2018-01

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Eaton, S. E. (2018). Avoiding Predatory Journals and Questionable Conferences: A Resource Guide. Calgary, Canada: University of Calgary.
http://hdl.handle.net/1880/106227
journal article

AVOIDING PREDATORY JOURNALS AND QUESTIONABLE CONFERENCES

A RESOURCE GUIDE

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Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Dr. Bartlomiej "Bart" Lenart, Librarian, Research and Learning (Education), University of Calgary, for the background he provided on predatory conferences.

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Citation (APA, 6th edition)

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Abstract

Purpose: The goal of this guide is to provide a clear overview of the topics of predatory journals and questionable conferences and advice on how to avoid them. This guide intentionally adopts a plain language approach to ensure it is accessible to readers with a variety English language proficiency levels. **Methods:** Electronic searches were conducted manually using Google and Google Scholar, along with a search of the University of Calgary library research databases. Search terms included *predatory journals, predatory publisher, predatory conference, questionable conference* and *vanity conference.* Three primary types of sources informed this report: (1) scholarly peer-reviewed articles; (2) reputable popular media such as established newspapers; and (3) grey literature such as blogs written by experts and scholars. **Findings:** Plain-language overviews of predatory publications and questionable conferences are provided to help researchers understand what these are and how to avoid them. A discussion of how to figure out where an aspiring author should publish their work is included, as well as a checklist for determining if a conference is worth the prospective presenter's time and resources. **Implications:** There are implications for mentors of graduate students and early-career stage academics, as well as for institutions as a whole. The issue of questionable conferences and publications is so complex that early-stage academics require support and mentorship to cultivate a deeper understanding of how to share their work in a credible way. **Additional materials:** Contains 66 references and 2 tables.

Keywords: predatory, journals, conferences, publications, research

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Introduction

Not long ago, a graduate student was lured in by a conference in his precise field of study and wrote to me to let me know of his acceptance. I had never heard of the conference. I had never even come across the name of it in passing. I have worked in higher education for almost a quarter of a century and I've heard of many legitimate and credible conferences in my field, so I became skeptical.

I asked numerous colleagues, as well as our resident librarian. No one else had heard of the conference either. Our education librarian at the University of Calgary, Dr. Bart Lenart, deserves thanks since he went to significant effort to determine if the conference was legitimate. In the end, we decided that it was not a wise use of the student's money or time.

As a result of that experience, I started investigating the topic of predatory conferences and journals in more depth. I started this guide thinking of other graduate students and junior academics who might be at risk of being seduced into spending valuable resources on taking part, while doing nothing to advance their own learning, professional development, scholarly experience or reputation. The stakes are high for academics and the pressure to produce can be overwhelming at times. This guide is intended to help scholars make wise decisions about how to spend their time, money and resources, while simultaneously protecting and preserving their professional reputation.

I am not going to offer a list of any journals or conferences that are, in my opinion, questionable. Beall (n.d.) has already done an excellent job of this. He also suffered for his troubles (Basken, 2017). Others have had to print corrections to their publishing after implying that some events may be predatory (McCrostie, 2016). I have learned through my research that naming names can be more trouble than it is worth, so I am not going to do that. Instead, I am going to provide you with an overview of what a makes a journal or a conference questionable and give you some tools so you can make an informed decision for yourself.

Grove (2017b) asserted that the number of predatory conferences now outnumbers official events. By "official events", he means conferences organized by legitimate scholarly associations and societies (Grove, 2017b). While the problem seems to be worse in the physical sciences, other disciplines are not immune (Nicoll & Chinn, 2015). The high number of predatory conferences and journals means that aspiring and emerging academics have to be savvier than ever about protecting their reputation. In academia, reputation is everything. It is not worth being lured in by the promise of an easy acceptance to a conference or publication.

Intended Audience

I wrote this guide for graduate students, researchers and anyone else interested in learning more about questionable conferences or predatory journals. There is real pressure on aspiring and early-career academics to demonstrate their ability to produce. This pressure means producing conference presentations and publications to show that you are worthy of a career in academia, or a promotion if you have already been hired.

Photo credit: Colourbox.com

This guide may be helpful to those who are further along in their careers, too. Not long ago, a colleague came by my office to ask for my advice. He was reviewing a tenure application for a junior professor and was worried. "Is this person publishing in predatory journals?", he asked me. I did not ask the name of the junior professor. Instead, I asked what the titles of the journals were. We sat down in my office together and did some investigating. In the end, we determined that the junior academic was publishing in legitimate and credible journals. The reviewer was simply unfamiliar with the journals in question because they were not in his field of expertise. We become familiar with journals and conferences in our particular area, but assessing the credibility of those outside of our field can be tricky.

There are so many new journals and new conferences popping up it can be difficult, even for a seasoned academic, to know the difference (Eriksson & Helgesson, 2017). The important point here is that the junior academic's reputation – and career future – was on the line. When senior academics who are reviewing your tenure application question if you are publishing in predatory journals, it shows how seriously academics take this issue.

It is crucial for everyone who works, or aspires to work, in academia to know how to identify reputable conferences and publications – and avoid them.

Method

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My aim with this guide is to offer a broad, but comprehensive, plain language overview of the key topics of (1) predatory journals and publishing and (2) questionable, predatory or vanity conferences. My treatment of each topic provides an analysis and synthesis of my findings, with practical suggestions for academics. There is a case to be made for taking a plain language approach in academic writing (Alford, 2017; Szala-Meneok, 2007). I wanted to write a guide that would be accessible to academics with varying levels of English proficiency, so I opted for an intentionally plain language approach to my writing. I would add that although the term predatory is controversial (Christopher & Young, 2015), I have used it in this guide because it is commonly used and understood among academics.

Selection criteria

This guide is not intended as an exhaustive literature review of all the possible sources, though I consulted a substantive and comprehensive range of sources to inform this work. My selection criteria included:

1. Journal articles and editorials published in credible scientific and research journals.
2. Popular media articles published in highly respected newspapers and online sources, such as *Times Higher Education.*
3. "Grey literature", such as blog posts written by thought leaders and experts who have a deep interest in these matters (e.g. Beall's blog[1]).
4. Sources published for an international scholarly, scientific or academic audience.

[1] See: https://beallslist.weebly.com/

Search procedure

I conducted an online search over an eight-week period that included the search terms: *predatory journals, predatory publisher, predatory conference, questionable conference* and *vanity conference*. My search strategies focused on electronic sources from:

1. Manual searches using Google and Google Scholar.
2. University of Calgary library databases.
3. Referential search, using bibliographic information of selected sources.

Analysis and synthesis procedure

I collected sources and created a reference list of relevant and strategic sources using Endnote. I reviewed each source in depth, making notes of recurring or common themes such as characteristics of questionable conferences. Using these notes, I synthesized my findings into plain language, cross-referencing sources as I wrote.

The Uprising of the Profit-Seeking Predator

This guide examines both predatory publications and conferences. There are some distinct differences between them, but there are also commonalities that are worth exploring.

Motivated by money

The difference between a legitimate and questionable publication or conference, can be related directly to its motive for existence. If the primary mission of a journal or conference is to advance knowledge and share new scientific and research findings, following an established and rigorous peer review process, it is likely credible. On the other hand, if the journal or conference's primary purpose is to make money with little regard for disseminating quality work, it may well be predatory, or at the very least, questionable.

Unscrupulous marketing

Those in charge of questionable publications or events engage in unscrupulous promotion. Spam e-mails to prospective contributors are common. Their spam messages are often detectable by:

1. poor grammar
2. poor spelling
3. hyperbolic language bragging about how prestigious the conference is
4. flattery for the prospective contributor, to appeal to their ego or inexperience
5. no button to "unsubscribe" or opt out of future messages
6. logos that look similar to those of credible publishers

Lack of credibility and low quality

Ultimately, predatory publications and conferences do nothing to advance scientific knowledge and nor do they elevate the reputation of those who contribute. Words such as "scam", "con", "corrupt", "fraudulent", "plague", and "bogus" have been used to describe these publications or events (Abbott, 2017; Beall, 2012; Eriksson & Helgesson, 2017; Jalalian, & Mahboobi, 2013; Pai & Franco, 2016;).

Those behind these scams have little "genuine concern for content" (Eriksson & Helgesson, 2017, p. 163). Having an end product that makes an intellectual contribution to research and scholarship is inconsequential to the predatory publisher or conference organizer.

Characteristics of Contributors

These journals or conferences are called "predatory" because they quite literally prey on academics who are eager to gain scholarly presentation and publication experience. This implies that these publications or events purposely target specific types of individuals in a prey-like fashion, but that does not accurately describe many of these organizations who instead spam potential contributors indiscriminately and rampantly. Beall (2016) also uses the term "parasitic" (p. 1511) as a descriptor, which is particularly helpful when we consider the kinds of individuals contribute, since some seem to benefit in a symbiotic way from the relationship while others feel professionally weakened by their experience.

Upon examination of the literature (Beall n.d., 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 a, b, c; Grove, 2017a; McCrostie 2016, 2017; Nicholl & Chinn, 2015; Nolfi, Lockhart & Redgate, 2015; Vinny, Vishnu & Lal, 2016; Xia, Harmon, Connolly, Donnelly, Anderson, & Howard, 2015; Ruben, 2016), those who contribute to predatory or parasitic publications or events seem to fall into three main categories: (a) those who are too naïve to know; (b) those who know, but do not mind; and (c) those pseudo-scientists who are masquerading as legitimate scholars or researchers, but are essentially quacks or charlatans themselves.

The ***Naïve Contributor*** ultimately recognizes that their contribution will bring them little benefit and their reputation may even be damaged.

The ***Cognizant Contributor*** has a more symbiotic relationship with the parasitical publication or conference because they perceive some benefit to their own advancement.

Like the Cognizant Contributor, the ***Pseudo-Scientist*** also receives (or at least perceives) benefit because questionable conferences or publications give them a venue to proclaim their own expertise, unproven results or absurd theories.

Photo credit: Poprotskiy Alexey - Colourbox.com

The table on the next page offers an overview of these various types. It is important to recognize that these descriptions are not fixed or permanent. Someone might be a Naïve contributor only once and then become more cautious about where they choose to share their work in the future.

Table 1: Characteristics of contributors to predatory journals or conferences.

Type	Characteristics
Naïve contributors	Academics in this category are, inexperienced, unassuming or naïve. They lack awareness that they are being targeted by a predatory publication or conference. These contributions have an accidental characteristic to them, because contributors believe their work has been selected because of its merit and legitimately peer-reviewed. Inexperienced academics may be especially tempted to submit their work to questionable journals if their work has been rejected by very high caliber journals (Nicoll & Chinn, 2015). When contributors discover they have succumbed to a questionable publication or conference they may feel regret, dissatisfaction or embarrassment.
Cognizant contributors	These individuals either work in, or aspire to work in, academic or scientific professions. They know that the publications or events lack credibility and they seem not to care. Often they seem driven by a compulsion to have high numbers of presentations or publications on their c.v.'s in order to get hired or promoted. Cognizant contributors may also agree to have their names added to organizing committees or editorial boards in order to further pad their curriculum vitae.
Pseudo-scientists	Whether these contributors know the conference or publication is questionable, is less relevant because they themselves may have questionable credentials or foolish notions of what constitutes scholarship or research. These individuals likely do not hold a credible academic or research post, though they may claim to be scientists. These contributors use questionable conferences and publications to legitimize their (usually unproven) claims or theories. Some (though not all) who engage in "advocacy research" (Beall, 2016) may fall into this category. Beall (2016) shares examples of the types of contributions from this category: claims that asbestos is non-toxic; claims of miracle cures; the denial of climate change; or claims of answers to unanswered questions in cosmology.

Understanding Open Access and APCs

In the late 1990s, the nature of scientific and academic publishing began to change with the introduction of article processing charges (APC), a publishing model in which authors pay to have their articles published in an open-access, online format (Abbott, 2017; Vinny et al., 2016). There was a time academics might have dismissed the idea of paying to have their article appear in a journal, but times have changed.

While the introduction of APCs may have been introduced with the Open Access (OA) movement. Suber (n.d., 2012) provides an in-depth explanation of OA that eloquently explains all the key features, including different categories of OA such as "green" and "gold". An in-depth explanation of all the intricacies of OA is beyond the scope of this report, so I recommend familiarizing yourself with Suber's work to understand the details.

Having said that, here are some highlights of key elements that characterize OA (Abbott, 2017; Suber, n.a., 2012):

1. Founded on the principle that publicly-funded research should be freely available to public (who have effectively already paid for the research with their tax dollars).
2. Copyright remains with the author.
3. The work is freely available in a digital format to readers without a prescription or a paywall barrier.
4. Is compatible with rigorous peer review. In other words, just because a work is Open Access does not mean it has not – or should not – undergo rigorous peer review.
5. Can be shared in a variety of formats such as journals or digital repositories.
6. OA is a kind of *access*, not a kind of business model.

Over the past twenty years, much has changed and now APCs have become more prevalent, even for the most credible journals. The publishing model that exists currently is imperfect (Anderson, 2012), but it is the one we have to contend with. What is important to note is, whether a journal charges an article processing fee is not necessarily an indicator of its credibility or quality. It is important for prospective authors to investigate the details of a journal and the fees it charges before submitting a manuscript.

Predatory Journals

Much has been written on the topic of predatory publishing in both scholarly and popular sources. Arguably the most prolific and authoritative writer on the topic to date has been Jeffrey Beall (n.d., 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 a, b, c). Since Beall launched his awareness campaign to educate academics about what predatory journals are and how to avoid them, other authors have since joined the dialogue on what has become a conversation of concern in academic, scientific and technical circles.

Characteristics of a predatory journal

Here are some traits that are common among many predatory journals (Beall, 2016; Eriksson & Helgesson, 2017; Nolfi, 2015; Vinny et al., 2016):

1. Are not linked to or run by a credible scholarly, academic or technical society or association, though some pretend to be.
2. Do not receive public (e.g. government) funds or grants.
3. Send spam e-mails.
4. Brag about the high quality of the journal, which can include false claims about journal metrics and where it is indexed.
5. Features an editor-in-chief who also edits numerous other journals, from a variety of different disciplines.
6. Make false claims about where the journal is indexed (e.g. PUBMED).
7. Promise fast publication.
8. Promise an easy peer-review and process.
9. Have titles very close to those of highly respected legitimate journals, with only subtle modifications.
10. May include the words, “International”, “World”, “Global” or “Universal” in the title.
11. Claim to be based in major cities (e.g. London or New York), when they are really published somewhere else.
12. Make it difficult to find out who manages the journal.

These are signs that a prospective writer might look for before they submit their work to a journal for publication. It is important to remember that none of these characteristics in and of themselves is a guarantee that a journal is predatory (Nolfi et al., 2015). For example, there are some highly credible journals with the words “International” in the title such as the *International Journal of Computer Vision*, noted at the time of this writing as

ranking #105 out of more than 28,000 journals[2]. There are also journals that are "amateurish but well-meaning" (Abbott, 2017, p. 6), that may share some of these characteristics, but aspire to develop their credibility over time.

As a writer seeking a high-quality publication to share your research, look for a combination of these characteristics and be wary of journals that display numerous traits of predatory journals.

[2] See: Scimajo Journal and Country Rank - http://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php

How to figure out where to publish your manuscript

It can be confusing for prospective authors to figure out where to submit their manuscripts for consideration (Christopher & Young, 2015). Consulting Beall's website[3] is certainly an excellent place to start. The Directory of Open Access Journals[4] also offers insights into which journals are both open access and legitimate. It is worth noting that neither of these websites is exhaustive and the prudent writer will look deeply into a journal before submitting a manuscript (Eriksson & Helgesson, 2017). Abbott (2017) counsels writers to look for journals with a favourable reputation and a well-defined aim and scope that targets "exactly the type of reader the author intends the article to be read by" (p. 6).

One informal, but effective approach to determining which journals to target is to look at the curriculum vita of a highly respected scholar or researcher in your field. Often universities will publish the vita of their professors online, making them publicly accessible. An informal analysis of where the top scholars in your field publish can help you create a list of journals you would like to target for your own work. Similarly, asking a trusted advisor or mentor who is well-respected in your discipline for advice can help to steer you towards more reputable journals.

Consulting with a librarian can be one of the easiest ways to find reputable journals in your field (Nolfi et al., 2015). Librarians may be one of the most helpful and under-appreciated resources for scholars and researchers seeking to learn more about the academic publication process.

Investigating the journal's impact factor (IF), such as the one produced by Thompson Reuters[5] can be another way to determine its credibility. It is worth nothing that impact factor is a contested indicator of journal quality (Abbott, 2017). Predatory journals simply lie about their impact factors, so it can be tricky to figure out the genuine impact that a journal has. It is worth doing some investigating to figure out how objective third parties rate the impact factor of a journal you are interested in.

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[3] See: https://beallslist.weebly.com/
[4] See: https://doaj.org/
[5] See: Thomson Reuters' website: http://ipscience-help.thomsonreuters.com/inCites2Live/indicatorsGroup/aboutHandbook/usingCitationIndicatorsWisely/jif.html

Questionable Conferences

Characteristics of a predatory or vanity conference

There are key red flags that indicate a conference may be questionable. Here are some typical characteristics of bogus conferences that you can watch out for before registering (AuthorAID, 2017; Bowman, 2014; Beal, 2015; Cowan, 2016; McCrostie, 2016, 2017):

1. Event is organized by a for-profit entity, rather than a credible scholarly or scientific society or association.
2. Conferences that combine a number of fields topics or disciplines into a single conference. Be particularly wary of alleged conferences that combine multiple, unrelated topics into a single event.
3. The conference uses a free e-mail address, such as a Gmail address.
4. The organizers spam prospective attendees to submit proposals and register. Often, these spam e-mails contain hyperbolic language about how prestigious the conference is.
5. Information about who is organizing the conference is either unclear or non-existent; or the organizer is not well known or reputable.
6. Acceptances are promised with a very short turnaround time (often less than four weeks).
7. The conference is marketed as a holiday in a desirable location. The event is held at a resort or a popular tourist destination and marketed as a holiday, rather than an academic or scientific event.
8. The conference name bears a striking resemblance to that of a credible or highly prestigious conference, but has subtle minor differences in its name.
9. Organizers guarantee your contribution will be published as an article in the journal associated with the conference. Like the conference, the journal is also predatory and the organizers may later insist on additional article processing charges to publish your article.
10. The conference websites are unstable. They may change URLs or have no record of conferences in previous years.
11. The website text contains poor grammar or numerous spelling errors.
12. Conference fees seem quite high, compared to those run by non-profit scholarly societies or associations.

Any one of these characteristics alone may not indicate a predatory conference. For example, sometimes credible conferences are held at popular tourist destinations in order to encourage attendance. Look for a number of these characteristics in combination and

use critical thinking skills to assess the overall legitimacy of a conference.

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Sometimes attendees who have been lured into such conferences later report about their experiences, which commonly include (Beall, 2015; Cowan, 2016; Grove 2017 a, b; McCrostie, 2016; Ruben, 2016):

1. Upon arriving at the conference venue, attendees reported that the conference has mysteriously been cancelled.
2. There was an event, but it does not resemble a scholarly or scientific conference in the traditional sense. It may be one event, held in a single meeting room of a hotel, rather than spread out over multiple meeting rooms like a large academic conference would be.
3. There may have been very few people in attendance (sometimes fewer than twenty in total).
4. Spouses and children of presenters may have attended sessions in order to make the conference rooms look full.
5. "Conferences" on several different topics or disciplines (sometimes marketed as entirely different conferences) were held in the same room, with presenters being the only ones in the room. The other attendees had little to no interest in others' presentations because they were lured in to present on a completely different topic.
6. Attendees were promoted to keynote speakers or session chairs. Subsequently, their names and photos were used without permission on the event organizers for any number of their events.
7. Some attendees have felt regret or embarrassment after attending a predatory conference, recognizing that attending a predatory conference may not have helped their reputation.

How to determine if a conference is questionable

Here is a checklist to help you determine if a conference may be a vanity or predatory (AuthorAID, 2017; Beall, 2015; Cowan, 2016; Grove 2017 a, b; McCrostie, 2016). Consider this checklist a starting point to make an informed decision, rather than an exhaustive list of potential indicators.

Table 2: Checklist to determine of a conference is legitimate

Question	**Yes/No/ Unsure**	**Cautionary note**
Have I heard of this conference before?		If you have never heard of a conference before, be cautious about signing up.
How legitimate do the website and e-mail address look?		If the e-mail is from a free account (e.g. Gmail, Yahoo or Hotmail) or if the website URL indicates a free website, it may be questionable.
Have any of my professors or colleagues whom I respect presented at this conference?		If people you know and respect have never presented at this conference, think twice before you attend.
Do the organizers spam me with lots of flattering e-mails?		If event organizers are laying on the flattery, be suspicious. Credible conferences are about sharing (even critiquing) ideas, not stroking your ego.
Do the conference organizers insist this is a prestigious event?		Credible conferences don't have to justify their credibility.
Do I know who is organizing this conference?		If the conference is not organized by a professional, scholarly or technical association or society you know and trust, be wary.
Do organizers guarantee acceptance quickly?		Questionable conferences often guarantee a very short decision time for your abstract.
Do organizers guarantee to publish your conference paper as an article in their journal?		Credible conferences almost never guarantee publication of papers without peer review.
Is this conference held at a resort or tourist destination?		If a conference is marketed as a holiday rather than a scholarly event, it may be predatory.
Does this conference look too good to be true?		If an opportunity looks too good to be true, it probably is. Consult with a trusted advisor.

A note to professors: Feel free to share this checklist with your students and use it as a conversation tool to prevent your students from falling prey to predatory conferences.

Implications

Consequences for Contributors

It may be difficult to define exactly the consequences are for those who contribute to predatory publications or conferences, there seems to be general agreement in the literature that the impact to an academic's career can be negative (Beall, 2015; Byard, 2016; Cariappa, Dalal, & Chatterjee, 2016; Christopher & Young, 2015; Clark, 2015; Nicholl & Chinn, 2015; Nolfi et al., 2015).

The question of reputation is mentioned throughout the literature, with the implication being that the career of an academic is founded on their reputation for high quality research or scholarship. The kinds of journals we publish in and the conferences we present at are implicitly judged to be a reflection of our own reputation as an academic.

The example I offered at the beginning of this guide about the senior professor who was trying to determine if a junior colleague was worthy of recommendation for tenure and promotion is noteworthy. Bowman (2014)

The overall reputation of an institution is comprised, in part, of the respectability of each individual academic who is associated with it. If an individual is deemed to be of ill-repute, as determined by their colleagues, they may find it difficult to secure or keep an academic post at a highly respected institution. Whether an academic secures a full-time appointment or a promotion may be the ultimate form of peer-review and hence, demonstrating quality contributions is paramount.

Implications for Mentors

Senior academics can play an important role in helping junior colleagues and graduate students cultivate both their reputation and a strong publication record. Those with more experience in academic publishing have different perceptions about where to submit their manuscripts and why, and as a result, it is important for mentors is important to raise awareness among those with less experience (Christopher & Young, 2015).

One strategy that has traditionally been recommended to early-career academics is for them to "aim high" with their publications and conference proposals. Then, if they are rejected to "aim lower" (Nicoll & Chinn, 2015). The problem is that rejection can be discouraging and in an environment where academics must either "publish or perish", sometimes "aim lower" is interpreted as "Get your manuscript published anywhere you can, and fast!" It is important for mentors to intervene during this process in order to help

junior colleagues understand that rejection of a manuscript does not equate to a blow to their reputation, but publishing in a predatory journal might be!

It is important for experienced scholars to teach junior colleagues and graduate students that it may be more impressive to turn down a so-called international conference than to be lured by one (Ruben, 2016). In short, those who "know the ropes" can help those who are coming up through the ranks apply their critical thinking and analytical skills to their own career development.

Implications for Academia

Grove (2017b) points out that universities have done little to raise awareness about this issue, which poses a particular problem for early-career academics, as well as graduate students. While reviewing the literature for this guide, I observed that numerous university libraries have produced resources in the form of a web page or a guide (a "lib guide", as they are often called). A web page or a lib guide are effectively passive resources, meaning that an individual has to go looking for information on the topic.

While it is helpful to have resources, librarians alone should not bear the institutional responsibility for helping members of the academic community avoid questionable publications or conferences in the hands of librarians. Institutions as a whole, as well as individual faculties and departments must take an active role in educating early-career academics and graduate students through workshops, on-going dialogue, and other forms of support to ensure members of the academic community are focusing on cultivating their credibility directing their energies towards highly credible publications and conferences. Institutional offices of research and others with budgetary oversight need to do their due diligence when allocating funds for conferences or publication fees (Bowman, 2014; Nicoll & Chinn, 2015). Barroga (2015) puts it succinctly when he says, "All stakeholders must raise awareness and educate authors about predatory publishing and its ethical implications" (p. 1535).

Essentially, the responsibility for helping scholars publish and present their work in high quality ways is a responsibility shared by individual academics, as well as academic departments, faculties and institutions as a whole, as well as those who work in the publishing industry.

Conclusions

Ultimately, the question you are asking yourself is: Is this conference or journal worth my…

1. Time?
2. Money?
3. Reputation?

One of the most important traits of an academic is their reputation (Nolfi et al., 2015; Matešić, Vučković, & Dovedan, 2010). Aspiring and junior academics, in particular, are in a vulnerable position. They must show that they can produce concrete outputs of their research in order to get hired or be promoted. Simultaneously, academics must strive to cultivate a reputation of excellence as an outstanding scholar or researcher whose contributions to knowledge are high quality and meaningful. This is more than a question of finding balance. It is a question of carefully and intentionally cultivating a lifelong career with high quality work as its foundation.

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