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Identifying and avoiding predatory practices



2021 UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science

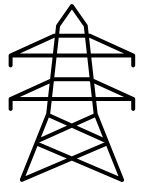
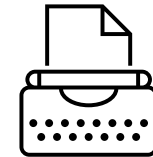
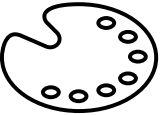
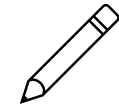
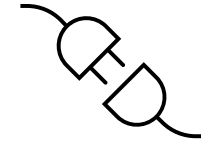
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What are the costs of publishing? (after an article is written)

- **Hosting the article: archiving, access**
- **Enacting the peer review process: editorial oversight, coordination of reviews**
- **Improving the quality and reach: text editing, visual design, factchecking**
- **Connecting with audiences: distribution**
- ...



Prestige is not a service.

Conventional Model

Subscription fee to journal
(readers pay)

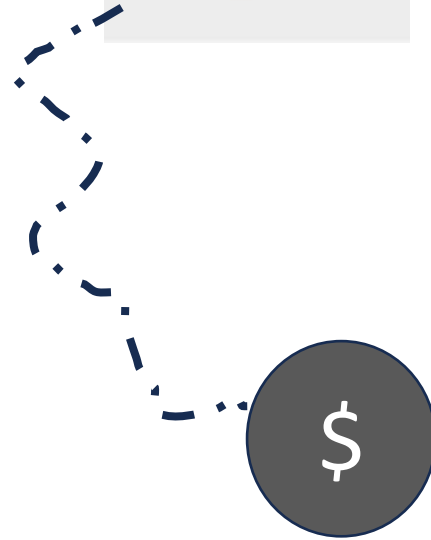
Authors publish for free



APC Model

Reading is free

Article processing charges
(APC) paid by authors /
authoring institutions



What are the costs of publishing?

Nearly half of OA articles from African authors were *published in a journal using a gold APC model (waivers may have been used)

African researchers are more likely to publish OA research using a gold APC model, compared to any other region

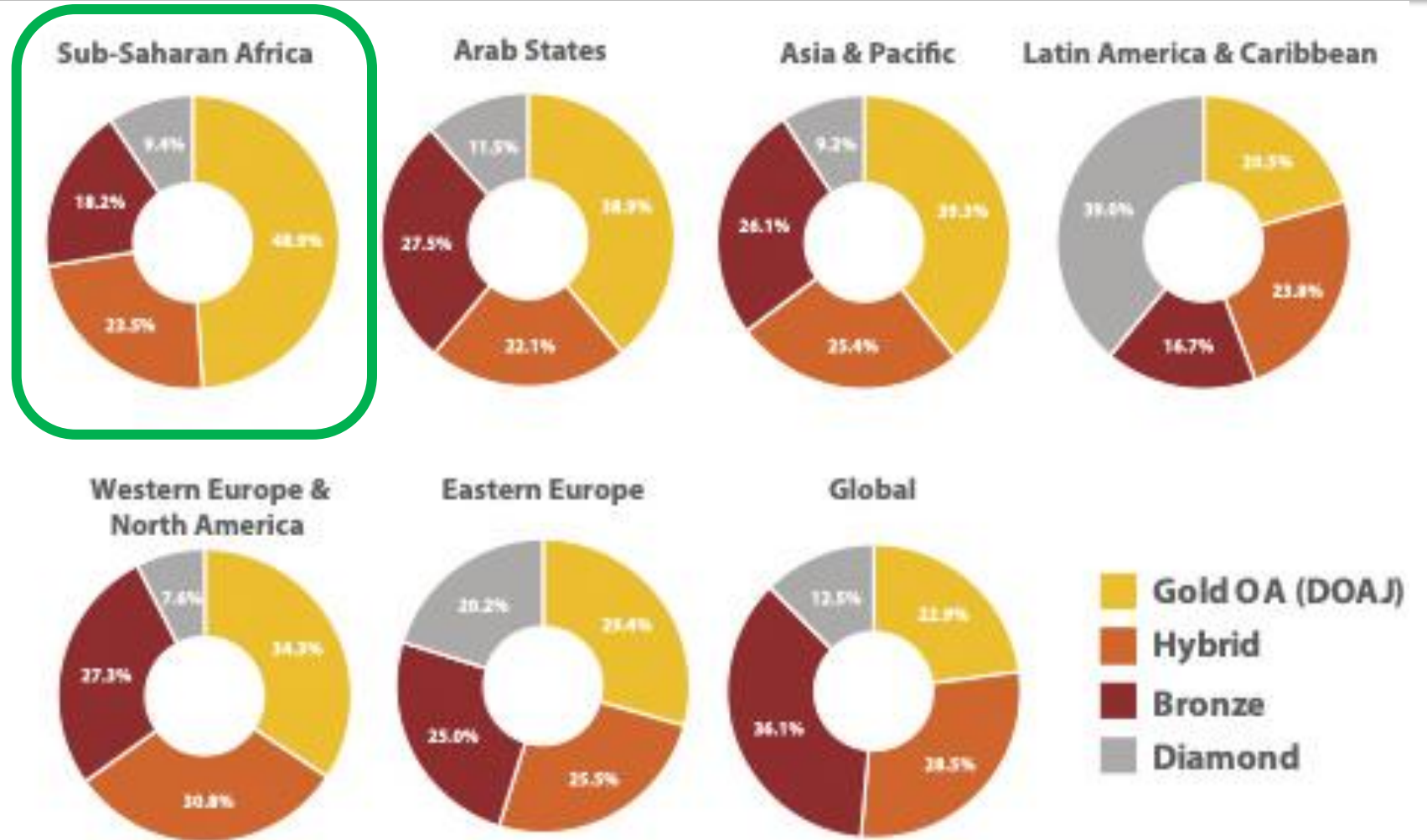


Figure 2.7. Share of open access articles, published between 2012 and 2021, by category of open access

Conventional model: Publishers make deals with an institution



APC model: publishers make deals with many individual researchers





IDENTIFYING PREDATORY ACADEMIC JOURNALS AND CONFERENCES

This document is part of the UNESCO Open Science Toolkit, designed to support implementation of the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science. This factsheet draws on and was prepared in collaboration with an InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) study on predatory academic journals and conferences, accessible at www.interacademies.org/publication/predatory-practices-report-english, with a summary report in English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish available at www.interacademies.org/project/predatorypublishing.



While the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science is an important milestone in the transition to a global science system that is more transparent, inclusive and democratic, it also cautions that open science may have unintended negative consequences, including further fuelling established and evolving "predatory behaviours". As the concept and practice of open science continue to evolve (alongside evolving wider academic and publishing business models, research evaluation and peer-review systems), the research sector is becoming increasingly vulnerable to overt commercial predation. Driven by profit and self-interest, this predation is becoming more prevalent. It risks polluting the global research enterprise, with serious implications for research quality and integrity, wasting research funding, derailing research careers, and compromising evidence-based policy decisions.

Predatory journals and conferences are the most well documented. They solicit articles and abstracts from researchers through deceitful or misleading practices that exploit the pressure on researchers to publish and present their work. Their practices include rapid pay-to-publish models with little or no peer review, fake editorial boards falsely listing respected scientists, fraudulent impact factors, hijacked titles and aggressive spam invitations.

Identifying predatory behaviours or practices is not always easy. There is a spectrum of journal and conference practices: a broad set of dynamic behaviours and characteristics that distinguish between predatory behaviors ranging from outright fraud, low-quality, to questionable and unethical practices, and good practice. All types of publishing and conferencing outlets, from reputable and established traditional publishers to the pseudo-open and open



Combatting predatory academic journals and conferences



REPORT



Predatory behaviours:

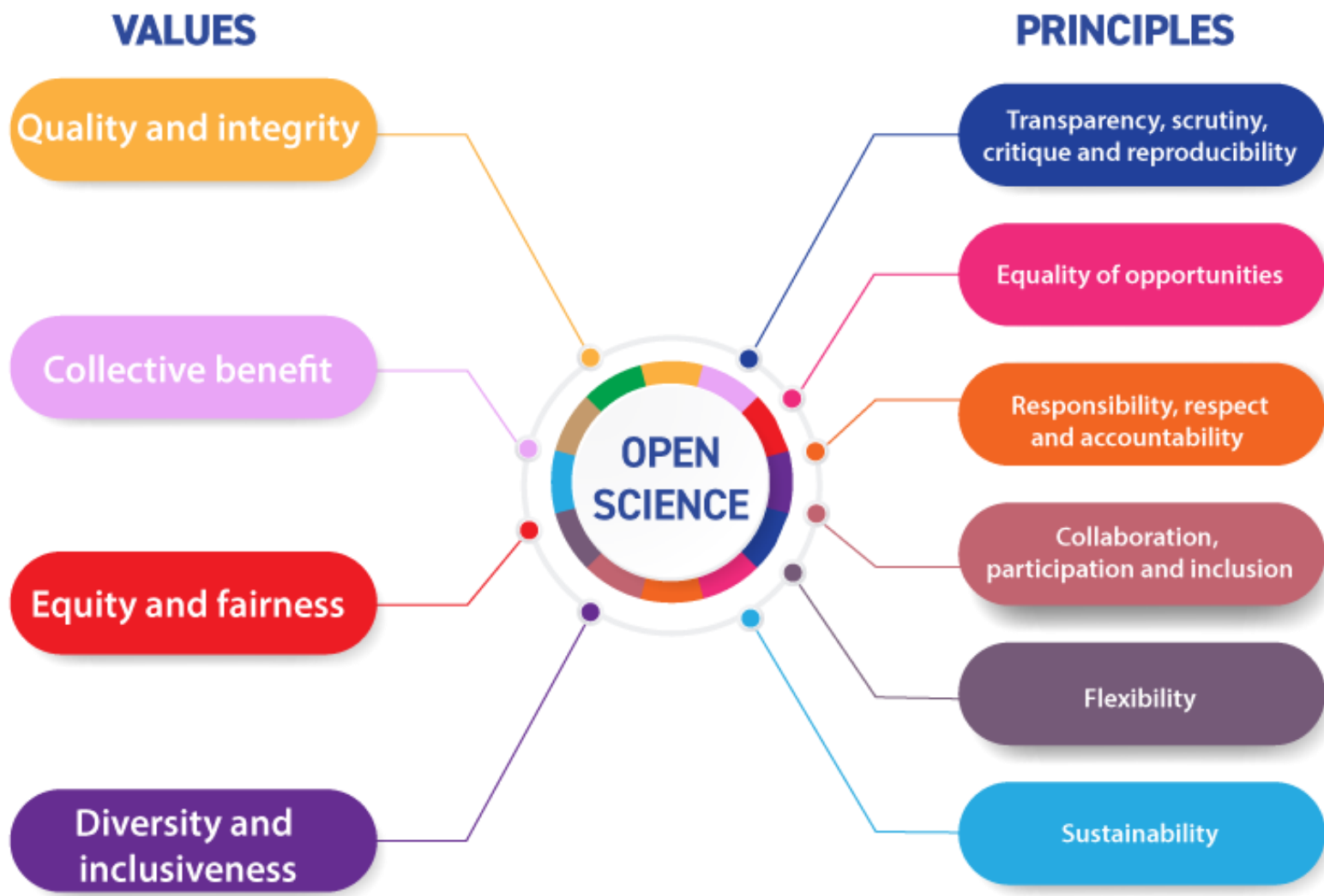
- **deploy deceitful or misleading practices to make money: charge a fee without providing the service**
- **motivated mainly by profit rather than scholarship**

Examples:

- **predatory journals and conferences;**
- **falsification of experimental evidence;**
- **fake or embellished qualifications, such as “predatory PhD”, certificates, awards and medals; and**
- **predatory preprint servers.**

Characteristics: rapid pay-to-publish models with little or no peer review, fake editorial boards falsely listing respected scientists, fraudulent impact factors, hijacked titles and aggressive spam invitations.

Open science values and principles



What is the link with open science?

Shifting from a model where publishing services are covered by subscriptions

...to a model where open access is promised, but the AUTHORS PAY per article

... plus tech permitting 'instant journals'

A growing problem:

- **Over 16,000 predatory journals in May 2022**
- **Hundreds more added every month**
- **Reputational challenges even for 'good' journals!**



TYPICAL MARKERS

FRAUDULENT

- Rapid and unrealistic service
- Poor or no peer review
- Plagiarise reputable outlets
- Use researchers' names without permission
- Fake editorial or advisory boards
- Meaningless programmes
- Lie about their credentials e.g. impact factor

LOW QUALITY

- Breach good practice
- Low quality peer review
- Aggressive or indiscriminate solicitation
- Inactive editorial or advisory board
- Lack of focus or organisation
- Invitations are full of mistakes
- Exaggerate their prestige
- Promised services are poor or lacking

QUALITY

- Thorough peer review
- Strong editorial and advisory boards
- Transparent, robust policy to ensure research and operational integrity (practice due diligence)
- Transparent policy for retraction or refund
- Clear about costs
- Take proper action when challenged

What makes people vulnerable?

- **'Publish or perish' assessment**
- **Monetization and commercialization of research output**
- **Weaknesses in peer review systems**



Why have people used predatory journals or conferences?



What makes people vulnerable?

- 'Publish or perish' assessment
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Solutions from open science

- More sustainable, less profit-motivated academic models
 - Responsible research assessment
 - Raise awareness: what does 'good' look like?
- Robust training, including access to strong publishing practices
 - Disincentivizing rushed, low-quality publishing
- Promoting more effective and sustainable peer review

WHAT are they?



Journal and conference practices that deceive or mislead researchers



Include fraudulent, low quality and unethical practices



Motivated by profit, not scholarship, they exist worldwide



Driven by monetisation, research metrics and peer review opacity

WHY are they a problem?



Damage careers and reputations; threaten research integrity



Hundreds of new predatory products every month



Compromise millions of researchers; waste billions of dollars



Dupe new and established researchers

HOW can we combat them?



Practice due diligence



Raise awareness



Communicate their threat to science and society



Work collaboratively to stop them

Help is available!

<https://thinkchecksubmit.org/>

<https://thinkcheckattend.org/>

! THINK ✓ CHECK > SUBMIT

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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**.

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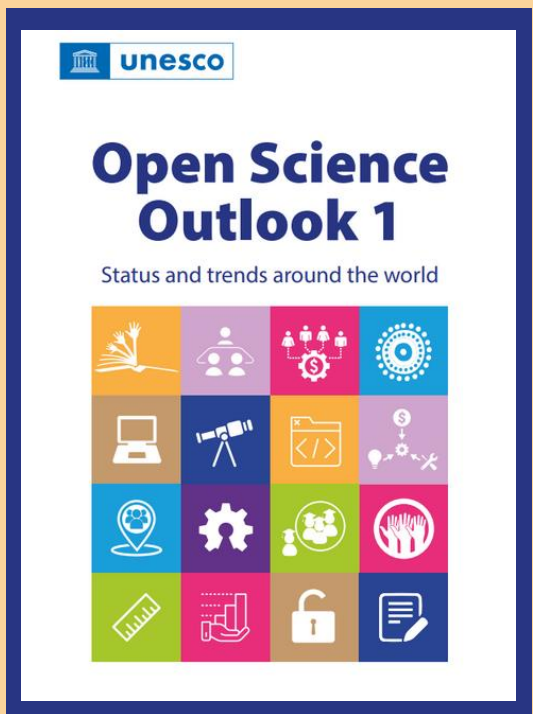
HOME THINK CHECK ATTEND ABOUT RESOURCES THINK CHECK SUBMIT CONFERENCE CHECK

Choosing the right conference to attend and present your research



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