The Legacy of Jeffrey Beall: Assessing Journal Watchlists and Safelists as a Solution to Predatory Publishing

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BRIEF TIEMLINE

2008
Jeffrey Beall publishes list of suspect journals on his personal website

2012
Jeffrey Beall uses the term "predatory publishing" to characterize suspect journals and publishers

2015
Controversy flares when Frontiers is added to Beall's list

2017
Beall removes his list from his blog, deleting all content from public view.

2020
Following the lead of Cabells International, terminology changes from "blacklists and whitelists" to "watchlists and safelists"

Threats posed by predatory publishers
(Beall, 2012)

✓ **THREAT TO SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION**

Predatory journals are "established and designed to deceive; they are counterfeit publishers"

✓ **THREAT TO SCIENCE**

"...when peer-review becomes corrupt, non-science can be published bearing the scientific community's ostensible seal of approval."..

✓ **THREAT TO RESEARCH INTEGRITY**

"Because the predatory publishers' customers are the authors rather than the readers, they mainly focus on attracting new manuscripts, even those unworthy of publication."

Criticisms of Beall
(Bloudoff-Indelicato, 2015)

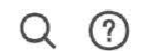✔ **BASED ON INTUITION AND ANECDOTES**

Lack of transparency and published criteria

✔ **DISPLAYS PERSONAL BIAS**

Decision to place journals on the list may reflect a bias toward open access publishing more generally

← → C ⟳ 🔒 sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0099133320301270

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Outline

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ELSEVIER

A qualitative content analysis of watchlists vs safelists: How do they address the issue of predatory publishing?

Amy Koerber [a] ✉, Jesse C. Starkey [b], Karin Ardon-Dryer [e], R. Glenn Cummins [c], Lyombe Eko [c], Kerk F. Kee [d]

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FEEDBACK 💬

Table 1
Sources analyzed.

Watchlists	Safelists
Beall's list of predatory journals and publishers	ABDC Journal Quality List
Cabells predatory report[a]	Berlin Institute of Health- Open Access Journal Positive List[b]
Dolos list	Cabells Journalytics[c]
Stop predatory journals	Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)
	Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)
	International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)
	JournalGuide Whitelist
	Journal Publishing Practices and Standards (JPPS)
	Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA)
	Publons

[a] Previously called Cabells Blacklist.
[b] Previously called Berlin Institute of Health- Open Access Journal Whitelist.
[c] Previously called Cabells Whitelist.

key features from the coding of criteria. The similarities and differences   comparable lists, because of the criteria and systematic ana

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Koerber, Amy, 2020, "STEPP NVivo file", https://doi.org/10.18738/T8/F3QE0H, Texas Data Repository, V2

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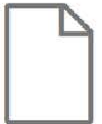**Subject** ❓   Social Sciences

Keyword ❓   qualitative research

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PUBLICATION PRACTICES

- Paper quality
- Faulty peer review
- Access, Copyright, Intellectual Property Violations

ROLE OF AUTHORS

FALSE BRANDING

- False identifying, credibility, and impact statements
- Communication and contact practices
- Misleading staff and partnership claims
- Misleading business practices

LIST PROCEDURES

</>

Codebook for Watchlists

BUSINESS PRACTICES

- Communication policies
- Funding and ownership transparency

TRUTH IN BRANDING

- Clarity of journal title
- Editorial board
- Ethical guidelines
- Fees
- Scope of journal
- Website quality

PUBLICATION PRACTICES

- Access, copyright, and IP guidelines
- Author instructions and policies
- Editorial guidelines
- Publication history
- Quality of scholarship

HOW TO USE SAFELIST

MULTIPLE, INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENTS

- Metrics and indexes accuracy
- Professional membership
- Reliance on other organizations' evaluations

</>
Codebook
for
Safelists

Findings

"...any attempt to create a list of this nature will be incomplete and out-of-date from the moment it is published."

CONTRASTING MOTIVATIONS AND CRITERIA

- Watchlists emphasize Beall's legacy
- Safelists downplay ties to Beall

GRAY AREAS EXIST

- MDPI and Frontiers as examples
- Scandals occur even at prestigious journals that no one would consider watchlist-worthy

Findings, continued

"...any attempt to create a list of this nature will be incomplete and out-of-date from the moment it is published."

LIMITATIONS OF LIST APPROACH

- Places responsibility on individual rather than system
- Publishing landscape is constantly changing
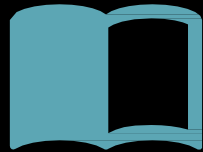
SUGGESTIONS

- More empirical research to understand stakeholder perspectives
- Training beyond the binary (predatory or not) approach
- Implementation of Open Science principles

The Predatory Paradox: Ethics, Politics, and Practices in Contemporary Scholarly Publishing (work-in-progress)

https://www.depts.ttu.edu/comc/research/grants/stepp/

OPEN ACCESS

A-Z

COMPREHENSIVE

AUDIENCE FOCUSED