Anyone with an email address has seen more than a few scam emails. Perhaps you have received a message from a long lost relative who is reaching out about your million-dollar inheritance—all they need is your full name, address, and social security number. While this is clearly a fraud, some are less obvious because they so closely mimic legitimate requests. For example, a message from what looks like your bank with important information about your account may convince you to click on a link. Researchers who publish in academic journals receive email notifications about new journals, invitations to publish in a special section, or inclusion in conference proceedings all the time. However, not all requests are from legitimate organizations.

Digital publishing has made it easier for existing publishers to launch new journals. Members may have recently received emails that ASA and CSSA are now accepting manuscripts for a new journal, Agrosystems, Geosciences & Environment. As part of the launch, this new journal was advertised through an email campaign.

What Is a Predatory Publisher?

It starts with knowing what a predatory publisher is. Definitions vary, but generally, predatory publishers are entities that pose as scholarly journals but exist to collect money without providing the services of an established academic journal. They will collect a publication or open access fee but lack peer review, editing, archiving, and other services. When quality research is published in a questionable journal, it can discredit the work and the authors on the paper. Taking the time to look into a journal that is new to you, or not well known within your field of research, could help you avoid falling into the trap of a predatory publisher.

The journal website is the best place to start but should be taken with a grain of salt. The scope of a scholarly journal should be easy to find on the publisher’s website. Once you have reviewed the scope, read some published papers to see if they fit within the scope. When reading a paper, if you notice poor formatting and typos, it may indicate a lack of editing services. The journal should also have an ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) number, and if publishing content online, use DOIs.

Another item to check is the editorial board. You are likely to recognize names within your field—it is also good to take the additional step to check the personal/university websites of those listed as the editor or editor-in-chief to make sure they acknowledge their role with the journal. Of course, anyone can put text on a website, so a functioning webpage with open access papers is no guarantee.

When journals are indexed in a database like the Web of Science (https://clarivate.com/products/web-of-science/) or PubMed (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/), it makes content more accessible and searchable to researchers. While not all journals are indexed, inclusion in one or more of these databases is a good sign. This is because indexing services should review each journal before inclusion—checking for the number of publications, number of citations, and proof of peer review among other aspects of the workflow. While this is a good way to assess established journals, newly launched
Benefits of Publishing with ACSESS

As an author, you may have a number of different reputable publishers that you can work with, including the Alliance of Crop, Soil, and Environmental Science Societies (ACSESS). Some benefits of publishing with ACSESS include:

International Reach and Impact

The ACSESS Digital Library reaches millions of readers all around the world. Our journals are indexed in Google Scholar, Web of Science, CrossRef, Scopus, Agricola, CABI, and more.

High Quality Editorial

ACSESS publishes relevant and timely research by collaborating with Editors all over the world who are experts in their field and also active respected researchers in academia, government, and private industry.

Quality Peer Review

All of our journal and book content is peer-reviewed by our diverse international editorial boards consisting of leading experts in each specialty area. ACSESS also offers its English Language Editing Service to assist authors with style fixes, form changes, and more in-depth corrections.

Open Access Options

Seven of our 14 journals are completely open access. Our seven subscription journals all offer an open access option for publishing your research under a CC BY-NC-ND or CC BY license for a nominal fee. For the most current open access charges, please refer to the specific journal instructions to authors (https://dl.sciencesocieties.org/publications/authors).

Low Cost

Several of our journals waive page charges for the first seven pages, and Society members may qualify for a discount on some journal titles. For the most current publication charges, please refer to the specific journal instructions to authors (https://dl.sciencesocieties.org/publications/authors).

Responsive Staff

At every step of the process, the Societies staff is here to serve you. We can guide you through the submission, peer review, editing, and publishing process. Additionally, ACSESS also allows you to transfer your submitted manuscript to avoid publication delays when another ACSESS journal is a better destination. This improves time to publish and reduces the frustration of resubmitting a paper. Also, if your research is timely and noteworthy, ACSESS can offer to assist with promotion of your published research through our magazines, email, and social media.

New Journal Editors

Four Society journals will be welcoming new editors in 2019:

**Agricultural & Environmental Letters**—Tom DeSutter, North Dakota State University, Fargo, replaces Warren Dick, Ohio State University, Wooster, OH, as Editor.

**Crop, Forage & Turfgrass Management**—John Hendrickson, USDA-ARS, Northern Great Plains Research Laboratory, Mandan replaces Peter Thomison, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH as Editor.

**Urban Agriculture & Regional Food Systems**—Sarah T. Lovell, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL replaces Han Wiskerke, Wageningen University, Netherlands as Editor.

**Vadose Zone Journal**—Markus Flury, Washington State University, Puyallup, replaces Harry Vereecken, Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH, Jülich, Germany, as Editor.

journals are unlikely to be included in an index as it takes time for a new journal to meet criteria for indexing.

If the journal is open access, you can also see if the journal is part of the Directory of Open Access Journals (https://doaj.org/) or the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (https://oaspa.org/). Like the indexing services, these are not perfect lists, and there are reasons why an academic journal may not be listed. However, these are good starting points if you are considering publishing in a journal with which you are not familiar.

T. Hmielowski, Science Editor for CSA News magazine

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