HOW TO ASSESS A JOURNAL

A.K.A. How not to publish in an undesirable journal

Key Things to Consider When Assessing a Journal*

*It’s up to you to weigh these factors in order to make your decision.

Don’t trust unsolicited emails
- If a call for submission does not come from a trusted source, treat it as spam.

Be similarly wary of unsolicited offers to join editorial boards or conference invitations.

Review several issues of the journal
- Check for writing and research quality, relevance to discipline and adequate copy editing.

While you’re at it...
- If your research grant or institution requires that your article be openly available, make sure the journal’s policy allows this.

Review the journal website. It should contain:
- A clear and appropriate scope;
- An editorial board with recognized experts and current contact information for them;
- A description of the peer review process;
- Transparent information about whether article processing charges (APCs) or other fees are charged.

Two journals can have similar names but different reputations; don’t mistake one journal for another.

Check that any impact metrics listed by the journal are recognized and reputable
- E.g., Journal Impact Factor, H-index, Eigenfactor

Beware: there are a number of made-up metrics on the Internet.

Still Unsure?

- Check with your colleagues and peers in your field.
- Get help from a librarian at your institution.
- Visit thinkchecksubmit.org for more useful tips.

Neutral Factors

The following factors are not indicative of journal quality:

- Lack of impact metrics
  - Not all reputable journals display impact metrics.

- Geographical location of publisher
  - Journal publishing is a global pursuit.

- Article Processing Charges (APCs)
  - Reputable open access journals operate under a variety of business models, including many who use APCs.

- Reputation of other journals by the same publisher
  - A publisher can be responsible for both highly respected and less reputable journals.