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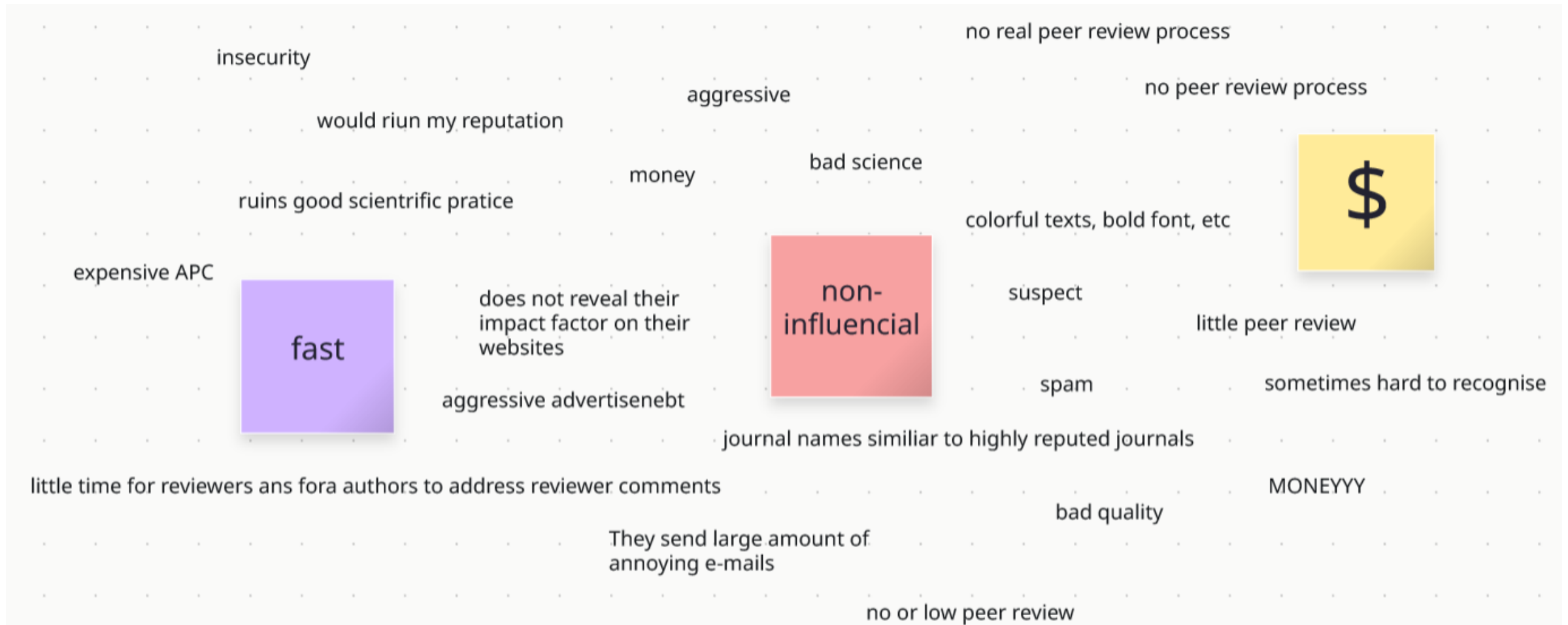
The Good, the Bad and the Inbetween -

The many facets of quality in scholarly publishing

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Brainstorming



Predatory publishing – a fraudulent business model



Predatory Publishing is first of all a fraudulent business model

- Predatory publishing utilizes the prevalent open access cost model, Articles Processes Charges (APCs)
- Fraudulence exists in any business and market
- Fraudulence means that the services offered are not delivered
 - Peer Review
 - Availability of content
 - Long term archiving
 - ...
- False claims about legitimacy of a journal
 - Provision of peer review
 - Indexing
 - Editorial board
 - ...

! It is a sham

Predatory publishing – a symptom of biases and deficiencies in the scholarly ecosystem



There is a market for predatory publishing

- Predatory publishing fills a demand
 - Quick publication of articles
 - Cheaper open access publishing
 - Publishing venues that are open to all
 - ...
- A demand created by systemic problems in the scholarly ecosystem
 - More authors publish ever more articles – Competition for scarce resources
 - Publish or perish culture – Incentivized acceleration
 - Inequities – Global South
 - Commodification of science – Production of scientific output
 - ...

! Combatting predatory practices per se will not suffice and is futile

At stake, the Scholarly Commons



Scientific knowledge is a common pool resource

- It is funded in large part through public funds
- It mostly belongs to everyone
- It is foundational to society and democracy

Scholarly commons encapsulates this understanding of scientific knowledge

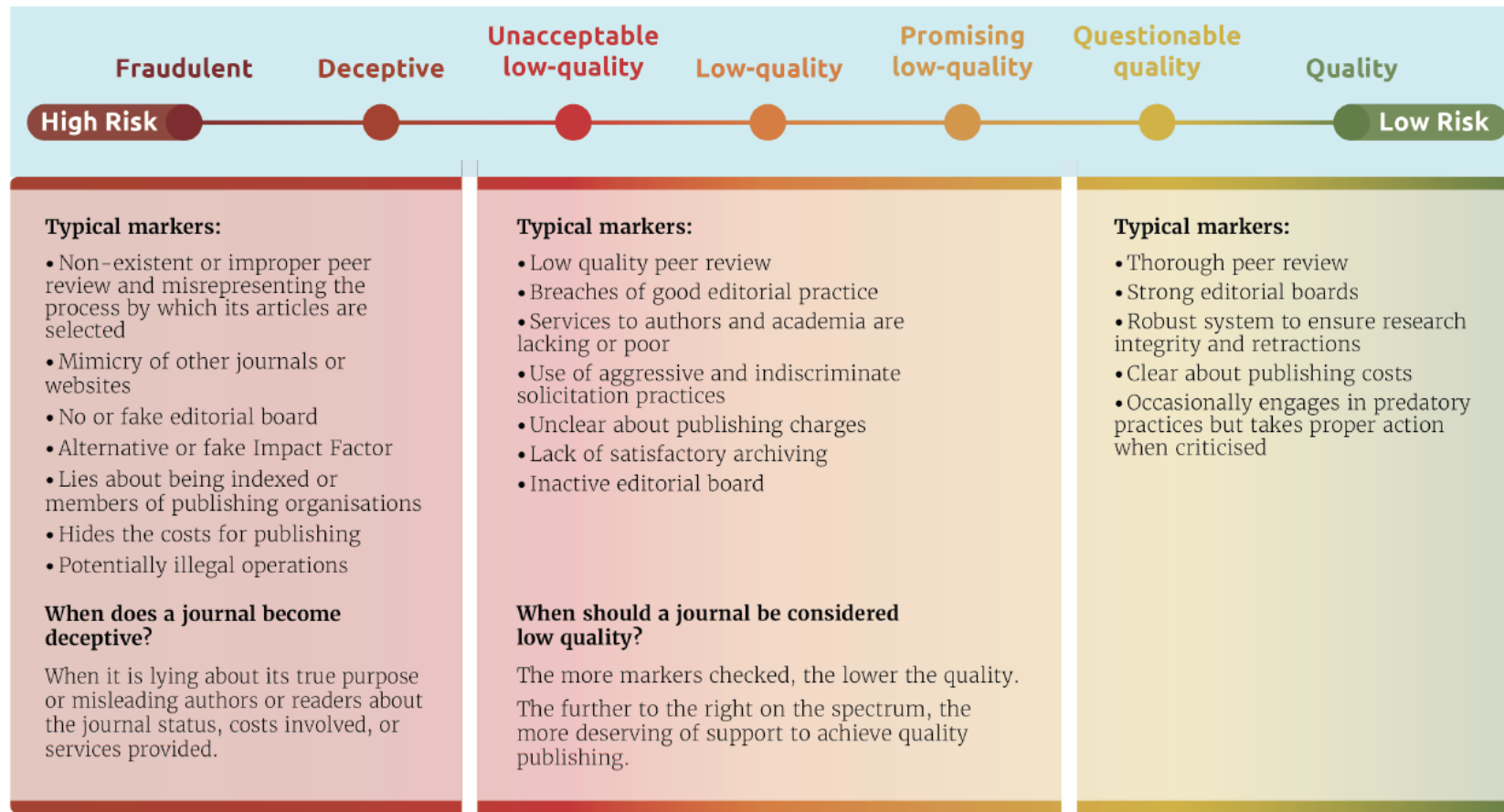
As science is a pillar of society and democracy it has to be of quality
People need to trust that the foundation is sound and solid

Predatory publishing pollutes scientific knowledge!

That is the problem with the predatory publishers in the end: eroding trust in science. A slowly creeping poison. Something might look like a study, but is not worth the paper where it is written on.

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/aug/10/predatory-publishers-the-journals-who-churn-out-fake-science>

Quality is multifaceted



IAP (2022), Combatting Predatory Academic Journals and Conferences. <https://www.interacademies.org/project/predatorypublishing>

Keeping the waters clean - sustaining quality, maintaining trust



Starving predatory publishers off – Do not lend them credibility through

- Publications
- Citations
- Editorialship

Fostering quality – Contribute to sustaining the commons through

- Publications in quality journals
- Peer Review
- Editorialship
- ...

First aid tool: Think Check Submit



Identify trusted publishers for your research

Through a range of **tools and practical resources**, this international, cross-sector initiative aims to **educate researchers, promote integrity, and build trust in credible research and publications.**

Books & Chapters >

Journals >



Think

Are you submitting your research to a trusted journal or publisher?
Is it the right journal or book for your work?

Check

Use our check list to assess the journal or publisher.

Submit

Only if you can answer 'yes' to the questions on our check list.

<https://thinkchecksubmit.org/>

Think Check Submit: Support tool



Checklist

Are you submitting your research to a trusted journal?

- What is the level of knowledge about the journal?
- Identity of the journal and publisher
- Information about peer-review
- Information about indexing and digital archiving
- Transparency of fees
- Transparency through guidelines
- Membership of recognized industry initiative

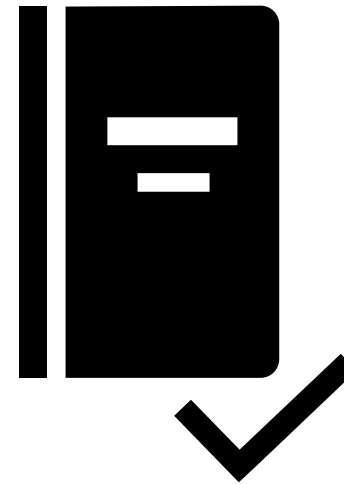
What is Quality?

What do we mean, when we talk about „quality“ in regards to scientific journals?

Quality of the content

vs.

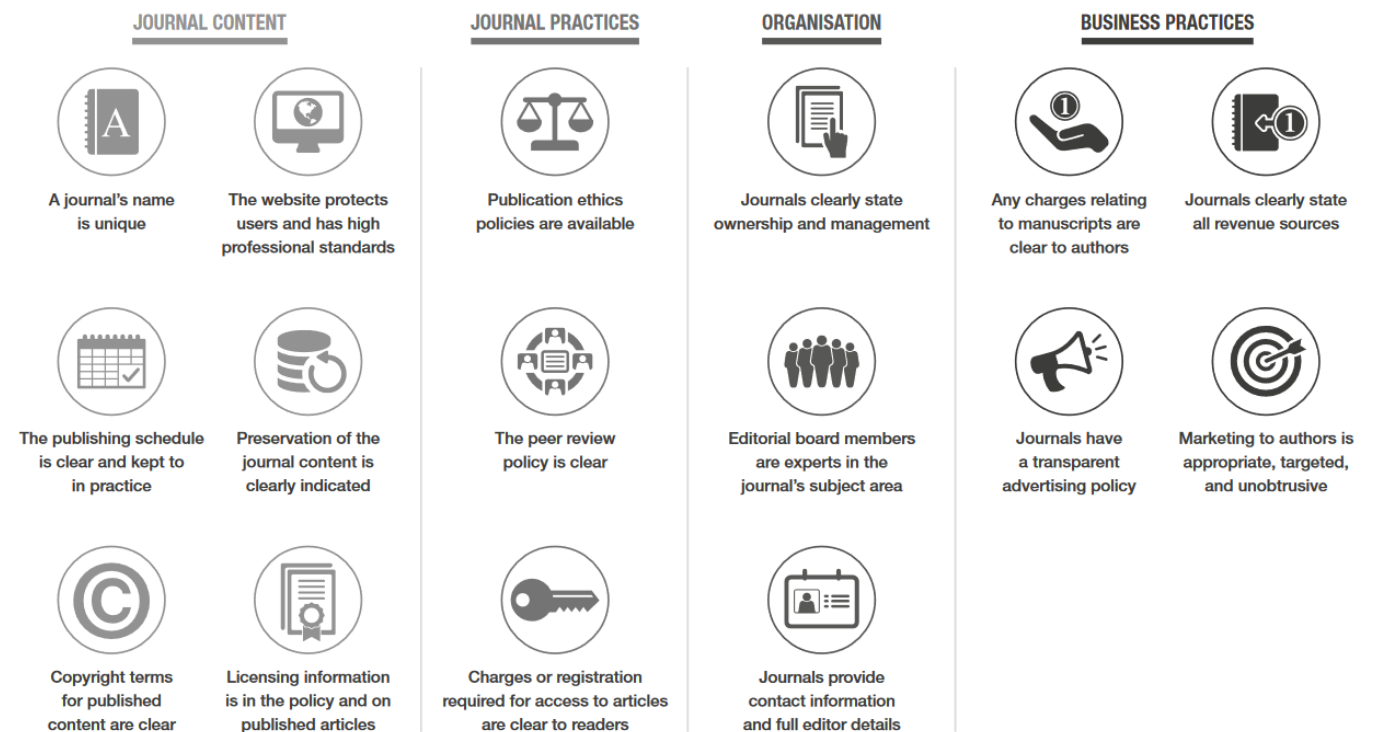
Quality of the ‚container‘



What is the formal quality of a scientific journal?

- Certain form, norms and standards have been established and best practices defined, which serve as template and guide for journals about
 - information and transparency
 - technical and legal standards
 - processes of quality assurance
 - services to readers and authors
- These are adjusted over time due to developments in scholarly communication or technology
 - special issues
 - AI

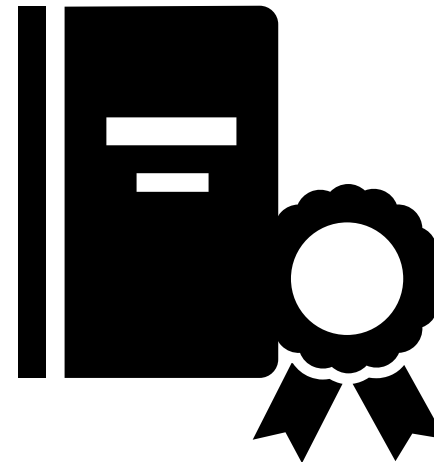
PRINCIPLES OF TRANSPARENCY AND BEST PRACTICE IN SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING – OVERVIEW



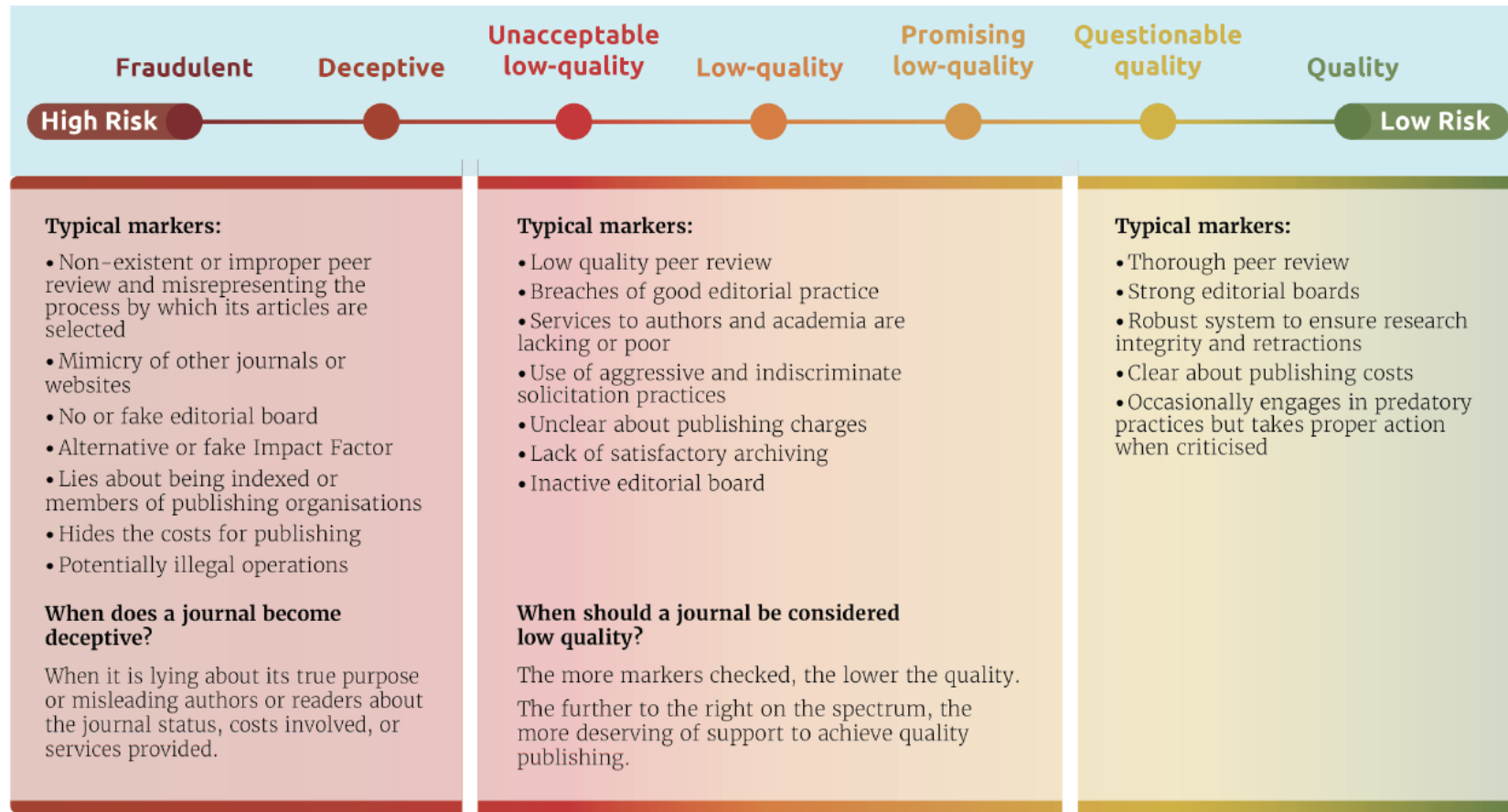
COPE, DOAJ, OASPA, WAME "The Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing"
<https://publicationethics.org/sites/default/files/principles-transparency-best-practice-scholarly-publishing.pdf>

Why do we need formal quality?

- As in every industry or production formal quality criteria, norms and standards serve to
 - ensure, that the content reaches a satisfactory level of quality for the scientific community
 - meet expectations of the readers and authors
 - establish trust in the publishing venue
- Formal quality criteria are used and required by
 - database providers – indexing
 - libraries – licensing
 - funding bodies – e.g. open access funding



Good vs. Bad Quality and the many shades inbetween



IAP (2022), Combatting Predatory Academic Journals and Conferences. <https://www.interacademies.org/project/predatorypublishing/>

Risks and consequences



When publishing in a predatory journal

Personal

- Loss of research results as they are difficult or impossible to find and long-term access is not guaranteed
- Results are not trusted because both the medium and its content are questionable and not quality-assured.
- Damage to reputation and career
- Waste of time and money

Institutional

- "tainted by association" - damage to reputation
- Waste of taxpayers' money (institutes, third-party funds, OA-funds)
- Lost publications for university rankings

Societal

- Good scientific practice is undermined
- Publication of false, misleading, erroneous findings leads to
 - Damage to health
 - Loss of trust in research
- Political decisions are also based on research findings, and trust in politics declines
- Research and science become a matter of belief

Risks and consequences – open questions



But what happens when...

- doing a systematic literature review?
- citing papers from predatory journals?
- uploading it to a repository or CRIS system?
- ...

Because the paper itself could be very good and useful, could even be groundbreaking.

These and many more questions are still in discussion and have opposing views and no final answer.

In the end it's about weighing the risks.

Every citation, reuse or distribution of a such a paper gives credit and credibility to the journal behind it, and legitimizes their model and therefore erodes quality in scholarly communication.

What about mass open access publishers?



In recent years big OA publishers like MDPI, Frontiers or Hindawi have come to be in the spotlight for being branded ‚predatory‘.

They cater to the authors, as they meet their needs:

- Quick turnaround and low rejection rate
- Well established workflows
- A journal for nearly every subject
- Meet funder requirements
- High impact factors at times
- Often available funding at universities

Are they or aren't they predatory?



They show certain markers on the spectrum that remind of predatory journals

- Quick turnaround
- Aggressive emails
- Very broad and general titles/spectrums

They are not Predatory publishers, as they do not actively deceive and defraud

- Do not invent impact factors
- Real editorial boards
- Peer review
- Publishing standards
- Some high quality, established journals

Somewhere between orange and green – depends on the journal – **weigh the risks!**



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Thank you for attending!

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