Predatory publishing

A view from an Open Access publisher

Matt Hodgkinson
Head of Research Integrity, Hindawi Limited
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matt.hodgkinson@hindawi.com  |  @mattjhodgkinson
Summary

- History
- Distinguishing legitimate journals
- Our experience
- Impact on other publishers
- Wider ecosystem
- Other business models & publishing models
Timeline

Origins of OA
COPE founded

OA established:
- Megajournals
- Hindawi flips

Predators arise:
- Beall’s list
- OASPA

Proliferation & counter-measures:
- Think.Check.Submit
- Principles of Transparency & Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing

Late 1990s - Early 2000s
Mid 2000s
Late 2000s
Mid 2010s
Late 2010s

Beall’s list
- FTC vs OMICS
- Cabell’s
- Ottawa summit
Telling apart legitimate & predatory

- Clear information on costs and waiver policy
- Separation of ownership/finances from editorial
- Engage with publishing & research communities
  - COPE & OASPA membership
  - Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing
    - Ownership, management, location, processes
- Legitimate indexing services
- Don’t over-promise, don’t fight or threaten critics

CAVEAT: Not a dichotomy
Hindawi’s experience

- Founded in Cairo in 1997, began with conference abstracts
- Acquired first journals 1999-2001
- Completed flip to Open Access in 2007
- Growth and experiments in peer review models
- Co-founded Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA) in 2008… but briefly on Beall’s ‘watchlist’

“I think my inclusion of ISRN may have hurt my credibility regarding classing the others as predatory”
(Jeffrey Beall to Richard Poynder, 2012)
Hindawi’s experience

- Acquired *The Scientific World Journal*
  Deselected by Thomson Reuters in 2011 due to prior issues

- Enhanced editorial screening in 2012:
  Checks for citation manipulation, author identities, text similarity, etc.

- Research Integrity team created in 2016

- HQ moved to London in 2017

- Partnerships with other publishers –
How predators affect legitimate publishers

- Tarred with same brush
- Unfair doubt on new entrants
- Stolen or imitated journal titles
- Dual submission leads to gazumping
- Confused authors
- Degrade standards:
  - Lower researcher expectations of peer review quality
  - Raised researcher expectations of speed
Wider ecosystem of “Cargo Cults”

- Republishing unedited theses as “books”
- Paper mills, selling authorship, fake peer review
  
  “China’s Publication Bazaar”, 2013 DOI: 10.1126/science.342.6162.1035
- Scamferences

Why?

- Perverse incentives in research assessment
  
  San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), sfdora.org
- Lack of training and support for researchers
Subscription model isn’t immune

- Hijacked/fake journals present as subscription journals
- Author fees: colour charges, page charges, supplementary materials, cover image, submission fees
cofactorscience.com/blog/author-charge
- Subscription costs justified by number of journals & articles
Subscription model isn’t immune

- Biggest bulk retraction ever?

- Merck paid to create a marketing journal in 2003

- *Medical Hypotheses* was not peer reviewed & deliberately published provocative work until 2010 scandal

- Elephant autism & space octopuses
Preprint servers

- Low or no fees
- No guarantee of peer review
  - arXiv has no comments
- Level of editorial screening varies
  - Higher in MedRxiv
- viXra

“When a paper is published in viXra, it is usually a sign that it is not likely to contain acceptable results. It may, but the odds against that are considerable”

– Gerard 't Hooft
Free to read, “free” to publish

- SciELO – Latin American and Caribbean governments
- Open Library of the Humanities – library support
- Knowledge Unlatched – crowdfunding
- Volunteerism – hidden costs

But…

- How sustainable?
- Funder influence?
Different types of peer review

- Open peer review
  - Science Domain International uses, but published a nonsense SciGen sting by German journalists, DOI:10.9734/JGEESI/2018/42607
- Post-publication peer review
- Author-driven vs editor-driven
- Volunteer peer review
bit.ly/2XnYABT (link to tweet with high-res poster)

journalology.blogspot.com

about.hindawi.com/blog/curbing-the-cargo-cults

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