

EDITORIAL

Jeffrey Beall, a librarian at the University of Colorado, Denver, called "predatory Publisher" to publishers who create an exploitative open-access academic publishing business model, what many have called an era of academic extortion. Under this model, they charge publication fees to authors without providing the editorial services of legitimate journals. In 2008, Beall began to publish a list of journals and publishers potentially or probably predators; in 2011, the list had 18 publishers, and in 2017 it had a list of more than 1100 journals and publishers that can be verified at <https://beallslist.weebly.com> [1].

Currently, two types of journals differing in the strategy to obtain their purpose are identified: i) those that hijack journals creating websites with the same name of recognized journals, and then massively invite academics to publish their works paying a fee for the publication of the article with little or no quality control, and ii) the predators that recruit articles through thousands of invitations to publish via emails, promising a peer review, a short publication time, and only charging for the article processing. It is a system of knowledge dissemination that contributes perversely to science and is corrupting its communication process [2]. Certainly, Beall points out, weak or absent revision systems mean that predatory journals can be reservoirs of the author's misconduct, including plagiarism, falsified data and image manipulation [3].

It has been proven that predatory publications accept articles with a poor or nonexistent peer review or without scientific interest; many of these journals consider general topics in order to accept everything aiming to have a broad coverage and more clients. Consistently, they lack editorial committees and give ambiguous information about their geographical location. It is estimated that predatory journals have a business of 74 million dollars per year, while the global market of subscription journals is around 10.5 billion dollars. It is also considered that the emergence of predatory journals is due to the importance that many academics have given to the criterion of having international publications, regardless of the content, scientific value, or relationship with the solution of problems in their environment. These journals would be impossible without the global network, similar to the qualified Open Access journals that have democratized access to knowledge. The most influencing factor within this business model is the economic factor, the business for the predatory journals and the salary increase for those who publish, a review that should also address the citation networks (I can quote yours, you can quote mines)[4].

The characteristics common to all these predatory journals and publishers are [1]:

1. There are no such reviewers and the works are published without any type of Peer Review.
2. They do not have indexing in any international database or repository.
3. They do not offer editing service or assistance to the authors to improve the works.
4. They do not follow the standard guidelines of institutions, such as the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME), the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) and the Council of Science Editors (CSE) .
5. They send massive emails to authors with the proposal of a rapid publication.
6. They charge a certain fee for publication, it is not easy to know how and how much you have to pay. This should not be confused with certain journals that have a charge for the manuscript to be published in Open Access.
7. They have a large catalog of online journals that are inaccessible, non-functional (for example, broken links), do not have published articles or are few, or of poor quality.
8. They do not have a functional telephone number or postal address (for example, a mailbox), or the address is residential instead of commercial.
9. They make false claims of being indexed in databases, such as DOAJ, Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed Central, Dialnet, REDIB, RedALyC, SciELO, etc. They also lie when they declare to be members of OASPA (Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association) and COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics).
10. The process of peer review is not credible, since they return the "reviewed" manuscript in a very short time (about a week).
11. The Executive Editors and the Reviewers, many times, are selected as such in journals of different disciplines or specialties not related to each other.
12. The names of the journals are similar to those of appropriately accredited and prestigious journals.

The first step in defeating predatory publishers is to raise awareness about the problem. Beall's list is useful, but keeping it updated is difficult, predatory journals are increasing rapidly and some exist only for a few weeks. Predictably, predatory publishers work to discredit Beall's list and other legitimate open access publishers have expressed concern about their stance against the open access publication cite5.

The lists are important, but the main response must be in the researchers and their institutions, with the support of their partners and donors. Research institutions in low and middle income countries should improve the supervision, training and mentoring necessary to optimize literacy in publications, especially among young researchers. They should establish clear guidance and requirements to publish research in legitimate journals. Researchers should probably be required to send with a central agency to the journal which they plan to submit the article, being allowed to submit only to journals that are reputable.

With the purpose of mitigating the impact and proliferation of predatory journals and publishers, actions such as the "S" plan have been taken. On September 4, 2018, a group of scientists gathered in London to make public a document that they described as revolutionary "The implementation guidance of plan S" using S of Science. This guide supports the idea that research financed with public money should only be published in journals and platforms that allow universal and free access. Just the opposite of what happens now, researchers want to publish more and more in prestigious journals (Nature, Science) that are also the most expensive, consequently the access to higher quality knowledge that we generate is restricted to those who have money to pay it. As stated by the Nobel Laureate Randy Schekman, the world of research is "distorted by inadequate incentives"; the value of an investigation is measured by the impact factor of the journal where it is published and not by what is published.

The eleven countries currently adhering to the "S" plan are: France, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Finland, Norway, Austria, Luxembourg, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and Slovenia). Starting in January 2020, they will be forced to publish the research financed with Public funds in open access journals. Robert-Jan Smits, the father of the plan S recognizes that the plan is radical, but there is no other alternative, the impact factor has reached the point that in science it practically no longer matters what you publish but where you publish it. Democratizing science by placing a change like the "S" plan requires that all those who have wanted it for years actively become involved. It is expected that once this unstoppable revolution starts, large publishers such as Elsevier, Wiley or Nature have no choice but to swithc to the open access model [5, 6]

References

- [1] E. Bersusky, "Las editoriales predatoras," *AAOT*, vol. 82, no. 2, pp. 89–90, 2017.
- [2] J. Clark and R. Smith, "Firm action needed on predatory journals," *BMJ*, vol. 350, p. 210, Jan. 2015.
- [3] J. Bell, "Medical publishing triage—chronicling predatory open access publishers," *Ann. Med. Surg.*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 47–49, 2013.
- [4] A. C. Laurell. [2017, Jun. 8] *Revistas predatoras y puntitis*. Accessed Jan. 30, 2019. [Online]. Available: <https://www.jornada.com.mx/2017/06/08/opinion/a03a1cie>
- [5] E. Sanz. [2018, Dec. 04] *Un plan para que la ciencia sea libre, universal, gratuita y abierta*. [Online]. Available: https://elpais.com/elpais/2018/12/03/ciencia/1543832345_644682.html?rel=mas
- [6] Science Europe. *What is coalition s?* Accessed Feb. 07, 2019. [Online]. Available: <https://www.coalition-s.org/about/>

Maryory Astrid Gómez Botero

Editor-in-Chief

Revista Facultad de Ingeniería

Professor-Universidad de Antioquia

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9685-3080>

<https://www.redalyc.org/autor.aa?id=8587>