**In this video I will examine different publishing scams you should avoid**

Now that publishing is on the web, there is an increasing amount of sophisticated scamming. Whilst there are many credible and legitimate open access journals, these scammers masquerade as credible and legitimate.

You get one shot to publish in a journal because of the prepublication rule. Legitimate journals will not accept articles that have previously been published. Publishing the same material in another article also constitutes self-plagiarism. So choose your journal wisely. Early researchers in particular can risk damaging their reputation and career by making the wrong choice.

There are a whole variety of scams that dud publishers use either to grab your money as an article processing charge, or simply to grab your article to help develop their dodgy journals. The scams are becoming more sophisticated and harder to detect – and researchers need to become like detectives investigating journals and publishers.

An immediate red flag is when you are sent an unsolicited email to publish in a journal or publish your thesis as a book or present at a conference. Such emails may be personalised. For example they could include your name and title of your thesis. Researchers will often receive one or two of these types of emails each week – and they should be treated with suspicion.

Here are the categories of scams to avoid:

**Predatory journal publishers**  Predatory Journals publishers trick researchers into publishing with them by making fake claims regarding their journal quality. Such publishers can have a variety of characteristics.

Predatory journals may make bogus claims regarding their impact factors and may even reference external companies or organisations that have collated their impact factors. Such the companies or organisations may exist but have been paid to produce bogus data.

Predatory journals can make claims regarding their indexing - for example in the Web of Science and Scopus but submitted articles won’t be indexed.

Predatory journals will typically make bogus claims as to their publishing standards. For example, they will claim their articles are peer reviewed. But once you supply your article, they will often publish it as is.

Predatory journals may list on their websites the names of legitimate academics on the journal editorial boards. But such names may have been listed without the academics’ knowledge or consent (or they may have been tricked into consenting).

**Hyjacked journal publishers** present another type of scam. These publishers duplicate or fake websites of legitimate journal publishers and use the title, ISSN and other information of the reputable journal. Researchers thinking they are publishing with the legitimate publisher pay a fee to this scam journal.

**Junk publishers.** These are becoming a major problem. For example, the fifth largest academic publisher, MDPI, is a junk-type publisher you should avoid. Junk journal publishers are publishers that can present as reputable publishers but lack reputable publishing practices. Their scamming can be sophisticated. Junk-type journal publishers can produce credible articles alongside questionable work. Consequently, basing a decision to publish on title and reputation alone isn’t always reliable.

As I mentioned, a good example is MDPI, the fifth largest academic publisher. A quick scan of MDPI’s professionally presented website shows that the publisher has a range of journals with impact factors of 3+ and 4+. It is based in Basel, Switzerland and has membership of a range of organisations including: the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE); the Directory of Open Access Journals; and the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers. So a superficial check might conclude MDPI is a safe professional publisher to engage with.

However a quick web search shows some researchers questioning the standards of this publisher, in particular poor peer review practices. Whenever researching a publisher such information should present as an immediate red flag.

A closer inspection of the MDPI’s website reveals that individual journals have 60, 300 and up to 1,500 special issues currently in production. Normally a journal will only have a couple of special issues per annum. So prima facie, this is a highly questionable publishing practice. Not surprisingly some MDPIs individual journals are now publishing more than 800 articles each month. Journals are sometimes able to exclude their special issue content from their metrics.

As MDPI is an open access publisher charging publishing fees for each article, their special edition publication strategy is a prima facie money grab, publishing quantity over quality. Griffith researchers should not to associate with MDPI.

Of course MDPI is not the only junk type journal publisher. There are many others with other poor publishing practices. There are also junk-type vanity publishers that will send HDRs unsolicited personalised emails to publish their thesis as a book.

Whenever assessing a journal, go through the [Think, Check, Submit](http://thinkchecksubmit.org/) check list. Check with your supervisor, and if you have any doubts ask your research librarian or you can contact myself, the Information Policy Officer.