OVERVIEW: THE JOURNAL BLACKLIST
THE THREAT OF PREDATORY PUBLISHING
TRAITS OF A PREDATORY JOURNAL
IDENTIFYING FRAUDULENT JOURNALS
ANATOMY OF A BLACKLIST ENTRY
What is the Journal Blacklist?

The Journal Blacklist is the only searchable database that identifies deceptive and fraudulent journals. Specialists identify and analyze over 65 behavioral indicators to flag potentially exploitative or dishonest operations.

Each entry in the Journal Blacklist provides information on how to identify the journal in the real world as well as a comprehensive report of each behavioral indicator that was uncovered in the journal's evaluation.
What is a Predatory Journal?

The rise of digital publishing in academia has made launching academic journals easier than ever and has done much to advance the democratization of research. It is also now easier than ever to create fake or deceptive journals whose only purpose is to defraud researchers and academic institutions.

These journals are often referred to as “predatory journals.”

How do they operate?

A hallmark of the predatory journal is charging researchers to publish and then not delivering upon the stated or implied promises. There are many variations on this theme, but almost all predatory journals sacrifice integrity for profit or prestige.

The following page identifies certain traits and archetypes, outlining different ways that these journals defraud researchers.
**Does not perform robust peer review**

The most common trait among predatory journals is that they do not perform substantial peer review. Performing peer review expends time, effort and money. Predatory journals often claim they perform peer review, but, in actuality, forego this most important step of the publishing process in order to reduce overhead and increase profit.

**Holds manuscripts hostage with surprise fees**

Some predatory journals accept manuscripts to publish, creating the illusion of performing a lengthy peer review. Upon the completion of this process, the journal demands payment of additional fees in order to ensure publication. By this time, researchers are often running out of time and energy and capitulate to the demand.

**Fails to publish accepted articles**

Many predatory journals promise to perform peer-review and publish a researcher’s article. Upon receipt of the author’s manuscript and publishing fee, many do not even pretend to perform peer review, publish nothing and pocket the fee. If they are eventually discovered, the operation will get a new website and a new name to start the process again.

**Hijack legitimate publications**

A very troubling archetype of predatory journals are those that make nearly identical copies of legitimate and well respected journals to capture submission fees from authors who believe they are submitting to the hijacked journal. These predatory journals are often able to spoof email addresses, copy websites and logos and even host previous issues of the legitimate journal’s articles.

**Publication mills**

Certain journals specialize in being an easy outlet in which complicit researchers can publish. These publication mills often perform minimal peer review and only allow “members” to submit and view articles they publish.
Some fraudulent journals are very sophisticated

Many predatory journals devote extensive resources toward appearing like high-quality and professional publications. Many will have professionally designed websites and claim to have an editorial board composed of respected researchers from elite institutions.

Some are not

Other fraudulent journals rely on maintaining low costs and preying upon researchers in developing countries. Many of these shell-like operations have websites fraught with errors and dead links.
Anatomy of a blacklist entry

Identifying information

An entry in the Journal Blacklist serves as a way for users to identify predatory journals in the real world. Each entry contains identifying information such as its title, claimed ISSNs, country of origin, claimed discipline and website. Using this data, researchers can know if an invitation to publish is legitimate, if research has been peer-reviewed or if a potential research outlet is reliable.

Transparent criteria

Each entry in the Journal Blacklist also displays what behavioral indicators our specialists found that flagged it for the blacklist. Each of these “violations” is weighted based on severity and categorized. Our scoring system is specifically designed to ensure that new or inexperienced journals are not flagged. Using this report, users can learn more about these behaviors and decide for themselves whether to trust the journal.