

Improving the transparency, credibility and impact of Open Access journals

Presentation at the
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Electronic Conference
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- Background and Basic views
- The promises of Open Access
- How will DOAJ contribute to improved transparency and credibility of OA-journals
- Hybrid Open Access – transition or distraction!
- Questionable Publishers
- A broader view on impact
- What comes next for Open Access Journals?

Basic views

- “International” subscription based publishing excludes major parts of the world.
- It doesn’t work, doesn’t serve research and societies.
- Dominant publishers and proprietary databases constitutes a “system” excluding continents from participation
- Dominant measures of scholarship enforces this power structure.

- Founded 2003 at Lund University – launched May 2003 with 300 journals
- Funded by initial one-off grants - membership and sponsor funding model introduced 2006.
- A lot has happened since then:
- Declarations, institution and funder open access policies and mandates, OA-publication funds, “innovative” and unethical companies enter the academic publishing market etc.

- A global list of peer-reviewed Open Access journals – all subjects and languages
 - journals undergo evaluation based on a set of criteria
 - + 10.000 titles
- An aggregation of article level metadata
 - Publishers upload article metadata into DOAJ
 - 60% of the journals do so
 - Currently 1.775.000 records

- Help is needed!
- Authors and their advisors want tools to choose proper publishing channels
- Funders want to be able to judge which publishing channels comply with their requirements
- Managers of OA-publication funds wants guidance for selecting eligible publishing channels for supporting APC-payments
- In short: Where can I find the proper OA-journals and transparent information about their practice?

- The promises of open access. OA can:
 - remove access barriers
 - reduce participation barriers
 - create a truly global scholarly communication system
 - reduce the total costs
 - increase the impact of research on research, societies and the people!

- This is not to say that OA-journals are problem free:

October
2013

NEWS

Who's Afraid of Peer Review?

John Bohannon

Dozens of open-access journals targeted in an elaborate *Science* sting accepted a spoof research article, raising questions about peer-review practices in much of the open-access world.

But:

February
2014

NATURE | NEWS



Publishers withdraw more than 120 gibberish papers

Conference proceedings removed from subscription databases after scientist reveals that they were computer-generated.

The big problem?

- The big problem:
- is **not** whether **open access** publishing is transparent and credible!
- but rather **how** to create a scholarly communication system that **serves** research, researchers, the people and our societies!
- The good thing is, that the awareness about the problems in the existing system is growing and a lot of promising developments are underway.

The real issue

- The real issue is how to improve the trust and transparency of ~~open access~~ academic publishing!

- OA-journals should be much more transparent regarding
 - The editorial process
 - The peer-review process
 - Rights (reader rights, reuse rights, remixing rights etc.)
 - The services they provide to the author
 - Archiving
 - Identifiers
 - Discoverability

Why tighter criteria?

- To promote best practice.
- To create better opportunities for funders, universities, libraries and authors to **determine** whether a journal lives up to reasonable standards
- To provide much more granular information about the journals - **transparency**
- Enable the community to **monitor compliance**
- Addressing the issue of **questionable** publishers not living up to reasonable standards both in terms of **services** and of **business behavior**.

Reasonable standards?

- When looking for reasonable standards we discovered that others were trying to do the same thing.
- We entered discussions with COPE, OASPA and WAME and drafted the Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing
- <http://doaj.org/bestpractice>

- COPE, OASPA, WAME & DOAJ:

Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing

Introduction

The Committee on Publication Ethics, the Directory of Open Access Journals, the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association, and the World Association of Medical Editors are scholarly organizations that have seen an increase in the number of membership applications from both legitimate and non-legitimate publishers and journals. Our organizations have collaborated in an effort to identify principles of transparency and best practice that set apart legitimate journals and publishers from non-legitimate ones and to clarify that these principles form part of the criteria on which membership applications will be evaluated.

These criteria are largely derived from those developed by the Directory of Open Access Journals. Note that additional membership criteria may also be used by each of the scholarly organizations. The organizations intend to share information in order to develop lists of legitimate journals and publishers. We do not intend to develop or publish a list of publishers or journals that failed to demonstrate they met the criteria for transparency and best practice.

This is a work in progress and we welcome feedback on the general principles and the specific criteria. Background on the organizations is below.

The Principles

1. **Peer review process**
2. **Governing Body**
3. **Editorial team/contact**
4. **Author fees**
5. **Copyright**
6. **Identification of and dealing with allegations of research misconduct**
7. **Ownership and management**
8. **Web site.**
9. **Name of journal**
10. **Conflicts of interest**
11. **Access**
12. **Revenue sources**
13. **Advertising**
14. **Publishing schedule**
15. **Archiving**
16. **Direct marketing**

Why tighter criteria?

- To create better opportunities for funders, universities, libraries and authors to **determine** whether a journal lives up to standards – **transparency!**
- Enable the community to **monitor compliance**
- Addressing the issue of **fake publishers** or publishers not living up to reasonable standards - in terms of content and of **business behavior**.

Why tighter criteria?

- To **motivate and encourage** OA-journals to
 - be more explicit on editorial quality issues
 - be more explicit on rights and reuse issues
 - improve their “technical” quality fostering improved dissemination and discoverability
- To promote standards and best practice
- Lack of transparency hurts all OA-publishers!

New criteria

- New tighter criteria address:
- **“Quality”**
- **“Openness”**
- **“The delivery” or “Technical quality”**
- They are much more detailed
- Publishers will have to do more to be included
- And we will have to do more to check and monitor for compliance!

- Consultation period: Advisory Board and [the public](#) to establish key quality indicators
- Developed [new Application Form](#) with [extended criteria](#)
- Old form: 6 questions. New form: 56!
- Released the new form 19 March 2014

Editorial “quality”

- **QUALITY AND TRANSPARENCY OF THE EDITORIAL PROCESS**
- The journal must have an editor or an editorial board, all members must be easily identified
- Specification of the review process
 - Editorial review, Peer review., Blind peer review, Double blind peer review, Open Peer Review, Other
- Statements about aims & scope clearly visible
- Instructions to authors shall be available and easily located
- Screening for plagiarism?
- Time from submission to publication

The must haves!

- Journals must have:
 - An Open Access statement
 - Comply with the BOAI definition
 - A peer-review process, and tell us what kind of process
 - An editor/editorial board with clearly identifiable members
 - Licensing and copyright information
 - Aims and scope
 - Published a least 5 articles to qualify

- Promoting best practice (anno 2014) – qualifiers for the DOAJ SEAL:
- Archiving arrangement with an archiving organisation
- Provision of permanent identifiers
- Provision of article level metadata to DOAJ
- CC-BY (embedded machine readable in article metadata)
- CC-BY or CC-BY-NC
- Deposit policy registered in a deposit policy directory

- The new application form:
- <http://doaj.org/application/new>

DOAJ Journal Application Form

All the information provided will help our Editorial Team with their assessment, to help them make an informed decision based on the information that you provide.

If you know a journal that should be in DOAJ, please contact the publisher and ask them to complete this form.

BEFORE YOU START, please remember that **all** the content of the journal you are applying about **must** be available **immediately** upon publication.

Basic Journal Information		Quality and Transparency of the Editorial Process	
1) Journal Title *	<input type="text"/>	34) What is the URL for the Editorial Board page? *	<input type="text"/>
2) URL *	<input type="text"/>		The journal must have either an editor or an editorial board with at least 5 clearly identifiable members and affiliation information. We may ask for affiliation information and email addresses as part of our checks.
3) Alternative Title	<input type="text"/>	35) Please select the review process for papers *	<input type="text"/>
4) Journal ISSN (print version) *	<input type="text"/>		This field is optional if you have selected "None" above.
	Only provide the print ISSN if your journal has one, otherwise leave this field blank. Write the ISSN with the hyphen "-" e.g. 1234-4321.	36) Enter the URL where this information can be found *	<input type="text"/>
5) Journal ISSN (online version) *	<input type="text"/>		
	Write the EISSN with the hyphen "-" e.g. 1234-4321.	37) What is the URL for the journal's Aims & Scope *	<input type="text"/>
6) Publisher *	<input type="text"/>		

A delicate balance!

- Respecting different publishing cultures and traditions
- Not primarily exclude, but rather facilitate and assist the smaller journals to come into the flow
- **While at the same time** promoting standards, transparency and best practice

Hybrid Open Access!

Transition model or distraction?

- Hybrid is based on the old subscription model
- Hybrid is much more expensive than real Open Access provided via Open Access Journals
- Transparency Issues – Double Dipping
- Not much evidence that it is a transition model!

About questionable publishers

Questionable publishing is **not** a phenomenon that is specific to Open Access publishing!

Proportions!

- The issue of so-called fake, shabby and unethical publishers has got unproportionally much attention.
- A few thousand articles published in shabby OA-journals seems to be the major problem in academic publishing today.
- This is obviously not the case!
- But for some I can be convenient to distract the attention from the big problems.

- Definition of predatory:
- inclined or intended to **injure or exploit** others for personal gain or **profit** (Mirriam-Webster)
- A predatory publisher can then be described as:
- a publisher who **intends to injure or exploit** others for personal gain or **profit**.

- Consider this:
- “Does **exploiting the divide between libraries** (that typically pay for subscriptions) **and scholars** (who typically use the subscriptions) in order to make **extraordinary high profits** constitute predatory conduct?”
- or this:
- “Does **continuing to raise prices at several times the rate of inflation**, even as those increases cause direct injury to libraries by robbing them of budget flexibility or even make it impossible for them to continue to provide resources – does that constitute **predatory publishing**?”

My definition:

Questionable publishers is publishers, who are **not living up** to reasonable standards in terms of **content, services, transparency** and **of business behavior.**

Spot a questionable publisher in 5 mins

- Check list inspired by Gavia Library (the library loon) -<http://gavialib.com/2012/04/assessing-the-scamminess-of-a-purported-open-access-publisher/> – april 2012 :
- Competent web-site?
- Mass e-mails asking for editors and submissions?
- In the DOAJ? – if not: worrying
- Usage statistics?
- Stable in the discipline?



Spotting in
5 mins ctd.

- Misspelled journal titles?
- Journal launch dates – many at the same time?
- Empty shells- no/few articles?
- Regularly publishing?
- Many “Edited volumes”?

Spotting in
5 mins ctd.

- Quality of writing, copyediting and typesetting?
- Archiving arrangement?
- Editorial Board – identifiable?
- Relevant Advertising?
- Running many/expensive conferences?

Beall's list:

- Maintained by one (1) person, a serials librarian,
 - with remarkable ignorance about just serials,
 - who explicitly dislike OA and
 - operates as prosecutor, judge and jury
- Re Ignorance:
 - Beall: Gold OA means charging APC's –
 - Fact: most Gold OA-journals do not charge APC's.
 - Beall - June 6th, 2012 is surprised, that a fair number of subscription journals charge various page charges, thought that such arrangements did not exist.
 - Fact: a study by Thomas Munro in 2005 found that 75% of 9000 subscription journals dis charge author-side fees!
 - Conclusion: a higher percentage of subscription journals than OA-journals have author-side charges!

Impact!

- Dominant measures of impact – i.e. the Journal Impact Factor – only measures impact of research on researchers and research itself.
- Determines research funding, research policy and the faith of scholars.
- Fails to embrace impact on practitioners, the public and our societies.
- Is flawed, prone to manipulation.
- What counts is not so much **what** you publish, but rather **where** you publish!

New impact measures

- New measures are luckily underway:
- ALM (Article Level Metrics) are very promising:
 - Much more granular
 - Does not only measure the impact via citations
- Research funders and research managers are key in helping this development further.
- Let us get rid of the Journal Impact Factor

- In a couple of years the following features might be a **must** to be included in the DOAJ:
- Copyright and publishing rights retains at the author(s)
- Archiving
- Persistent Identifiers
- Machine readable license information
- Article Level Metrics
- Data management policy

DOAJ DIRECTORY OF OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS

Thank you for your attention!



DOAJ DIRECTORY OF OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS

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