

# Abusing Openness? An STS Approach to Predatory Publishing

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Track 61: 'Open Science in Practice'

# Goals of OA, Berlin Declaration, 2003

*Our mission of disseminating knowledge is only half complete if the information is not made widely and readily available to society. New possibilities of knowledge dissemination not only through the classical form but also and increasingly through the open access paradigm via the Internet have to be supported. We define open access as a comprehensive source of human knowledge and cultural heritage that has been approved by the scientific community.*

*In order to realize the vision of a global and accessible representation of knowledge, the future Web has to be sustainable, interactive, and transparent. Content and software tools must be openly accessible and compatible.*


Available at: <https://openaccess.mpg.de/Berlin-Declaration> (very similar to Budapest & Bethesda Declarations)

# Types of (Open Access) Publishing

- Platinum – free to both reader & author (e.g. ESTS)
- **Gold** – OA journals where author pays to make article freely available to all upon publication (so not behind a pay wall)
- **Green** – author deposits version of article (pre-publication, drafts, presentations) in repository (institutional, national, disciplinary)
- **Hybrid** – traditional journals where author pays to make article open, or made open after embargo period of months or years
- **Predatory** – journals that exploit OA rhetoric, to charge authors but do not provide editorial and other services provided by legitimate journals
- **Feral** – commercial publishers that earn super profits, or do not pay taxes, or lock-in editors/associations (see Harvie et al 2013)

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Roxie <Roxie@kindtoyo.org>

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### Announcements

*No announcements have been published.*

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### Vol 6, No 7 (2016): July

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# Who publishes with predatory publishers?

- Individuals with little or no history of previous publication
- Often located in global South
- In countries with recent and severe adoption of 'publish or perish' model (e.g. former Soviet republics)
- In fields with less experience of journal publication (e.g. nursing, computer science)

*Sources: Xia et al 2014, Djuric et al 2015*



# Spotting Predatory Publishers

Beall's List gives 25 criteria, relating to:

- Editor & staff – e.g. missing, made up, without consent
- Management & publisher – e.g. postbox address
- Integrity – e.g. false claims about Impact Factor
- Other forms of poor practice – e.g. copying look & feel of other journals

But the predatory publishers are getting more sophisticated....



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# Problems & Implications

- No long-term preservation
  - For scientific record
- Picked up by search engines & indexed by Google Scholar
  - Taken up in meta-analyses
  - Available to students & bibliometricians
- 'Strong' publication records of 'wrong' people
  - Who then get tenure in metric-based promotion systems
- 'Junk' science enters system
  - Used by journalists, policy makers & others

# What are the controversies?

- Demarcation – OA/PP/feral/vanity publishing
- Is all (OA) publishing predatory or feral, from the perspective of poorer countries?
- How do we (in rich countries, in STS) contribute to the emergence of predatory publishing?



## **FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION**

### **PROTECTING AMERICA'S CONSUMERS**

The FTC's complaint alleges that OMICS Group, Inc., along with two affiliated companies and their president and director, Srinubabu Gedela, claim that their journals follow rigorous peer-review practices and have editorial boards made up of prominent academics. In reality, many articles are published with little to no peer review and numerous individuals represented to be editors have not agreed to be affiliated with the journals.

According to the FTC's complaint, OMICS does not tell researchers that they must pay significant publishing fees until after it has accepted an article for publication, and often will not allow researchers to withdraw their articles from submission, thereby making the research ineligible for publication in another journal. Academic ethics standards generally forbid researchers from submitting the same research to more than one journal.

From Press Release, issued by FTC, 25 August 2016

# How to respond?

## More research

- Ethnography
  - Of predatory publisher?
  - As author?
  - Of court case?
- Interviews & surveys
- Scientometrics

## Action

- By 4S & EASST?
- By publishers of STS journals, such as Sage?
- Our own universities and institutes?
- Other forms of (direct) action?

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