

Notes on predatory publishing for doctoral candidates

Members of Kiel University regularly receive emails inviting them to publish in certain academic journals. Sometimes they are even offered a position as editor of these journals. The senders of these messages are often dubious online journals that charge fees for the publication of articles while not offering the customary editorial services in return although they convey the impression that they do so. Such journals are generally known as predatory journals, the overall phenomenon as predatory publishing. Predatory journals only exist in an online version and are not available in print.

The pressure on young researchers to publish the results of their research is very high. However, publishing in a predatory journal is meaningless for an academic career and the researcher's standing in his or her scientific community, and will eventually harm his or her reputation and career in academia. These journals do not have a recognized impact factor, there is no or only a fake peer review and the article will only be published if the researcher pays a publication fee.

This means that predatory journals are not academic journals at all, but a deceitful and devious business practice designed by its perpetrators to earn money by dubious means. The same approach is used in the organization of supposedly academic conferences, the so-called predatory conferences. The [Wikipedia article](#) on predatory publishing offers a good description of this phenomenon and of discussions on this topic.

When preparing an article for publication it is therefore very important to investigate whether the journal considered for submission is a serious publication or a predatory journal. Not all predatory journals can be easily identified. Their websites often resemble the websites of acknowledged journals, or renowned researchers are mentioned on the masthead page despite the fact that these researchers have no connection to the journal in question. For an investigation the following reliable and useful tools from the internet are useful:

- The website [Think. Check. Submit](#) shows the user how to prepare a publication and identify journals for submitting in three easily comprehensible steps
- For conferences there is the website [Think. Check. Attend](#)
- The [Directory of Open Access Journals](#) is a continually updated list of open access journals which execute the standard quality controls for academic publications
- The [Journal Evaluation Tool](#) offers an extensive list of criteria with which to evaluate the quality of a journal
- In principle young researchers should always consult experienced researchers in their field
- For some subjects there are official lists for approved journals (e.g. for [business and management studies](#)), although open access online journals seldom appear on them because they carry less prestige than long-established print journals