Your Publication, Your Choice: Choosing the Right Open Access Journal

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Authors may want to think about the following issues before submitting a manuscript to an open access journal. This list is by no means exhaustive.

Appointment of Editorial Board Members and Reviewers
- Are the editorial board members and reviewers researchers/scholars/practitioners in the discipline(s) the journal focuses on?
- Did the journal make the appointments without the individuals' consent?
- Are editorial decisions made independent of the journal's business needs?

Communication of Journal Policies
- Are there clear author guidelines that can be easily located on the journal site?
- Is there a clear explanation of the peer review process? Does it sound reasonable?
- If the journal charges an article processing fee, it there a schedule of the fee on the journal site?

Author Rights and Copyright Issues
- What is the journal copyright policy? Does the author retain copyright in the published article?
- Does the journal publish its articles with a Creative Commons license for broadest dissemination and reuse?

Contact Information for Journal
- Do the journal and/or the publisher provide clear information about how to contact them both electronically and physically?

Track Record of Journal
- What is the journal's reputation in the discipline?
- What is the quality of the published articles?
- For authors who have published in the journal, what are their comments on the quality and timeliness of peer review?

Marketing and Indexing of Journal
- Are there obtrusive advertising on the journal site?
- Does the journal spam potential authors and readers with calls for papers and/or announcements?
- Is the journal indexed by academic article databases?

Preservation of Published Content for Perpetual Online Access
- How does the journal/publisher preserve the published content for long-term access?

Desirable Features of Open Access Journals
- The editor, editorial board members, and reviewers are knowledgeable researchers/scholars/practitioners in the concerned discipline(s). (not applicable to student-run journals)
- The scope of the journal is well-defined and clearly stated on the journal site.
- Published articles are within the scope of the journal and of good quality.
- The peer review process (or quality control mechanism) is clearly explained.
- Information about charges for publishing in the journal is clearly presented.
- Copyright ownership and rights for reuse are clearly stated at the article level.
- The contact information for the journal and the publisher is sufficient and can be easily located on the journal site.
- The journal has a good reputation among researchers/scholars/practitioners in the concerned discipline(s).
- Published articles are included in academic article databases and/or indexes, especially those that serve the discipline(s) the journal focuses on.
- The publisher has a policy and a mechanism to preserve the journal content for long-term access.
- The journal is affiliated with or sponsored by an established scholarly society or academic/research institution.
- Dates of submission, acceptance, and publication are available for each published article.
- The journal has an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN), e.g., 0246-8620.
- Each published article has a digital object identifier (DOI), e.g., 10.1234/1800-5678.2012 or http://dx.doi.org/10.1234/1800-5678.2012.
- The publisher is a member of the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association.
- The journal is listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (http://doaj.org/).
- The journal is registered in Ulrich's Web Global Serials Directory.

Negative Signs
- The scope and policies of the journal are obscure or absent on the journal site.
- Instructions to authors are unavailable.
- The journal offers little information about the peer review process (or quality control mechanism) and copyright issues.
- The journal site, the publisher site, and/or information about the publisher's headquarter are difficult to locate.
- There have been negative comments on the journal among researchers/scholars/practitioners in the concerned discipline(s) and/or in the media, e.g., falsely claiming to have an impact factor.
- The journal site and/or the publisher site are marked with misspellings, grammatical errors, and/or broken links.
- Articles in the same issue have repeat lead authors.
- The publisher promotes the journal by spamming potential authors and readers.
- There is obtrusive advertising on the journal site.

Relevant Resources

Directory of Open Access Journals
http://doaj.org/

Cost Effectiveness for Open Access Journals
http://www.eigenfactor.org/openaccess/

Creative Commons Licenses
http://creativecommons.org/licenses/

University of Kentucky Libraries Open Access Research Guide
http://libguides.uky.edu/OpenAccess

Relevant Articles

Investigating Journals: The Dark Side of Publishing. The Explosion in Open-Access
Publishing Has Fuelled the Rise of Questionable Operators
http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/495433a

Sham Journals Scam Authors: Con Artists Are Stealing the Identities of Real Journals
to Cheat Scientists out of Publishing Fees
http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/495421a

Open Season on Academics: My Brush with Predatory Publishing
http://www.academicmatters.ca/2014/04/open-season-on-academics-my-brush-
with-predatory-publishing/

Cost-effectiveness of Open Access Publications
http://www.eigenfactor.org/openaccess/CostEffectiveness.pdf

Publication Fees in Open Access Publishing: Sources of Funding and Factors
Influencing Choice of Journal
http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/asi.21660

Guidelines for (Open Access) Journal Publishing

Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing
http://oaspa.org/principles-of-transparency-and-best-practice-in-scholarly-
publishing/

Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association's Code of Conduct
http://oaspa.org/membership/code-of-conduct/

Committee on Publication Ethics' Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors
http://publicationethics.org/files/Code_of_conduct_for_journal_editors_1.pdf

Grand Valley State University Libraries' Open Access Journal Quality Indicators
http://www.gvsu.edu/library/sc/open-access-journal-quality-indicators-2.htm

Jeffrey Beall's Criteria for Determining Predatory Open-Access Publishers (2nd edition)
http://scholarlyoa.com/2012/11/30/criteria-for-determining-predatory-open-access-publishers-2nd-edition/