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*[with thanks to Sofie Schütte for data collection]*

## PREDATORY OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS: ACADEMICS BEWARE!

### The negative side-effect of technological changes

- Jeff Beal (Nature, 2012)
  - “When e-mail first became available, it was a great innovation that made communication fast and cheap. Then came spam — and suddenly, the innovation wasn’t so great. It meant having to filter out irrelevant, deceptive and sometimes offensive messages. It still does.”
  - “The same corruption of a great idea is now occurring with scholarly open-access publishing.” (referring to predatory open access journals)
- For an excellent 1-page overview, see Jeff Beal’s recent (13-09-2012) article in Nature  
<http://www.nature.com/news/predatory-publishers-are-corrupting-open-access-1.11385>

## Predatory Open Access Journals

- ◉ *“Those that unprofessionally exploit the author-pays model of open-access publishing for their own profit. Typically, these publishers spam professional email lists, broadly soliciting article submissions for the clear purpose of gaining income.”*
- ◉ Operating essentially as vanity presses, these publishers typically have a low article acceptance threshold, with a false-front or non-existent peer review process. Unlike professional publishing operations, whether subscription-based or ethically-sound open access, these predatory publishers add little value to scholarship, pay little attention to digital preservation, and operate using fly-by-night, unsustainable business models

Source: Jeff Beal, academic librarian at the University of Colorado Denver, in Denver, Colorado. Beal has an EXCELLENT blog on Scholarly Open Access Publishing at <http://scholarlyoa.com/>

## Additional characteristics of predatory Open Access journals

- ◉ Mostly run from emerging/3<sup>rd</sup> world countries (India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Romania, Nigeria, Kenya) though sometimes with shopfront in Canada/USA/UK/Australia ([see picture next page](#))
- ◉ EB members/authors mostly from the same countries, plus: Middle East, Turkey China/Taiwan, South Africa, but not insignificant number from the US/UK/Australia for some journals
- ◉ Editors and EB members usually have few if any publications
- ◉ Very broad scope of topics accepted (see later slides)
- ◉ Not listed on any journal ranking lists, or in credible databases (though some unfortunate exceptions)
- ◉ Turnaround time for reviewing 7 days to 1 month, publication instantly after acceptance, though increased competition is shortening the time with “blindly peer review”:
  - <http://scholarlyoa.com/2012/09/09/peer-reviewed-journal-promises-submission-to-publication-in-four-days/#more-632>

## Office location of OA journal in a UK city as listed on their website



## How to put up a front?

- International Journal of Business and Social Research
- Run by Maryland Institute which claims to have been established in Maryland (USA) in 1988 <http://miredu.org/>, however website was registered in October 2011 by a Bangladeshi
- Editorial board is full of prestigious academics, but Stanford editor-in-chief has never done any work for the journal
- Website includes “related links” to Harvard Business Review and Maryland University to generate credibility

## Open Access: Journal names

- Names that sound credible, but are difficult to keep apart
  - International Journal of Business and Management
  - International Journal of Business and Commerce
  - International Journal of Management and Administrative Sciences
  - Journal of Research in International Business and Management
  - Journal of Global Business Management
  - African Journal of Business Management
  - The International Journal of Management
  - International Journal of Business and Social Science
  - European Journal of Business and Social Sciences
- So come up with original variants to distinguish from the pack
  - Prime Journal of Business Administration and Management
  - Wudpecker Journal of Education Research (formerly Education Research and Essays)
- Or go one step further to claim the entire field
  - Universal Journal of Business Activities

## Shortage of journal names leads to interesting name variants



<http://scholarlyoa.com/2012/07/23/journals-from-antarctica/#more-523>

## Open Access: Very broad scope

- Articles in AJBM examine emerging trends and concerns in the areas of the Journal – Managerial focus comes first, more also business law, public responsibility and ethics, marketing theory and applications, business finance and investment, general business research, business and economics education, production/operations management, organizational behaviour and theory, strategic management policy, social issues and public policy, management organization, statistics and econometrics, personnel and industrial relations, technology and innovation, case studies and management information systems.

## Strangely specific topics

Accounting for Decision Making, Financial Reporting, Fundamentals of Cost Accounting, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Quantitative Economic & Business Analysis, Financial Management, Business Law, Computer-based Information System, Principles of Management, Marketing, Auditing and Public Practice, External Reporting Issues, Accounting for Corporate Structures, Managerial Costing and Control, Advanced Management Accounting, Corporate Law, Income Tax Law, Business Information Systems, Systems Analysis and Design, Data and Information Management, Database Management Systems in Business, Management Information Systems, Financial Institutions, Econometrics, Corporate Finance, Investment and Portfolio Management, International Finance, Banking and Lending Decisions, Derivatives, Risk Management, Electronic Commerce, Capital Markets, Empirical Finance, Asset Pricing, Contemporary Issues in Commerce Research, Accounting reforms, [Bait and switch](#), Black market, Collectivism, Conservation movement, Consumerism, Corporate accountability, corporate crime, Creative accounting, [Eco-capitalist](#), Environmental ethics, Environmental finance, Ethical implications in contracts, Ethical investing, Ethical purchasing, Externality, Fair trade, Free-market environmentalism, [Franchise fraud](#), Green economics, Global debt, Income inequality metrics, Gini coefficient, Lorenz curve, Theil index, Robin Hood index, Poverty line, Governance, Individualism, Islamic economics, Law and economics, Marxist economics, Monetary reform, Moral purchasing, Persuasion technology, Philosophy of accounting, Political choice theory, Poverty, Absolute poverty, Relative poverty, Price discrimination, Prisoner's dilemma, Product churning, Public relations, [Seven-generation sustainability](#), Sexual harassment, [Office romance](#), Slow company, Social cost, Social responsibility, Stakeholder theory, Sustainable development, Triple bottom line, Wealth, Working week, UN Global Compact, UN Human Development Index, Uneconomic growth, Value of Earth, Value of life, Personal information management, Personal knowledge management, Stress management, Time management, Administration, Agile management, Change management, Conflict management, Conflict resolution, Constraint management, Theory of Constraints, Focused improvement, Cost management, Crisis management, Critical management studies (CMS), Customer relationship management, Design management, Earned value management, Human interaction management, Integration management, Interim Management, Knowledge management, Logistics management, Operations management, Organization development, Perception management, Planning, Process management, Program management, Project management, Quality management, Requirements management, Resource management, Risk management, Skills management, Spend management, Strategic management, Strategic planning, Communication management, Engineering management, Enterprise content management, Financial management, Human resource management, Information technology management, Marketing management, Procurement, Product management, Supply chain management, Association management, Educational management, Land management, Public administration, Talent management, [Analysis paralysis](#), Balanced scorecard, Benchmarking, Business operations, Business process, Business intelligence, Market research, Industrial espionage, Environmental scanning, Competitor analysis, Reverse engineering, Business plan, [Centralization](#), Corporate image, Corporate governance, Corporation, Cross ownership, Critical success factor, Cultural intelligence, [Decentralization](#), Innovation, Leadership, Management by objectives, Manufacturing, Non-profit organization, Operations research, PERT, [Poison pill](#).

## Or even broader.....so what HASS topic can one not publish in this journal?

- The scope of the journal is very broad. It includes studies in the following areas: Human Resource Management, Strategic Management, Trade, International Businesses, Marketing Strategies, Sales Management, Advertising, Finance, Corporate Finance, Financial Economics, Econometrics, Economic Theory, Business Development, Sales Promotions, Investment, Portfolio Management, Product Development, Accounting, Financial Reporting, Corporate Governance, Social Policy, Public Administration, Business Laws, Statistical Inferences, Empirical Business Research, Total Quality Management, Consumer Behavior, Organizational Behavior and Theory, Insurance, Risk Management, Project Management, Supply Chain Management, Operations Management, Cost Accounting, Managerial Accounting, Management Information System, Crisis Management, Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Social Research, History, Geography, Education, Political Science, Linguistics, Library Science, Information Science, Media Studies, Law, Criminology, Gender Studies, Demography, Communication Studies, Business Studies, Journalism, Environmental Engineering, Archeology *and other areas of business and social sciences that may be of interest to academicians and business professionals.*

## “Interesting” mission statements

- They have heard something about different research methods, but didn't quite understand them:
  - “The journal seeks to publish original research articles that are hypothetical and theoretical in its nature and that provide exploratory insights in the fields of ...”
- They have good intentions, but a rather idiosyncratic use of the English language:
  - “Transcending the familiar periphery of perfunctory substance, The International Journal of Management is offering to unfurl a newfangled panorama in the contemporary management study. We are rummaging around the web for progressive and clairvoyant minds for this exponential journal to focus upon various components of trade, marketing, finance, economy and behavioral study. This search can reach a culmination only with authors' as well as readers' cooperation at large. This is precisely meant to be an exploratory analysis over the given topics to stimulate the budding genius into aspiring eminent management personalities and present an international platform for interactive pleasure and argumentative progression.”
  - Who wouldn't want to be called a budding genius and have their work on a platform for interactive pleasure?

## When things go wrong...

- Predatory OA journals mean that the traditional role of filtering to ensure high quality research is disappearing
- Most Australian academics will not “fall” for these scams, although some inexperienced academics might; but what if these journals get external credibility?
- Several predatory OA journals are C-ranked or at least listed in the ERA list, meaning publications in these journals are likely to be taken seriously

## When things go spectacularly wrong .....

- *African Journal of Business Management*: ISI listed since volume 1, issue 1. The result? An explosion of articles published before their eventual delisting late 2011 (2011 income: 1350 \* \$550 submission fee = nearly ¾ million dollars).

The screenshot shows a Web of Science search results page. At the top, it says 'Web of Science® now with books'. Below that, the search criteria are 'Publication Name=(African Journal of Business Management)'. The results section shows 'Results: 1,968'. There are two panels for refining results: 'Refine Results' on the left and 'Publication Years' on the right. The 'Publication Years' panel shows a bar chart of the first 100 publication years by record count, with 2011 having the highest count (1,350), followed by 2009 (114), 2008 (10), and 2007 (8).

- Its ISI delisting doesn't seem to have damaged its business model. It still publishes an issue every week. After nine months it has already published more than 10,000 pages in 2012 and promises to beat its 2011 record.
- One of their authors had 8 out of 10 most highly cited articles in EcoBus by publishing in AJBM with quick turnaround and a very high % of self-citations, for details see [http://www.harzing.com/esi\\_highcite.htm](http://www.harzing.com/esi_highcite.htm)

## What is an academic to do?

- Before submitting to a journal, check:
  - Beal's list of predatory journals/publishers at <http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/>
  - The editor's and editorial board's publication records
  - Whether the journal's articles can be found in Google Scholar
  - Some sample articles from the journal's website, after all they are Open Access, so do some due diligence
- As with any scam:
  - If it sounds too good to be true it usually is....