

Checklists for Identifying Suspicious Journals and Conferences

Paije Wilson, MLIS



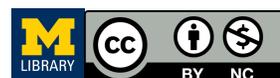
Instructions: Download a copy of these checklists to fill out while investigating a journal or conference. For access to the abridged checklists, [click here](#).

Important Note: There is no single, straightforward method of identifying a fraudulent journal or conference. The questions on these checklists are the compilation of questions and characteristics of fraudulent journals and conferences identified in the literature (see Works Cited). They are meant to serve as a helpful guide for researchers or librarians attempting to identify a suspicious journal or conference.

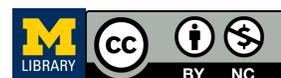
Checklist for Identifying Suspicious Journals

As always, take careful consideration when choosing a journal to submit your work to. If there are more “No” than “Yes” answers when filling out the checklist, you may want to reconsider whether you would like to submit work to the journal.

Category	Question	Answer (Yes/No)
Email	If the journal sent you an email, is the email free of language that pressures you to submit within a short deadline?	
	If the journal sent you an email, is the email free of grammatical and spelling errors?	
	If the journal sent you an email, is the email domain professional or affiliated with the journal (e.g. the address is not generic, such as gmail, yahoo, etc.)?	
Website	Are the images on the journal’s website clear (i.e. not fuzzy)?	
	Is the journal’s website unique (i.e. it does not look like it has been copied from other journal websites you’ve seen)?	
	Is the journal website free of grammatical and spelling errors?	
Editorial Board	Do members of the editorial board mention the journal on their personal web pages?	
	Can you find information about members on the editorial board?	
	Do members of the editorial board have backgrounds that align with the scope of the journal?	
Policies	Does the journal provide clear policies for retraction, plagiarism, copyright, editorial processes, ethics, and preservation?	
Content	Is the title of the journal unique (i.e. it doesn’t mimic the name of a reputed journal)?	
	Does the journal have a logical scope?	
	Does the journal have ISSN numbers?	



	Is the number of articles the journal publishes each year sensical (i.e. not too many, but not too few)?	
	Can you find past articles published by the journal?	
Content	Are the journal's articles high in quality (e.g. free of spelling or grammatical errors)?	
Impact Metrics and Indexing	Is the journal indexed in Medline, Web of Science, CINAHL, Scopus, INANE, or the Directory of Open Access Journals; or included in Clarivate's Journal Citation Reports?	
	Does the journal have a legitimate impact factor (e.g. not a bogus impact factor, such as from Index Copernicus)?	
Transparency and Workflow	Is the journal transparent about its peer review process (e.g. whether it uses single-blind, double-blind, etc.)?	
	Does the journal mention having a peer review process?	
	Is the journal transparent about their fees, review processes, and publication processes?	
	Is the journal's workflow feasible (e.g. provide enough time for peer review and publishing)?	
	Is there a formal submission process (e.g. does NOT have you submit via email)?	
Publisher Information	Can you find the publisher's location on Google Street View?	
	Is the publisher a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association, (OASPA), or World Association of Medical Editors (WAME)?	
	Have your colleagues heard about the publisher or journal?	
	Is the journal affiliated with/supported by known scholarly associations or societies?	
Fit	Does the journal align with your own professional interests and background?	
Total "Yes" vs "No" score: Note: You will want more "yes" than "no"		Yes: No:



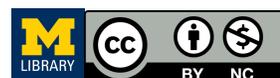
Tips for Identifying Suspicious Special Issues: When evaluating a special issue proposal:

- Follow the instructions above to determine if the journal promoting the special issue is authentic
- Retrieve the email of the person/people you are contacting for the special issue from their online profile instead of using the email address given in a special issue announcement.
- If you are paying open access fees, only do so via the publisher's system, and not via instructions given by an email (exempting in cases where the email is sent directly from the publisher). **Note:** Journals should not be charging compulsory fees for special issue articles.

Checklist for Identifying Suspicious Conferences

As always, take careful consideration when choosing a conference to attend. If there are more “No” than “Yes” answers when filling out the checklist, you may want to reconsider whether you would like to attend the conference.

Category	Question	Answer (Yes/No)
Email	If the conference sent you an email, is the email free of grammatical and spelling errors?	
	If the conference sent you an email, is the email free of excessive flattery?	
	If the conference sent you an email, is the email free of imprecise language in the greeting (e.g. it is NOT addressed “Dear Dr. or Professor”)?	
	If the conference sent you an email, is it free of attempts to “sell” the conference location (e.g. giving you tourist information about the location, how much fun you’ll have, etc.)?	
	If the conference sent you an email, is it free of language that oversells its reach (e.g. using words like global, worldly, etc.)?	
	If the conference is soliciting you to be a speaker or chair, does it state it will waive the fee for attendance?	
Website	Is the conference website free of grammatical and spelling errors?	
	Does the conference website provide information about where the proceedings of the conference will be published?	
	Is the content on the conference website clear and well-organized?	
Editorial Committee	Can you find information about the editorial committee?	
	Are the backgrounds of members of the editorial committee relevant to the scope of the conference?	
	Can you verify information about the editorial committee outside of the conference website?	
Policies	Can you find policies about how the conference addresses peer review and editorial control of conference content?	

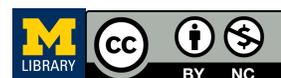


Content	Is the conference name unique (i.e. it doesn't mimic the name of a reputed conference or organization)?	
	Can you find information about the speakers?	
	Are the conference speakers people you have heard of before?	
	Does the conference have a logical scope (i.e. not too broad)?	
	Does the conference have a logical theme?	
History	Has this conference ever been held before?	
	If the conference has been held before, are you able to access past conference proceedings?	
Transparency	Can you find an agenda for the conference?	
	Does the conference website provide information about the venue, fees, and timeline for the conference?	
	Does the conference website provide information about fees for the conference?	
Organizers	Can you find and have you heard of the societies, associations, or patrons behind the conference?	
	Can you verify that the patrons are NOT from a business company?	
Fit	Does the conference align with your own professional background and interests?	
Total "Yes" vs. "No" score: Note: You will want more "yes" than "no"		Yes: No:



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