

Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing

Introduction

The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE, <http://publicationethics.org/>), the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ, <http://www.doaj.org/>), the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA, <http://oaspa.org/>), and the World Association of Medical Editors (OASPA, <http://oaspa.org/>) have collaborated in an effort to identify principles (criteria) of transparency and best practice that set apart legitimate journals and publishers from non-legitimate ones. These criteria are largely derived from those developed by the Directory of Open Access Journals. The principles are available on the Web sites of all the participating organizations since December 19, 2013.

Principles of Transparency

- 1. Peer review process:** All of a journal's content, apart from any editorial material that is clearly marked as such, shall be subjected to peer review, clearly described on the journal's Web site.
- 2. Governing Body:** The full names and affiliations of the journal's editors shall be provided on the journal's Web site.
- 3. Editorial team/contact information:** Journals shall provide the full names and affiliations of the journal's editors on the journal's Web site as well as contact information for the editorial office.
- 4. Author fees:** Any fees or charges that are required for manuscript processing and/or publishing materials in the journal shall be clearly stated in a place that is easy for potential authors.
- 5. Copyright:** Copyright and licensing information shall be clearly described on the journal's Web site.
- 6. Identification of and dealing with allegations of research misconduct:** Publishers and editors shall take reasonable steps to identify and prevent the publication of papers where research misconduct has occurred, including plagiarism, citation manipulation, and data falsification/fabrication, among others.
- 7. Ownership and management:** Information about the ownership and/or management of a journal shall be clearly indicated on the journal's Web site.
- 8. Web site:** A journal's Web site, including the text that it contains, shall demonstrate that care has been taken to ensure high ethical and professional standards.
- 9. Name of Journal:** The Journal name shall be unique and not be one that is easily confused with another journal or that might mislead potential authors and readers about the Journal's origin.
- 10. Conflicts of interest:** A journal shall have clear policies on handling potential conflicts of interest of editors, authors, and reviewers and the policies should be clearly stated.
- 11. Access:** The way(s) in which the journal and individual articles are available to readers and whether there are any associated subscription or pay per view fees shall be stated.
- 12. Revenue sources:** Business models or revenue sources (eg, author fees, subscriptions, advertising, reprints, institutional support, and organizational support) shall be clearly stated on the Web site.
- 13. Advertising:** Journals shall state their advertising policy.
- 14. Publishing schedule:** The periodicity at which a journal publishes shall be clearly indicated.
- 15. Archiving:** A journal's plan for electronic backup and preservation of access to the journal content in the event a journal is no longer published shall be clearly indicated.
- 16. Direct marketing:** Any direct marketing activities, including solicitation of manuscripts that are conducted on behalf of the journal, shall be appropriate, well targeted, and unobtrusive.



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