

Clues to quality of journals

Experts do not always agree on the most appropriate place to publish or present a particular piece of research, but all agree that **this choice is important**, especially for early-career authors, both

- a) to **meet professional goals**, such as tenure review and grant funding, and
- b) to **reach the audience** you want to reach by publishing or presenting.

Fake and very-low-quality journals are not limited to open access; there are reports about fraudulent journals in the world of traditional publishing also.

So, how to avoid publishing in an hijacked journal?

1. **Ask for Advice:** ask us ([contact details](#)) and/or your research colleagues in person/ via mail / in an discussion list/ in a research network (e.g. [researchgate.net](#) = over 280 HZI staff members)
2. **Check the Impact:** use tools for getting an impression of the impact via
 - a) the [Journal Citation Reports \(JCR\)](#)

***** No matching journals were found. *****

1) Search by:	2) Type search term:
ISSN	Enter words from journal title or ISSN (view list of full journal titles) 0975-9158
	SEARCH

Search Examples:

Full Journal Title: Enter JOURNAL OF CELLULAR PHYSIOLOGY or JOURNAL OF CELL* ([more examples](#))

Abbreviated Journal Title: Enter J CELL PHYSIOL or J CELL * ([more examples](#))

Title Word: Enter CELLULAR or CELL* ([more examples](#))

ISSN: Enter 0021-9541 or other ISSN ([more examples](#))

b) or [Scopus' Journal Analyzer](#) that we also purchased for such reasons (for details see tutorial: http://help.scopus.com/flare/Content/tutorials/sc_AnalyzeJournals.html) or

c) [SCImago Journal & Country Rank](#).

Please keep in mind that **not all journals are listed** due to discipline, the journal's age or other factors.

Additionally **alternative metrics** were created to measure the relevance in times of Web2.0/ Social Media and Google:

- d) [Alternative Metrics](#) (analyzing the mentions in Social Web etc.) or
- e) [Google Scholar Metrics](#) may also be helpful.

All in all, please keep in mind that the **Journal's Impact Factor does not show perfectly the relevance/ quality of an article** see [The focus on bibliometrics makes papers less useful](#)

3. **Check the directories [ZDB](#) / [EZB](#):** is the journal referenced in the Zeitschriftendatenbank/ ZDB which comprises all printed and electronic journals? If a journal is **NOT** indexed in these directories, you should look **very critically** to it. **We would advise that you ask colleagues like us (as we are confronted with the topic of hijacked journals for more than 1 year)**
4. **Check the Publisher e.g. via [Sherpa/ROMEO](#):** Is the publisher a well-known and important scholarly society in your research area? What else does the publisher promote or produce?
 - **Editorial Board:** Are the scholars listed in the Editorial Board well-known in your area of research (do they at least work in your academic field)? Have these scholars published important, cited papers? (One of the [quality metrics](#) for scholars is the *h-index*, see details in [this Scopus blogpost](#)). Are those scholars associated with strong academic programs or research institutions?

- **Acceptance/Rejection Rates:** Higher quality journals tend to have lower acceptance rates and higher rejection rates. Some journals will include the acceptance rate in the “information for authors” area of the paper journal or journal home page. Some scholarly societies will also publish acceptance rates for their journals on their homepages. Use an internet search engine, such as Google or Bing; put the journal name and "acceptance rate" in the search box.
 - **Peer Reviewed(?):** Editorial policies, instructions to authors, or "about this journal" sections will sometimes describe this also.
 - **Publication Fees:** Many traditional journal have page charges or other fees; many open access journals use an "author pays" procedure. Publication fees do not mean a journal is low quality or fraudulent, but high article publication charges are the motivation for recent frauds and "fake" journals where scholars probably would not want to publish their work if they were paying attention. For open access publications, exercise extreme caution when using a publisher on [Beall's List: Potential, possible, or probable predatory scholarly open-access publishers](#) or when considering a publisher that is NOT a member of [OASPA](#).
5. **Check the quality of published articles** by evaluating various aspects (e.g. author, purpose...) - for details see guide [Check the relevance of information sources](#)
- **Do you usually read the journal?** If not, it's probably better to publish in a journal which you and your colleagues do read.
 - **Additional criteria** are summed up by Beall: <http://scholarlyoa.com/2012/11/30/criteria-for-determining-predatory-open-access-publishers-2nd-edition/>

Original check list: <http://libguides.wustl.edu/c.php?g=47124&p=302704>

Further information:

Beall's List: *Potential, possible, or probable predatory scholarly open-access publishers* – URL: <http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/>

Jalalian, Mehrdad; Mahboobi, Hamidreza: *Hijacked Journals and Predatory Publishers: Is There a Need to Re-Think How to Assess the Quality of Academic Research?* – In: *Walailak Journal of Science and Technology* - Vol. 11 (2014) 5: pp. 389–94. – URL: <http://wjst.wu.ac.th/index.php/wjst/article/view/1004>

Check the relevance of information sources – HZI Library – URL: http://www.bibliotheca-open.helmholtz-hzi.de/Portals/1/howto_Relevance-Check%20of%20sources_engl.pdf

Crawford, Walt: *Journals, “Journals” and Wannabes: Investigating the List* – In: *Cites & Insights: Crawford at Large* - Vol. 14 (2014) 7 – URL: <http://citesandinsights.info/civ14i7.pdf>

Butler, Declan: *Sham journals scam authors.* – In: *Nature* - Vol. 495 (2013) 7442: pp. 421–422. – URL: <http://www.nature.com/news/sham-journals-scam-authors-1.12681>

Butler, Declan: *Investigating journals: The dark side of publishing* – In: *Nature* – Vol. 495 (2013) Special issue: pp. 433–435
<http://www.nature.com/news/investigating-journals-the-dark-side-of-publishing-1.12666>

The future of publishing: A new page. A special issue of *Nature* looks at the transformation taking place in scientific publishing. – In: *Nature* – Vol. 495 (2013) 425 – URL: <http://www.nature.com/news/the-future-of-publishing-a-new-page-1.12665>

Werner, Reinhard: *The focus on bibliometrics makes papers less useful* - In: *Nature* – Vol. 517 (2015) 7534: p. 245
<http://www.nature.com/news/the-focus-on-bibliometrics-makes-papers-less-useful-1.16706>

Wikipedia: *Hijacked Journal* – URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hijacked_journal