Open Access Journal Quality Indicators

Positive Indicators

● Scope of the journal is well-defined and clearly stated
● Journal’s primary audience is researchers/practitioners
● Editor, editorial board are recognized experts in the field
● Journal is affiliated with or sponsored by an established scholarly society of academic institution
● Articles are within the scope of the journal and meet the standards of the discipline
● Any fees or charges for publishing in the journal are easily found on the journal web site and clearly explained
● Articles have DOIs (Digital Object Identifier, e.g. doi: 10.1111/j.1742-9544.2011.00054.s)
● Journal clearly indicates rights for use and re-use of content at article level (e.g. Creative Commons CC BY license)
● Journal has an ISSN (International Standard Serial Number, e.g. 1234-5678)
● Publisher is a member of Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association
● Journal is registered in UlrichsWeb, Global Serials Directory
● Journal is listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals
● Journal is included in subject databases and/or indexes

Neutral Indicators

● Lack of impact metrics
● Geographical location of publisher
● Article Processing Charges (APCs) – there are a variety of business models
● Reputation of other journals by same publisher

Negative Indicators

● Journal website is difficult to locate or identify
● Publisher “About” information is absent on the journal’s website
● Publisher’s direct marketing (i.e. spamming) or other advertising is obtrusive
● Instructions to authors information is not available
● Information on peer review and copyright is absent or unclear on the journal website
● Journal scope statement is absent or extremely vague
● No information is provided about the publisher, or the information provided does not clearly indicate a relationship to a mission to disseminate research content
● Repeat lead authors in the same issue
● Publisher has a negative reputation (e.g. documented examples in Chronicle of Higher Education, listservs, etc.)


Think Check Submit checklist: http://thinkchecksubmit.org/check/


Neutral Indicators from How to Assess a Journal – CARL guide: http://www.carl-abrc.ca/how-to-assess-a-journal/

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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.

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

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.

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.

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

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

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 thinkcheckssubmit.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.

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