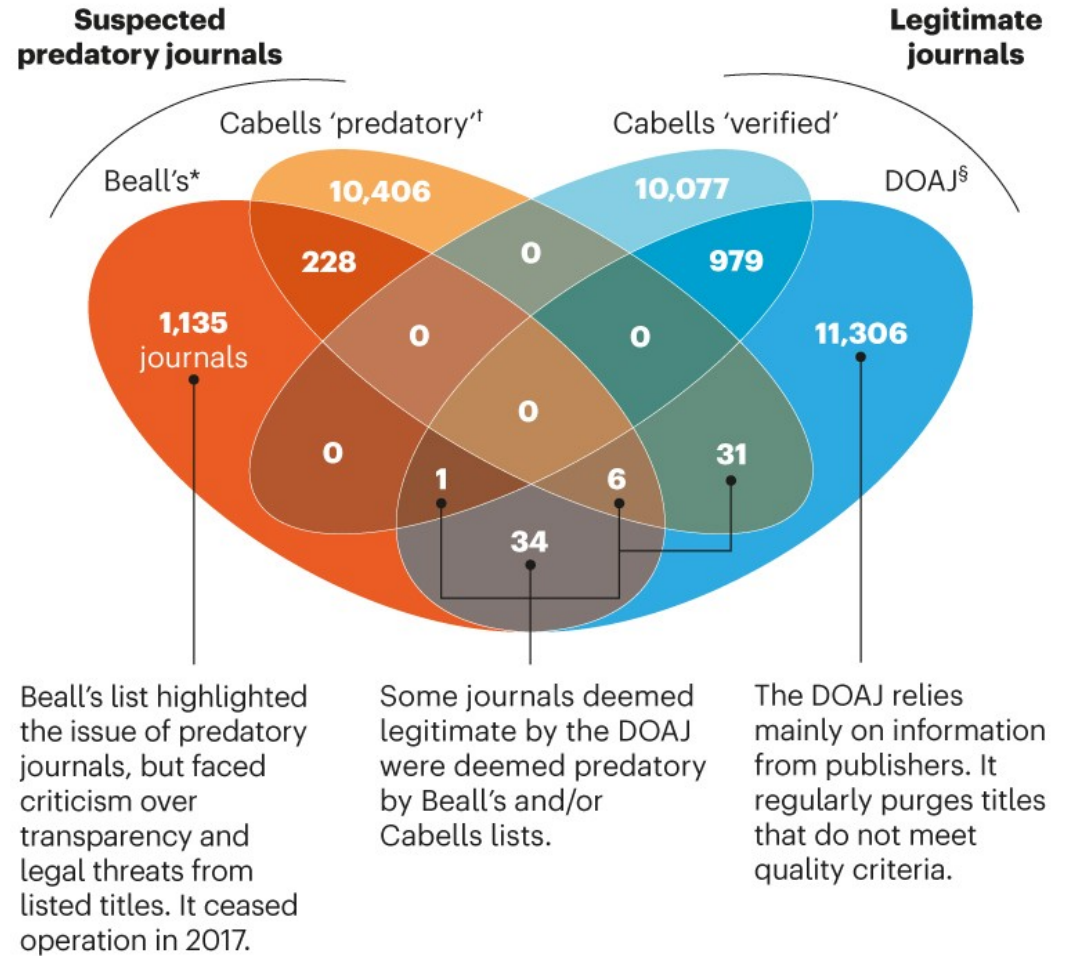


But Getting it right  
may be very difficult

That's probably why the facility on  
the next slide could be useful.....

## NO LIST TO RULE THEM ALL

Assessments of which journals are likely to be predatory or legitimate do not tally, and titles can appear in both categories. There is no way to know which journals were considered for a list but left off, or which were not considered.



\*Informally assessed by University of Colorado Denver librarian Jeffrey Beall in ~2008-17; †Pay-to-access lists from Cabells, a scholarly analytics company; §The Directory of Open Access Journals, a community-curated list requiring journal best practices such as peer review and statements on author fees and licensing.



- According to their website:
- “**Think. Check. Submit.** helps researchers identify trusted journals and publishers for their research. Through a range of tools and practical resources, this international, cross-sector initiative aims to educate researchers, promote integrity, and build trust in credible research and publications.”
- Think. Check. Submit.provides an easy-to-use checklist that researchers can refer to when they are investigating whether journal or other resources can be trusted.

<https://thinkchecksubmit.org/>



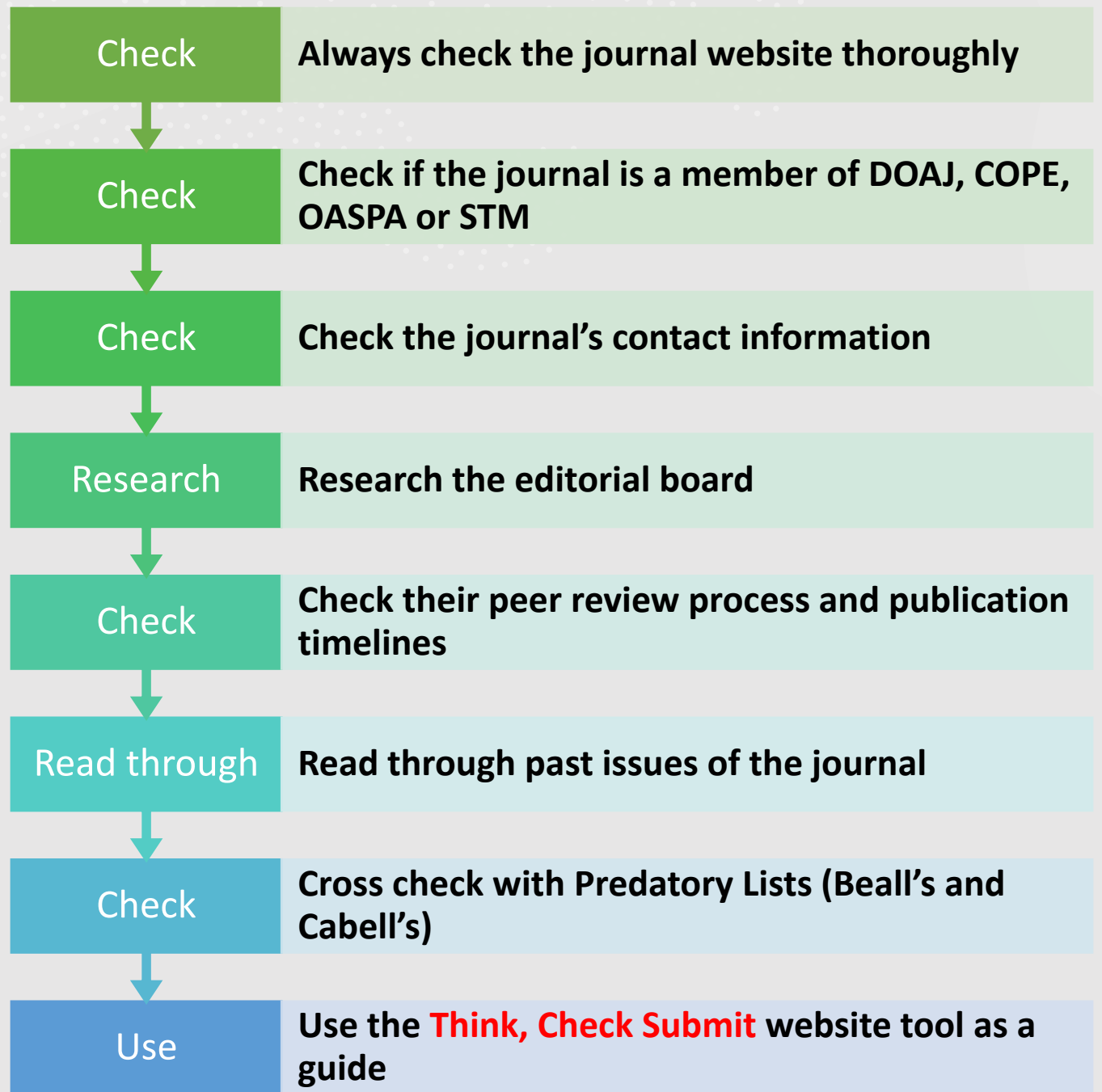
## Important

- [“Think.Check.Submit](https://www.enago.com/academy/think-check-submit-a-new-approach-to-journal-selection/) does not aim to recommend any particular or set of journals to authors. Indeed, on the whole, the aim of this important initiative is to guide researchers in how they evaluate where to publish their work to improve their research impact and future career development.”

<https://www.enago.com/academy/think-check-submit-a-new-approach-to-journal-selection/>



# How to spot predatory journals



# How to spot predatory journals

## 1. Always check the journal website thoroughly


- Often, a tell-tale sign of a predatory journal is the mistakes in both spelling and grammar on their website. Poor use of language shows a low professional standard.
- The journals' fees should be clearly stated on the website and should only be requested from the author after the article has been accepted for publication. If a journal requests a submission fee before the article is accepted, this may be a predatory journal.

• <https://www.rxcomms.com/blog/6-ways-spot-predatory-journal/vglasson/>

# How to spot predatory journals

## 2. Check if the journal is a member of DOAJ, COPE, OASPA or STM


- If they advertise membership to the Directory of Open Access Journal ([DOAJ](#)), Committee on Publication Ethics ([COPE](#)), Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association ([OASPA](#)) or International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers ([STM](#)), check their membership on the relevant website.
- These associations are all reputable organisations that vet their members for adherence to publishing standards. If in doubt, send an email to the organisation, and they should be able to confirm or deny membership.



# How to spot predatory journals

## 3. Check the journal's contact information

- It is important to ensure there is verifiable contact information that matches the advertised nationality of the journal. **Often predatory journals state that their offices are in one country, whereas the contact details will be in another.** Check that the time-stamps of incoming emails are during working hours of the country of origin, ensure the phone number has the correct country-code, and if they provide an address, search for it!



# How to spot predatory journals

## 4. Research the editorial board

- One way to look credible is to list experts in the field as members of the editorial board. Often predatory journals will create fake scholars, or they will list scholars without their permission. One way to know for sure, is to check the professional online profiles of named individuals through their listed institution page, LinkedIn or Research Gate. If there is no mention of the journal, then proceed with caution.

# How to spot predatory journals

## 5. Check their peer review process and publication timelines

- Peer review is essential to uphold the quality of scientific articles and journals. The peer review process is an important stamp of approval for the publication of academic research. When an article is published in a scientific journal, readers can assume the information published is reliable, credible, and has been evaluated by an editor and at least two independent experts in the field. Predatory journals tend to miss this peer review process out completely. If the journal advertises exceptionally quick peer review timelines, investigate them further, and ensure they state online their peer review policy in full.

# How to spot predatory journals

## 6. Read through past issues of the journal

- **Many predatory journals will publish any and all articles that are submitted to them.** Read through past issues of the journal and see whether the articles published are true to the journals' advertised speciality areas; if a cancer journal is publishing articles on the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, you can assume their editorial policies are lacking! If you find articles with many mistakes this could show their poor Peer Review process! Also, if past issues are missing or listed as 'coming soon', this could be a strong sign that the journal is not legitimate





Terminologies  
used in Academic  
Publishing

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# Guest vs. Gift Authors

- A **guest author** is somebody who did not contribute in any way to the research and writing but is included in the author list because they confer extra credibility on the article.
- A **gift author** is one who may have a slight relationship with the study or the article, but who would not be considered an author according to the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) guidelines.

## Guest vs. Gift Authors


- Guest/gift authorship is thought to be quite common.
- A frequent example is the head of department, or the PhD supervisor being named in all articles.
- Or consultants being included among authors because he/she “owns” some of the patients in the study
- In some regions of the world this is not only expected but also required – so many authors will not realize that it is considered unethical to include these people.

## Ghost Authors

- A ghost author is a person who should be listed as an author but has been excluded.
- This term is most often used to identify authors who are professional (medical communications) writers.
- These are usually commissioned (and often paid) by pharmaceutical companies to produce a paper from raw data. The authors listed on the article may have undertaken the research, created and perhaps analysed the data, but not written the article.



LOL 😂



www.VADLO.com

“No, it’s my wife’s turn to be the first author on your paper.”

- **Guest authors:** an undeserving author who is placed on the author list, despite minimal contribution, to enhance the author list
- **Gift authors:** an undeserving author who is placed on the author list, despite minimal contribution, for mutual resume augmentation
- **Ghost Authors:** an individual who is omitted from the author list, despite fulfilling the criteria and qualifications to be listed as an author
- **Coercion Authorship:** giving an individual authorship because he/she asserts that his/her position or actions demand authorship.





# Lead Author

- The lead author, or first author, is the first named author of a publication such as a research article
- Academic authorship standards vary widely across disciplines. In many academic subjects, including the natural sciences, computer science and electrical engineering, the lead author of a research article is typically the person who carried out the research, wrote and edited the paper.
- The list of trailing co-authors reflects, typically, diminishing contributions to the work reported in the manuscript. Sometimes, journals require statements detailing each author's contributions to be included in each publication.



# Co-Author

- A co-author is someone who works with another person to write something.
- According to the ICMJE guidelines, anyone who fulfils all of the following criteria can be an author:
  1. Contributes significantly to the conception, design, execution, and/or analysis and interpretation of data
  2. Participates in drafting and/or revising part of the manuscript for intellectual content
  3. Approves of the version to be published
  4. Agrees to be accountable for all aspects of the work

# Why research papers have multiple authors

## THE AUTHOR LIST: GIVING CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

**The first author**  
Senior grad student on the project. Made the figures.

**The third author**  
First year student who actually did the experiments, performed the analysis and wrote the whole paper. Thinks being third author is "fair".

**The second-to-last author**  
Ambitious assistant professor or post-doc who instigated the paper.

Michaels, C., Lee, E. F., Sap, P. S., Nichols, S. T., Oliveira, L., Smith, B. S.

**The second author**  
Grad student in the lab that has nothing to do with this project, but was included because he/she hung around the group meetings (usually for the food).

**The middle authors**  
Author names nobody really reads. Reserved for undergrads and technical staff.

**The last author**  
The head honcho. Hasn't even read the paper but, hey, he got the funding, and his famous name will get the paper accepted.



# The peer review process

- Scholarly peer review is the process of subjecting an author's scholarly work, research, or ideas to the scrutiny of others who are experts in the same field, before a paper describing this work is published in a journal, conference proceedings or as a book.





The Following  
is a real-life  
situation:

# 1994: a scientific breakthrough

## **The Problem**

- A 29-year-old African woman
- 5 weeks of amenorrhoea
- Empty uterus with ectopic pregnancy.

## **The Intervention**

- Laparotomy with relocation of the ectopic pregnancy into her uterus

## **The Result**

- Delivery of a healthy 2.7 kg female infant at 38 weeks

# The Accolade

- Worldwide media coverage
  - Successful reimplantation of an ectopic pregnancy
  - Doctors had been trying to do this for a century.
  - Huge achievement

BJOG August 1994

*British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*  
August 1994, Vol. 101, pp. 716-717

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## CASE REPORTS

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### Term delivery after intrauterine relocation of an ectopic pregnancy

*J. M. PEARCE Consultant, I. T. MANYONDA Senior Registrar, G. V. P. CHAMBERLAIN Professor*  
*Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, St. George's Hospital Medical School, London*

# Who are the protagonists?

- Malcolm Pearce, a consultant in London
  - World famous expert on ultrasonography in obstetrics
  - Assistant editor to the “*British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*”
- Senior author on the case report was Geoffrey Chamberlain
  - Editor-in-chief of the journal
  - President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
  - Professor and Head of Department

# The Exposé

- A young doctor at St George's Hospital Medical School had raised questions about the case report
- An investigation was promptly started and showed:
  - The patient did not exist.....
- Among studies investigated back to 1989 - four others appeared to be fraud

# The confession

- Geoffrey Chamberlain:
  - I did not have a clue!
  - He had not known that the work was fraudulent
  - A case of Gift/Guest authorship. Common practice in medicine. He had his name on the paper when he had not done much”





# The Fall: What happened next?

- Paper was retracted
- Questions about other articles
- Pearce was de-registered by the General Medical Council of Britain
- Chamberlain retired or resigned from all his positions: a terrible end to a distinguished career
- His crime: gift authorship.



## An illustrative point

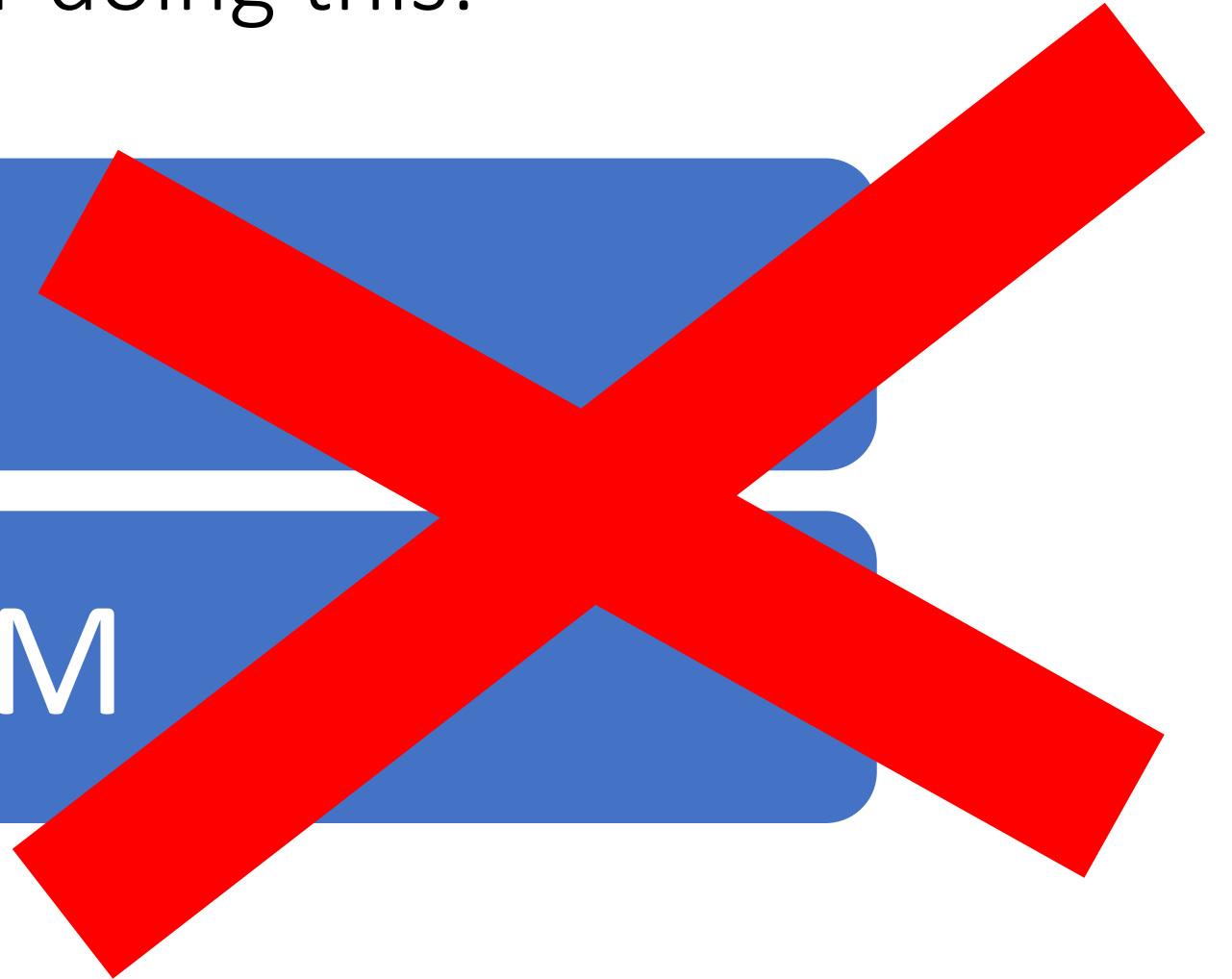
*Received 26 April 1994*  
*Accepted 29 April 1994*

- 3 days interval between receipt and acceptance
- How could it have been peer reviewed in that short period?

In your academic journey  
never, ever consider doing this:

**FRAUD**

**PLAGIARISM**





# Thank You

To ask questions, please join the  
forum at [www.oluwadiya.com](http://www.oluwadiya.com)