

Disseminating Knowledge: From Potential to Reality – New Open-Access Journals Collide with Convention

**Anne-Wil Harzing
Nancy J Adler**

Version October 2014

Accepted for Academy of Management Learning & Education

Copyright © 2014 Anne-Wil Harzing, Nancy Adler

All rights reserved.

Prof. Anne-Wil Harzing
ESCP Europe
527 Finchley Road, London NW3 7BG
United Kingdom
Email: anne@harzing.com
Web: www.harzing.com

DISSEMINATING KNOWLEDGE: FROM POTENTIAL TO REALITY – NEW OPEN-ACCESS JOURNALS COLLIDE WITH CONVENTION

ABSTRACT

Scholars beware! For years, researchers have lamented the long lag times endemic in conventional academic publishing, where even the highest quality papers have often taken more than two years from initial submission to publication. Luckily, advances in digital technologies and the advent of online, open-access (OA) journals are rendering such delays obsolete. Society can now directly benefit from published research within months (and sometimes weeks) of a study being completed. Unfortunately however, open-access, online technologies are interacting with new revenue-generating business models and historic assessment systems, leading to the rise of predatory open-access (POA) journals that prioritize profit over the integrity of academic scholarship. Such interaction is leading to disruptive distortions that are systematically undermining academia's ability to disseminate the highest quality scholarship and to benefit from free, timely access.

DISSEMINATING KNOWLEDGE: AN INTRODUCTION

The primary role of scholarship is to create and to disseminate knowledge. Whereas much attention has focused on the creation of knowledge, from asking the right questions (see Adler & Hansen, 2012; Adler & Harzing, 2009; Rynes, 2007, among many others) to using appropriate methodologies (see, among many others, Gulati, 2007; McGahan, 2007; Rynes, 2007; Tushman & O'Reilly, 2007; and Vermeulen, 2007), much less attention has been paid to the diffusion of knowledge (see Starkey & Madan, 2001). What leads to the successful communication of research results both within the academic community and more broadly throughout society? Over the last decade, three central concerns have repeatedly been raised about the diffusion of knowledge: restricted availability – and thus reduced relevance – in the form of inordinately long lag times and limited accessibility, as well a shift away from content and formats that are perceived to be broadly relevant.

Inordinately long lag times refer to the long delays before social science research is published, with many scholarly articles taking more than two years from initial submission until they are published. Recently many traditional publishers have begun to use systems such as “online first” and “early view” to pre-release articles prior to official publication. Whereas such pre-release systems have substantially mitigated long lag times, they have not resolved them completely, as the review process remains lengthy. Although many journals have improved turnaround times, facilitated in part by online submission systems such as manuscript central, increasing requests for multiple revisions leave many authors continuing to experience significant delays in having their articles into publication. Given the extremely rapid rates of change now defining society, people increasingly question if some, and perhaps most, research remains as relevant and useful as it should be, and could be, by the time articles are finally published. Would not research be much more valuable if the lag times endemic to academic publishing were significantly reduced and accessibility expanded?

The second concern, restricted access, is a function of the business model that has been used in academic publishing. It refers to barriers erected by conventional publishers'

standard financial arrangements that preclude many potential readers from gaining easy access to scholarly publications (for an excellent critical analysis of this business model, see Beverungen, Böhm & Land, 2012). The current distribution system for scholarly knowledge, primarily through academic journals, is easily accessible within the academic community, especially to those in economically advantaged parts of the world, such as Europe and North America. The financial arrangements are such that universities – and some other research-focused organizations – pay significant annual subscription fees to publishers to allow their members – primarily professors – to read research articles without paying a per article download fee. Since almost all research universities with the financial means to do so pay the annual subscription fees, most scholars effortlessly obtain access to newly published research, many without even realizing that others are precluded from the same access to their work. The general public, and many scholars in economically developing regions of the world, however, are hindered from gaining equally straightforward access to scholarly knowledge by substantial per article download fees that act as financial and psychological barriers. Such a system neither serves authors– whose work is not as widely disseminated as they would like - nor the general public - that cannot easily benefit from the scholars' work. Such circumscribed access is particularly unfortunate when we remember that research is often funded through government grants that are paid for by the general public through taxation, with the ultimate intent of enhancing the general welfare. It is therefore not surprising that in several countries, including Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, mandates to publish research funded by government grants in OA journals are either under active consideration or have already been established (see Baruch, Ghobadian & Özbilgin, 2013 for a critical analysis of UK policies).

Other accusations have been levelled against the current system of dissemination for scholarly knowledge, with the most common being that the ultimate goal of dissemination (in the form of publications) has shifted from advancing knowledge and benefiting society to attempts by scholars to place their work in A-listed journals, and by journals to attain and maintain their A-listed status. Underlying such attempts is a pervasive competition aimed primarily at maximizing the number of citations that individual journals and articles garner (Adler & Harzing, 2009; MacDonald & Kam, 2009; Wilhite & Fong, 2012). Score-keeping for journals is reflected in their reported Journal Impact Factor (JIF), a statistic calculating the average number of citations received by articles in a journal for the immediate time period (two and five years for respectively the 2-year and 5-year JIF) following publication. Whereas achieving A-list status and winning the citations Olympics (as it has been informally referred to) may be fun and ultimately stature enhancing for individual scholars and journals, it is problematic as a tactic for disseminating relevant knowledge and enhancing society's well-being.

Not surprisingly, similar to other transformations being brought about in the 21st century by rapid advances in digital technology, journal publishing currently faces exciting, and potentially disruptive, challenges. Most noteworthy is the dramatic shift toward online, open-access (OA) journals. The advantages of such journals are readily apparent, as the new technologies address two major concerns that have been raised about knowledge distribution through academic publishing. Many OA journals offer extremely rapid turnaround, with articles published within months, not years, of submission, and in some cases, within weeks. In addition, OA journals, as their name

implies, do not erect financial barriers to readership. Anyone, whether university-based or a member of the general public, can read the articles without fee, as soon as they are published. This is possible because the business model used by most commercial publishers of OA journals has shifted from a subscription-based pay-for-access revenue-generation model to an author-pays-for-submission and/or pays-for-publication model.¹

Whereas the expansion of publishing to include OA dissemination would appear to be quite positive, to date, that has not always been the case. A highly problematic and controversial pattern of outcomes has emerged. This article traces those dynamics and asks how the scholarly community and society-at-large can benefit from the advances in digital technologies that have made online OA journals possible, without simultaneously undermining the quality of the scholarship being disseminated. It is, for sure, a cautionary tale and reminds us of the maxim: “Be careful what you measure” – whether that measurement is denominated in profits, A-list journal status, citations, or readership (see Lawrence 2002, 2003, and 2008 on the impact of measurement on scholarship).

In the following sections, we first document how the appearance of primarily predatory OA journals (POA) has given the quest for publications, citations, and inflated JIFs a whole new meaning. We then present both the broader potential, and contrasting current reality, of OA journals in business and management, based on an analysis of a sample of OA journals that were actively soliciting articles from management scholars during the initial phase of such journals’ entrance into the field. We conclude the article with a discussion of the broader implications of OA publishing for the field of management.

OPEN ACCESS: A SUPER-AUTHOR EMERGES

In management, OA journals are a fairly recent phenomenon. As yet, little scholarly attention has been paid to them. Whereas OA journals are more established in other disciplines, their presence in management only began to gain our attention when a management article published in an OA journal, by a relatively unknown author, became the most cited article in management for 2009. In the following years, the article’s recognition, based on citations, succeeded in eclipsing that of all articles published in conventional mainstream management journals. Given the importance of such prominent work – at least from the perspective of impact (as measured by citations), and the uniqueness of it having been published using the new OA format, it clearly signaled that it was time for the field to better understand both the underlying dynamics and potential consequences of the transition taking place.

The Publication Olympics: Competing for A-Listing

Since the beginning of the 21st century, academe has become even more involved in an intense competition among individual scholars and journals to achieve high rankings (MacDonald & Kam, 2007, among many others). The most aspired-to rankings claim to measure what is labelled as research productivity, with the definition of productivity often reduced to simply counting publications in A-listed, high-impact-factor journals.

¹ The *Directory of Open Access Journals* (DOAJ) lists 359 OA journals in business and management. Of these two-thirds do not charge any publication fees. However, with few exceptions, journals that do not charge fees are published by universities or professional associations. OA journals published by commercial publishers charge publication fees, as do all journals in our study.

Using impact factors as a component, and often a major component, of the criteria for A-listing, renders the counting the citations that articles acquire (in the set of journals that such assessment systems recognize) as critically important. The focus on citations does not simply influence one level – individual, journal, university, granting agency, etc. – but rather the influence of citation-based assessment systems is pervasive. It is against this background of an A-list ‘Publication Olympics’ that OA journals entered the field and that one author, arguably a Super-Author based on his ability to get cited, walked away with some of the competition’s top prizes.

On Becoming a Super-Author

Thomson Reuters Web of Knowledge (formerly known as ISI) is considered by many to be the premier database for citation analysis. Thomson Reuters tracks citations in journals included in its Web of Knowledge, which encompasses what is usually referred to as all ISI-listed journals. Based on the performance of all articles that a journal has published in a defined period, Thomson Reuters assigns impact factors to journals (JIF). Based on such citation counts, Thomson Reuters also reports which individual articles outperform the thousands of other academic papers that are published each year, as tracked in their Essential Science Indicators database, identifying both “Hot Papers” and “Highly Cited Papers”. “Hot Papers” are those publications that are the top 0.1% most highly cited papers among all academic articles, within the first two months following their initial publication. “Highly Cited Papers” is the designation that Thomson Reuters awards every year to recognize the top 1% most highly cited papers among all academic publications in a particular field.

By 2012, a scholar had achieved a very dominant position at the top of Thomson Reuters’ rankings. This Malaysian professor not only had one of his articles recognized as a “Hot Paper”, his publications held all five top positions in Thomson Reuter’s Essential Science Indicators’ list of the 38 “Hot Papers” in their Business and Economics category, thus giving the impression that the author was indeed a Super-Author. Moreover, Thomson Reuters, based on citation counts, awarded nine of the same Super-Author’s publications, including his five “Hot Papers”, their designation as “Highly Cited”.

Closer examination reveals that 7 of his 9 most-highly-cited articles were published in one journal, the OA journal *African Journal of Business & Management (AJBM)*. *AJBM* is one of many journals managed by Academic Journals, a commercial, Nigeria-based publisher. Not only did the Super-Author publish in *AJBM*, but he had also been one of *AJBM*’s editors. The other two of the Super-Author’s nine most-highly-cited articles were published in two other OA journals, both managed by the same publisher, Academic Journals. Far from being unacknowledged, all three journals that published the Super-Author’s most-highly-cited articles were recognized by Thomson Reuters. Unlike most new journals, which ordinarily have had to wait years to obtain ISI listing, each of these new – and as will be documented later, predatory – OA journals received ISI listing from Thomson Reuters beginning with their first issue. Each journal therefore was explicitly recognized by academia’s main ranking organization as a legitimate outlet in which to disseminate scholarly work.² As a consequence of their ISI listing, articles published in

² It is unclear why ISI listed these journals from their first issue. Such immediate acceptance would have rendered it difficult for Thomson Reuters to apply its normal evaluation standards, including assessing basic publishing standards (timeliness, international editorial conventions and peer review), editorial content, the international diversity of authorship, and citation data (see <http://wokinfo.com/essays/journal-selection->

all three journals, similar to all articles published in other ISI-listed journals, were able to gather ISI citations and were consequently included in Thomson Reuters' assessment of articles considered for its coveted "Highly Cited Papers" and "Hot Papers" designations.

It is problematic, however, to view this recognition as an equitable, and therefore as a meaningful, assessment. More accurately, it might best be considered a failure of a central governance mechanism to appropriately provide signals of quality (citation counts, SSCI listing, etc.) to the field, not just in the case of *AJBM*, but also for other new OA journals that might potentially behave similarly. By the very nature of OA journals' differentiated publication processes, articles published in most OA journals, as opposed to their conventional counterparts, differ in the ways and rates at which they can acquire citations. Articles published in most OA journals are structured to be able to gather citations much more quickly than are articles published more conventionally. This is particularly true in the case of POA journals, due primarily to the practice of such journals of publishing articles extremely rapidly and very frequently. Some POA journals publish weekly—rather than the more conventional pattern of monthly or quarterly. Moreover, by reducing lag times, many POA journals publish articles within mere weeks of submission. The Super-Author's journal (*AJBM*) fits this pattern, with weekly publication in 2012 and most of 2013. It therefore published a very large number of articles per year; 1350 articles in 2011 alone, explicitly stating on their website:

Decisions will be made as rapidly as possible, and the journal strives to return reviewers' comments to authors within a short period of time. The Editorial board will re-review manuscripts that are accepted pending revision. It is the goal of the AJBM to publish manuscripts shortly after submission.

(<http://www.academicjournals.org/journal/AJBM/authors>, accessed 12 November 2013)

AJBM also has a very high rate of within-journal citations, meaning articles published in *AJBM* are cited primarily in other articles published in the same journal. In the case of the Super-Author, nearly 100% of the articles citing his five most-highly-cited papers are other articles published in the same journal, the *AJBM*. Similarly, nearly 90% of those citing his other four articles are also from the same journal. In addition, a significant number of the Super-Author's citations are not only within-journal citations, they are self-citations from the author's other articles. Because the author published an almost unheard of 46 articles in ISI listed journals in three years, 41 of which in just two years, there was ample opportunity for self-citation. In one example of a seemingly self-serving citation-inflating practice, *AJBM*'s overall citation rate was significantly boosted by an editorial, written by the Super-Author, in which he cited more than 250 articles, all published in *AJBM*.

[process/](#) for details). The inclusion of these journals may have been a part of Thomson Reuter's regionalization initiative, which led to the addition of 1600 regional journals between 2007 and 2009 (see <http://wokinfo.com/essays/globalization-of-web-of-science/> for details). One of the publishing countries that was newly represented in the ISI database through this regional initiative was Nigeria, the country with the largest number of journals added (12) after Serbia. Thomson Reuters asserts that: "Web of Science is well known for the selectivity of its content. The Editorial Development team takes great care in maintaining quality standards in selecting both international and regional content." It appears, however, that quality criteria may have been applied differently for new journals based in certain countries or parts of the world.

OPEN ACCESS: THE POTENTIAL VERSUS THE REALITY

Whereas *AJBM*, its publisher, and the Super-Author might well be an extreme case, and their behavior is certainly not indicative of all OA journals, it is definitely not an unimportant case. As the literature suggests, extreme cases are highly valuable in revealing phenomena that are often camouflaged in less extreme, more common, and therefore more familiar circumstances (Cohen & Crabtree 2006; Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010). In the case of *AJBM* and its parent publisher, Academic Journals, the extreme behavior alerts the field to the phenomenon of questionable knowledge dissemination and publishing practices, some apparently sanctioned, at least initially, by mainstream assessment organizations, within the rapidly expanding overall category of OA journals, and particularly within the group of OA journals that have been labelled as predatory.

Predatory Open-Access Journals and Publishers

Beall (as cited in Stratford, 2012) defines predatory publishers as those “whose main goal is to generate profits rather than promote academic scholarship”. Such publishers, typically:

“spam professional email lists, broadly soliciting article submissions for the clear purpose of gaining income, have a low article acceptance threshold, with a false-front or non-existent peer review process.” (Beall, 2009)³

Such publishers, Beall advises, based on his extensive work identifying, researching, and writing about questionable OA journals, “add little value to scholarship, pay little attention to digital preservation, and operate using fly-by-night, unsustainable business models (Stratford 2012).” Beall (2010) has thus labelled journals displaying behaviors similar to those exhibited by the *AJBM* as “predatory Open Access journals”. To enable scholars to make the best choices for the publication of their work, Beall posts a continuously updated list of POA publishers on his website (see <http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/>). As of October 29th 2013, Beall’s list featured 449 publishers. Many listed publishers put out dozens of journals, with some publishing in excess of 100. One alone publishes 350 journals. As a result, scholars face a bewildering minefield of potentially POA outlets soliciting their work.

Predatory Open-Access Journals in Business and Management: The Data

To determine the situation for OA journals in our field, and especially for the commercial, POA journals that appear to dominate it, we specifically targeted predatory business and management journals. Moreover, as many OA journals in business and management currently are predatory, we made certain that they were the focus of both our sampling procedure and data analysis. We therefore collected data based on the email solicitation for papers by OA management journals and publishers, a technique identified by Beall as most commonly, although not exclusively, used by predatory publishers.

We began the data collection in 2012, when spam-like email urging recipients to submit papers to previously unknown journals began flooding management scholars’ in-boxes. In contrast to what we suspect most of our colleagues did, we neither deleted the emails

³ Quote originally appeared on Beall’s blog, on the blog platform Posterous. Posterous was bought by Twitter, which then abandoned the site and removed all content from the Internet (as confirmed by Beall in an email to the authors on November 4 2013). The issues reflected in the original quote are discussed, including quoting Beall, in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Stratford, 2012): <http://chronicle.com/article/Predatory-Online-Journals/131047/>

nor dismissed them as junk. Instead, we systematically collected such email solicitations for the initial eight months (March-October 2012) of mass solicitation, and then analyzed the characteristics of all soliciting journals that accepted papers in the broadly-defined category of business and management.

Following the eight-month data-collection period documenting the inception of the OA phenomenon in management, no additional new journals were added to the data set. However, the by-then-established pattern of OA journals and publishers soliciting management scholars continued. Like other scholars, we received email invitations from an additional 70 new journals in the following 11 months (November 2012 to September 2013). At the end of that period, each journal in the original list was re-analyzed to determine whether it had continued publishing articles.

In the initial data collection period, we identified 47 OA journals that were soliciting papers in the broadly-defined category of business and management. All but two (45 of 47) displayed predatory characteristics. The two not displaying predatory characteristics are published by Hindawi Press and Sage. Both appear to be credible ventures, with each leveraging the advantages of being open-access and online without reducing the quality of the work they publish. As will be documented in the following sections, this minority of two journals stands out from the other OA management journals in our study on a number of important dimensions, including by having editors with established publication records in fields relevant to the journal's research domain, editorial board members with credible academic credentials, authors affiliated with established universities, appropriate use of English, and transparent and accurate publisher contact information. Sampled articles from the two non-predatory OA management journals were of medium to high quality and could have been published in mid- or higher-level conventional subscription-based scholarly journals. Their email solicitations were professionally formatted and did not display the spam like characteristics of POA journals. Although articles published in these journals were not highly-cited, 20-30% had received one or more Google Scholar citations.

By contrast, all of the other 45 OA management journals displayed predatory characteristics. Thirty-six of the 45 journals displaying predatory characteristics were included on Beall's list of POA publishers and journals. Among the nine that were not on Beall's list at the time of our analysis, two had previously been included. An additional five either never succeeded in publishing any articles or had already ceased publication. All 45 POA journals in our sample charge their authors a fee for publication, ranging from US\$100 to US\$800, rather than charging universities and other organizations subscription fees similar to those charged by conventional scholarly journals.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PREDATORY OPEN-ACCESS MANAGEMENT JOURNALS

Common to the POA management journals is their search for legitimacy, use of broad content domains, inclusion of editorial board members and authors from around the world, ambiguous headquarters locations, very rapid publishing cycles, questionable quality of their review process and published articles, and low impact, as measured by citations. As will become apparent, one of the dominant characteristics of POA journals is both legitimate and dysfunctional inclusiveness, including multiple forms of international inclusiveness that are emblematic of the 21st century. Each of these distinguishing characteristics is discussed in this section.

Seeking External Recognition: Creating the Illusion of Legitimacy

All journals seek external recognition and legitimacy. New journals, whether open access or conventional, seek legitimacy as a way to attract potential authors and readers to their as yet unknown publications. Acquiring an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN), a unique 8-digit number used to identify print and electronic periodical publications, to feature on their journals is the first step taken by virtually all publishers to convey legitimacy. However, whereas an ISSN appears to convey a formal assessment, many submitting authors fail to realize that acquiring an ISSN is both easy and free. They consequently fail to appreciate that the assignment of an ISSN to a journal does not indicate any verdict as to the quality of the journal.

The most commonly acknowledged form of legitimacy for academic journals is listing in Thomson Reuter's Web of Science database (usually referred to as ISI listing). Only one journal among the sampled OA business and management journals, *AJBM*, succeeded in obtaining ISI listing. Nothing, however, stops journal editors and publishers from applying for ISI or Scopus, Elsevier's alternative to Thomson Reuter's Web of Science, listing and then publicly expressing their expectation that they will soon succeed in being listed. Indeed several POA journals in our data set used such hoped-for listings as a major selling point to create the illusion of legitimacy. One POA journal, for example, proudly announced:

Our journal is under evaluation of SCOPUS from January 2012. We are sure our monthly journal "Advances In Management" will have impact factor soon. [sic] (<http://shankargargh.org/mngmnt.aspx>, accessed 31 October 2013).

Likewise, the *International Journal of Business & Commerce* initially proclaimed:

We have also applied in many others reputable databases like PsychInfo, Scopus, ISI, Digital Libraries of many reputable universities, and Standard Periodical Directory. IJBC will soon be listed in all of them. [sic] (The statement was removed from their website, but is still listed at <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!msg/mestrado-adm-ucs/NoqErF04Tso/HA5ew296-BYJ>, accessed 31 October 2013).

This practice, at the level of journals and publishers, is equivalent to an author not differentiating between having submitted a manuscript to an A-listed journal, such as *Administrative Science Quarterly* or *Academy of Management Journal*, and having received an acceptance from the same journal. The latter takes substantial work and demonstrated competence whereas the former only necessitates a click on the send button. Illusions of legitimacy are particularly powerful when an industry is in transition, as is academic publishing, and people are searching to better understand and evaluate the new circumstances and entrants.

Domain Inclusiveness: Very Broad Scope

The vast majority of POA journals are highly inclusive. Unlike most conventional journals, they do not focus on a specific academic discipline. Conventional scholars therefore may be surprised to find research on all business and management disciplines, from accounting and business law to economics and strategy all published not only in

the same journal but co-mingled within each issue. Such broad, all-encompassing content domains, however, have become standard practice for most POA management journals, at least as represented by those in our sample. A quintessential example of the all-encompassing nature of such mission statements, in part because of its embellished language, is:

Transcending the familiar periphery of perfunctory substance, The International Journal of Management is offering to unfurl a newfangled panorama in the contemporary management study. We are rummaging around the web for progressive and clairvoyant minds for this exponential journal to focus upon various components of trade, marketing, finance, economy and behavioral study. This search can reach a culmination only with authors' as well as readers' cooperation at large. This is precisely meant to be an exploratory analysis over the given topics to stimulate the budding genius into aspiring eminent management personalities and present an international platform for interactive pleasure and argumentative progression. [sic] (<http://www.theijm.com/>, accessed 31 October 2013)

Most OA business and management journals, especially those that have been labelled as predatory, also accept papers from social science disciplines outside of business and management, including from education, economics, political science, psychology, and sociology. Some stretch even further to include archaeology, demography, linguistics, and religious studies; with a small number including an even more disparate list of disciplines. One would certainly be hard-pressed to find a topic that the *International Journal of Innovative Research & Development (IJIRD)*, for example, would consider outside of its scholarly domain:

IJIRD... is a Multidisciplinary international journal. Encouraging innovative & quality research work. This multidisciplinary journal is deliberated on diverse elemental branches of the contemporary research school, namely Science, Management, Technology and Humanities with an equal concentration in each area. The above areas are just indicative. The editorial board also welcomes innovative articles that redefine any research field. [sic] (<http://www.ijird.com/index.php/ijird/pages/view/abt>, accessed 1 October 2013)

Theoretically, there is nothing inherent to OA publishing that would require journals to maximize inclusiveness, nor is there a problem with thoughtful inclusiveness. The OA business model, however, advantages those publishers that increase the number of articles they publish, and thereby maximize revenues from the author-submission charges and publishing fees they collect. It is not surprising, therefore, to see both explicit editorial policies and implicit policies-in-action that are broadly inclusive; where inclusiveness translates into publishing all-comers without regard to thematic focus or disciplinary coherence. Whereas many top scholars are rightfully calling for greater integration and multidisciplinary in academe, the practices of POA journals, to date, do not create either. They do not expressly encourage, invite, or publish papers that incorporate multiple disciplinary perspectives within a single theoretical framework or research article. Rather, many POA journals simply include any paper from any domain that they can attract into their fee-paying submission and publication process.

Going Beyond Scholarly Leadership: Editors Lack Academic Credentials

In stark contrast to most conventional journals, two-thirds (30) of the 45 POA management journals in the sample appear to have either no editor or an editor who has failed to publish any scholarly work. Even when searching for the names of editors in a comprehensive database such as Google Scholar, which includes not only publications in all journals (including both ISI-listed and unlisted journals), but also in books, book chapters, conference proceedings, and working papers, most listed editors could not be found. Of the remaining third (15 editors), most had only a few publications, typically in either their own POA journal or in other POA journals. Most of these 15 editors also had fewer than 20 Google Scholar citations. This is in contrast to the citations rates for editors of conventional journals who typically have thousands of Google Scholar citations. For example, the current editors of the *Academy of Management Journal* (Gerard George) and the *Academy of Management Review* (Roy Suddaby) have more than 11,000 and 6,000 citations respectively. Only 5 POA editors have established credible publication records, with half a dozen or more publications in fields relevant to their specific journal. In terms of impact, only four editors had citation rates between 50 and 200 Google Scholar citations, and only one had more than 500 Google Scholar citations.

What is clear from the publishers' choices of editors for their POA journals, and the lack of academic qualifications and substantive performance records of the editors themselves, the primary goal of the journals does not appear to be the advancement of science and scholarly discourse, at least not in ways that conventional scholars would recognize as valid. Rather, the publishers' goals appear to be the maximization of revenues and thus of profits. It is important to note that whereas this problem is widespread, it is not inherently caused by the journals being open access, but rather more accurately attributed to the ways in which the new OA structure is being manipulated by a disproportionate number of the early, predatory entrants into the field.

Inclusiveness: Editorial Board Members and Authors from Around the World

POA journals, to date, appear more geographically inclusive than historically has been the case for most conventional journals. Most editorial boards at the surveyed POA journals, while drawing their members from around the world, include few members affiliated with well-known and recognized research universities. One would hope that this broader global inclusiveness reflects recognition of the 21st century's overall global integration as well as a very positive trend toward greater inclusiveness; and, in addition, that it reflects a move away from the dominance of primarily Western universities and Western-trained scholars. Perhaps, as Friedman (2005) observed, "The world is flat" – or at least flattening – even within the world of academic publishing. So far, most editors and editorial-board members, similar to the POA journals and the publishers they represent, come primarily from non-Western, economically developing countries. The surveyed POA journals typically display a distinct geographic concentration within their editorial board, e.g. with membership being predominantly African, Eastern European, Middle Eastern, or South or East Asian. Author composition typically reflects a similar pattern, with many journals showing both a global openness and a substantial concentration of authors from a single region (usually the same region as that of most editorial board members), with some additional authors coming from other primarily non-Western regions.

As *AJBM* is the only ISI-listed POA management journal, it is the only one for which it is possible to conduct a comprehensive online data-based geographical analysis of all authors without having to resort to a manual review of each individual author. ISI comprehensively reports data by journal by authors' country. Since *AJBM* was ISI listed from 2007 to 2011, it was possible to determine that half the papers it has published come from just three countries (Iran, Malaysia, and Taiwan) and another quarter from Pakistan, South Africa, and Turkey.

One of the uncontested strengths of OA journals is that they are reaching out to a much wider range of scholars than has previously been the case for conventional journals. The caveat, of course, is that such inclusiveness, at least to date, still remains defined geographically. Twenty-first century journals need to attract scholars and readers from around the world rather than primarily from particular regions or economic strata, while maintaining the highest and most rigorous standards of scholarship. To date, most early entrants into the domain of OA publishing are making progress on the former while failing at the later.

Location: Mystery Headquarters or Residents of Cyberspace

Where are most new POA journals and their editors located? Surprisingly, but perhaps only signaling that they are denizens of the digital era and therefore live in cyberspace, fully a quarter of the publishers do not reveal where they are geographically headquartered. Among those publishers not providing a location, Nigeria appears to have become the most common. Listed headquarters locations include a full range of countries, including economically advantaged countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. For many publishers and journals, however, reported headquarters locations appear to function as no more than a postal address. Figure 1, for example, shows the purported headquarters of the U.K.-based *International Journal of Arts and Commerce*: the New Image Carpets shop at (70-76 Westoe Rd, South Shields, Tyne and Wear, UK.

Figure 1: The purported headquarters of the International Journal of Arts and Commerce



A check of the publisher's (Center for Enhancing Knowledge) domain name registration and its associated name server, however, suggests strong ties with Bangladesh.⁴ The

⁴ Bohannon's (2013) research for *Science* reports a Bangladeshi name and address for publication-fee payment for another journal from the same publisher (see <http://scicomm.scimagdev.org/data/journals/44/4/Review%20Report%20B-01125.pdf>).

absence of a stated geographical location could be an artifact of the new OA journals operating online and having a global orientation. Both would augur well for the types of structures academia needs in order to host the most important 21st-century scholarly discussions. The “storefront” nature of all too many POA-journal headquarters, however, raises the possibility that the absence of an address reflects a troubling lack of transparency, and perhaps even a lack of accountability, rather than any more positive attribution.

POA journals supply even less information about the affiliation of their editors than they provide about their headquarters’ location. Nearly half of the surveyed POA journals provide no information at all about their editor’s academic affiliation. Among those reporting an affiliation for their editor, many appear to be based at universities that previously have not been known as research institutions or otherwise recognized for their tradition of scholarship. There are three notably exceptions, with journals respectively listing Stanford, the University of Glasgow, and the University of Western Ontario for their respective editors. Closer examination, however, reveals this most likely to be a subterfuge. For one of these three journals, for example, the listed name of the editor, Stephen West, appears to have been invented and his affiliation and biography appropriated from another scholar. The journal subsequently replaced Stephen West’s name as editor with that of Andrew Christopher, describing Christopher as affiliated with Anglia Ruskin University, a large university in the United Kingdom. Disconcertingly, there is no evidence of Andrew Christopher at Anglia Ruskin University, nor at any other university. Web searches for his name, rather than leading to an affiliation with Anglia Ruskin University (or any other academic institution) only lead back to his name on the *International Journal of Arts and Commerce’s* editorial board page. Despite our best attempts, we were unable to establish the veracity or otherwise of the editors for the two other journals. Many people who are listed as editors of POA journals appear to have been given very common, almost generic names (such as Jackie Chang and Herbert Simon), thus making it difficult, if not impossible, to verify their credentials. Dubious practices such as these used by some POA journals encourage potential authors and readers to presume legitimacy, including the legitimacy conveyed by an editor with recognized academic credentials and a substantial publishing record that would allow the editor to competently and professionally edit an academic journal. Alas, to date, much of the apparent legitimacy appears to be mere façade.

Very Quick Turnaround Versus Substantive Peer Review: Why Not Both?

POA journals generally publish papers within days of acceptance, thus regularly completing the whole process from submission to publication within less than a month. Quite an attractive prospect given that conventional academic journals can take from 1 to 3 years for this same process! Many authors submitting papers to POA journals are therefore attracted, at least in part, by the promise of a quick review and speedy publication. Although all surveyed POA journals claim to be peer reviewed, they more predictably deliver rapid publication. A month is the maximum time promised for an editorial decision, with many POA journals assuring authors that their papers will be reviewed within 1-3 weeks. Given how busy most scholars are, and the significant amount of time required to competently review a paper, it seems unlikely that enough knowledgeable scholars would be reliably available to instantly review the stream of papers being submitted to, and published in, these journals.

That conventional journals fail to offer authors rapid turnaround on reviewing, and ultimately on publishing, their papers is indisputable. Whereas POA journals superficially appear to have addressed and solved the delays that have retarded the dissemination of new scholarly knowledge, they appear to have done so by sacrificing quality (see the next section). Needless to say, this is neither an acceptable solution nor an appropriate trade-off. The challenge facing academia is how to significantly reduce publishing delays while maintaining quality; it is not a question of either or.

Quality of Articles Published in POA Journals: Less than What We Need

To determine the quality of articles being published in POA journals, we evaluated two randomly selected articles from each surveyed journal (among those that had actually published papers). The evaluations were conducted based on 5 standard criteria conventionally used in reviewing scholarly work: (1) quality of the literature review, (2) soundness of the methodology, (3) clarity of the argument(s) and extent to which conclusions are based on reported findings, (4) clear presentation of ideas, including overall structure and English expression, and (5) appropriate referencing. The five criteria, each of which was assessed qualitatively, were used to ensure that articles were evaluated fairly and comprehensively and to avoid a halo effect. All articles were initially assessed by a postdoc-scholar with expertise in the field of management. Subsequently, to determine the accuracy of the assessments, the first author randomly selected ten of the articles and independently rated each. The convergent validity was high, with all but one assessment being identical. The remaining assessment differed by only one rating.

Based on the evaluation, articles were given an overall score on a scale from 1 (lowest quality) to 4 (highest quality). A 1 was assigned to articles scoring so poorly on all criteria that it was judged that they should never have been published in any academic journal. In these articles, the literature review was often absent or consisted of vague references to textbook material, the methodology was likewise absent or described too incoherently to follow. Arguments in these papers were poorly constructed in awkward, sometimes indecipherable English, and referencing was inadequate. Some contained blatant plagiarism. Articles assigned a 2 were judged to have the potential, in principle, to be published in lower-level conventional academic journals, pending *major* substantive revisions to address serious shortcomings such as an inadequate literature review, methodological flaws, lack of coherence between the literature review, methods and conclusion, and/or poor writing. Articles scoring a 3 were judged to be publishable in lower-level conventional academic journals, such as in many local or regional journals, or in those with an extremely narrowly defined focus. Although they did not make a major contribution to the field, they presented an up-to-date literature review, a clearly defined research question, appropriate methods, were reasonably well written, and, pending *moderate* revisions, could potentially make a modest contribution to the literature. The highest evaluation, a 4, was reserved for those articles that, pending *moderate* revisions, were assessed to be publishable in medium or higher-level conventional academic journals, i.e. those having a strong international reputation and readership. They were well-written, integrated academic articles, with up-to-date references and methods, and had the potential to make a significant contribution to knowledge in the field. Whereas none of the sampled papers was assessed to be a 4, some were scored 3-4.

As summarized in Table 1, most articles were of very low quality. Of the 37 POA journals that had published papers by the time of the evaluation, all but nine had one or both of

their articles assessed to be a 1; that is, not of sufficient quality to be published in a scholarly journal. An example is a 3-page article published in *Advances in Management* titled “A Diagnosis Human Capital” [sic] that reads like a sermon on the power of humanity, with sentences such as:

“At the present juncture, when we have found out the real meaning of education, no wonder we are able to find out another earth and space to live in” [and] “The home lady has multitask and activities which are not to be fingered.”[sic]

The paper has no literature review, no research question, no methods, and no references. The three pages consist of seemingly random observations presented incoherently.

*Table 1: Number of OA journals at each quality level **

Article scores	Journals receiving this score
Both articles scored 1	13
One article scored 1 and the other article scored 2 (11 articles) or 3 (4 articles)	15
Both articles scored 2	2
One article scored 2 and the other article scored 3	5
Both articles scored 3 or 3-4	2

*Scoring Legend:

1 = should never have been published in any academic journal

2 = publishable in lower-level conventional academic journals, pending *major* revisions

3 = publishable in lower-level conventional academic journals, pending *moderate* revisions

4 = publishable in medium or higher-level conventional academic journals, pending *moderate* revisions

For only two journals was the assessment of both articles a 3 or 3-4. An example of the latter was a 19-page article reporting on a collaborative project on workplace affective commitment, emotional labor, and burnout, conducted by a team of researchers that was well-written, had a detailed description of methods, sound results and conclusions, and a comprehensive review with nearly 100 relevant references. With some polishing, it might have been published in a medium- to high-ranked conventional journal, rather than in the POA journal, *International Journal of Business and Management*, in which the authors chose to publish it.

Publishing low quality articles helps neither scholars nor readers. Far from advancing scholarship and its dissemination, it undermines them. Although maximizing revenue by maximizing the number of articles published unfortunately appears to have taken precedence over monitoring quality, there is no inherent reason for the quality of articles published in open access format to be low. It is therefore regrettable that “low quality” is the current norm for most management articles published in POA journals.

Availability: Where Are Those Easily Accessible Articles?

Most scholars highly value having other people read their articles. OA journals are seen as offering the advantage of easy access. Unlike conventional journals, OA journals erect no fee barriers to prevent potential readers from accessing and reading published work. Such accessibility is a legitimate expectation and a valuable advantage.

Most surveyed POA journals performed reasonably well on accessibility. The vast majority provides free, easily-downloadable, online pdf versions of accepted articles. They also provide a table of contents, or list of titles and authors of published work, in each issue, making it easy for readers to search for the articles that most interest them. Unfortunately, however, there are notable exceptions. *The International Journal of Management*, for example, provides only .rar files for entire issues, making it cumbersome for potential readers and search engines to find specific articles.

As most of these journals have only existed for a few years, it is uncertain if the present ease of accessibility will continue. Given Beall's (in Stratford, 2012) observation that POA publishers "pay little attention to digital preservation, and operate using fly-by-night, unsustainable business models", such journals, and the articles they publish, may be "Here today and gone tomorrow". For POA journals that go under, it will likely become impossible to access their previously published research, thus robbing authors – and their institutions - of evidence that their publications ever existed.⁵

Scholars, of course, want their work to be easily found by others searching for them or for the topics they are working on. We therefore attempted to verify which POA journals in our sample could be found in Google Scholar, by far the most comprehensive search engine available for academic publications. Disappointingly, nearly two-thirds (28) of the surveyed POA journals could not be found using standard Google Scholar searches, thus revealing that the "open access" aspect of many of the new online journals is, at best, tenuous. In most cases, scholars would only be able to find an author's publication if they previously knew the exact title of the article. Alternatively, if they did not know the exact title, but knew the journal, they could browse every issue on the journal's website until, if they were lucky, they found the particular scholar's article or topic. Needless to say, this time consuming process is neither attractive nor feasible for most scholars.

Among the remaining 17 journals, only seven (three of which were published by the same publisher, Sciedu Press) appear to have received comprehensive coverage in Google Scholar. Among the remaining ten surveyed journals that were not comprehensively covered by Google Scholar, it was only possible to find incidental articles and/or Google Scholar's coverage had stopped in recent year(s), even though the journal had continued publishing. Whereas this pattern of lack of coverage by Google Scholar might be due, in part, to limitations or regional biases in Google Scholar's approach, Google Scholar does offer fairly comprehensive coverage of journals with conventionally structured websites. Whether the reason for Google Scholar's lack of coverage is attributed to Google Scholar or to the journals and their publishers, the

⁵ Some POA journals appear to be "gaming the system" by presenting their journals as if they are more accessible, and their articles more frequently read, than they actual are. The *Journal of Business & Financial Affairs (JBFA)*, for example, reports that each of the pdf files of their articles (for which there are download statistics) has been downloaded exactly 3723 times, regardless of when the particular article was published over the 20 month period from February 2012 to October 2013. Whereas such high reported download counts are likely to attract authors to consider publishing in the *JBFA*, the chances of these overly consistent statistics being accurate are extremely low. No journal, whether conventional or online, experiences such predictably consistent downloads. Rendering the journal's reported download statistics even more problematic, a click on the pdf download link for the first 2 issues leads the would-be reader not to a copy of the article, but rather to the notice "page not found", revealing that the articles most likely have never been downloaded at all.

result is the same: authors and their work, in most cases, are difficult to find using standard academic search procedures.

Getting Cited: Most Open-Access Articles Fail to Influence Future Scholarship

Are articles published in POA journals influencing future scholarship? Academic influence is traditionally measured by the number of citations articles receive. The expectation is that papers published in OA journals could potentially receive more citations than those published in conventional journals (see Harnad & Brody, 2004; Norris, Oppenheim & Rowland, 2008). Is this expectation accurate for POA management journals? Given that only one journal in the sample was listed in ISI or Scopus (*AJBM*), these databases cannot be used to determine overall citations rates for the surveyed journals. Alternatively, the most comprehensive academic search engine, Google Scholar, had to be relied on to establish citation counts. To give articles the maximum time (within this study) to accumulate citations, citation searches were performed in late September 2013. As has been indicated previously, even with its more comprehensive coverage, only 17 of the surveyed journals were included in Google Scholar, of which ten received inconsistent coverage. It is therefore not surprising that most articles published in these ten journals received very few citations, and thus, at least based on citation counts, are failing to influence the work of future scholars.

The average number of citations per article in POA journals is much lower than in conventional journals. Of the seven journals with comprehensive Google Scholar coverage, two had only a minimal number of citations. Three journals had between 150 and 400 lifetime citations, translating into an average of 0.5 to 1 citation per article. The remaining 2 POA journals (*International Journal of Business & Management* and *AJBM*) received a substantial number of citations (2800 to 4700). However, as these journals published approximately 2,000 to 4,000 articles respectively, their per article citation rates remain low (approximately one citation per article) and thus similar to those of the other surveyed POA journals. Most articles published in POA journals received no citations at all. Further investigation revealed that most citations were self-citations by the author(s) who had written the particular article. Moreover, a disproportionate number of the citations were from articles in other POA journals, conference proceedings, and/or working paper series; not from articles published in conventional journals.

One might argue that evaluating the citation rates of young journals is unfair as citations take time to accumulate and therefore generally have a significant lag time. This caveat, however, is probably more applicable to conventional journals than to OA journals, due to the former's inordinately long delays between submission and publication. Given that POA journals promise and deliver extremely fast turnaround, citations conceivably can start accumulating much more rapidly than for conventionally published articles. As articles in POA journals appear to be cited primarily in other articles published in the same fast-cycle online world, citations, at least hypothetically, could start accumulating almost immediately after publication (Gargouri et al., 2010).

Contradicting the expectation of a citation advantage for OA journals and thus by extension POA journals, articles published in conventional journals, even with their long review-delays and slow publication processes, still produce much higher citation rates in Google Scholar than did the surveyed POA articles published in the same time period. As reported in September 2013, articles published in the *Academy of Management*

Journal, for example, for the period 2007-2012, averaged nearly 70 cumulative Google Scholar citations per article. The *International Journal of Business & Management* and *AJBM* began publishing in 2006 and 2007 respectively; for articles published in the same period, 2007-2012, the average cumulative citation rates were approximately one citation per article. Admittedly, *Academy of Management Journal* is an established, top-ranked journal, but even much lower ranked conventional journals average significantly more citations. The *European Management Journal* (typically ranked as a B or C journal), for example, averages more than 20 cumulative Google Scholar citations per article over the same time period.

FALL FROM GRACE: NO LONGER A SUPER-AUTHOR

Whereas it was disconcerting to discover that Thomson Reuters, the leading accrediting organization for academic journals, had given its ISI listing to a POA journal (*AJBM*) from its first issue (an acknowledgement that is rarely, if ever, given to new conventional journals), Thomson Reuters rescinded its accreditation in 2012 and delisted *AJBM*, as well as the other journals it had listed from the same publisher. Hence, no new articles have been added to Thomson Reuter's Web of Science from *AJBM* since January 2012. In addition, the Super-Author's "celebrated" articles no longer appear on the Essential Science Indicators Highly Cited Papers and Hot Papers lists as of Thomson Reuters' May 2012 update. A year later, Academic Journals was one of four publishers officially blacklisted by the Malaysian government as a warning to Malaysian scholars not to publish in their journals (see http://mjoc.uitm.edu.my/v1/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=70&Itemid=64). Even with such public sanctions, *AJBM* has continued to attract and to publish large numbers of papers. Although the total number of pages published annually peaked in 2011 at 13,579, *AJBM* continued publishing weekly issues, with a total of 12,100 published pages in 2012. The weekly issues continued uninterrupted in 2013; although, the number of published pages decreased precipitously (to less than 5,000).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Technology and the disruptions it brings are here to stay. The major questions are: will the field recognize the potential that OA journals offer and leverage it to its advantage? Or will the field try to simply ignore, or dismiss, OA journals, and as a result, both fail to take advantage of their potential and be undermined by their current destructive dynamics. At this early stage, as OA online technology begins to disrupt historic publishing patterns in business and management, the story could unfold in either direction – for good or bad. In the article, we reviewed both possible outcomes: the potential for beneficial developments as well as for an unfortunate future littered with the dysfunction of current reality. We presented a unique individual case documenting what can, and has, gone wrong; a case that highlight the impact of a Super-Author and a journal that succeeded in eluding current governance mechanisms and processes for quality control. We then presented a much broader perspective, based on data collected from 47 early entrants into the field of online OA publishing in business and management. Disappointingly, most of the surveyed early entrants are predatory. The majority are neither enhancing the field nor the authors who publish in them. Hence, we conclude by offering some caveats, in hopes that management scholarship and society can benefit from the digitally-enhanced opportunities that are now available, many for the first time in history, in the opening decades of the 21st century.

Whereas it is tempting to discard POA journals as no more than a transient, aberrant phenomenon and to reject the Super-Author as an extreme or idiosyncratic case, both would be false conclusions. Both signal that established governance mechanisms in academic publishing are failing to adequately manage the disruptions taking place due to new, primarily digital, technological developments. Although Thomson Reuters, historically the central governance organization, eventually rescinded the recognition (ISI listing) it had given to some highly questionable journals, including *AJBM*, its choices, if anything, underscore the field's need for new governance mechanisms to rapidly assess the increasingly diverse array of publishers and journals now coming online. Exacerbating the situation, past errors, even when rectified, continue to distort the future. Even though Thomson Reuters delisted *AJBM* and withdrew the questionable recognition they had given to the Super-Author by awarding their Hot Papers and Highly Cited Papers designation, Thomson Reuters continues to count ISI citations from delisted POA journals, not only for the Super-Author but also for other authors for the years in which the now delisted POA journals were, in fact, ISI listed.

In addition, even though Google Scholar's coverage of POA journals, to date, is sparse and uneven, some authors publishing in such journals have acquired thousands of Google Scholar citations. Clearly, just this one technological disruption to conventional academic publishing – the introduction and rise of OA and POA journals – threatens to seriously undermine the credibility of citation counts, a central measure of influence (often misunderstood to be a quality assessment) used in assessing academic publications. By consequence, such behavior puts in question whether established governance mechanisms and measures to document, and thus guarantee, quality and influence, will work, not just for the new OA journals but also, by implication, for all academic publishing in the 21st century, a century that is guaranteed to have not just one, but multiple highly influential technological innovations and disruptions.

Not surprisingly, the consequences of POA publishing are being compounded by other current societal trends. For example, the trend toward an increasingly flat, globally integrated world, with more scholars than previously entering academia from parts of the world that historically have been severely underrepresented. In many economically less developed and transitional economies, including in such large and important economies as China and India, universities increasingly provide strong incentives to scholars to publish in peer-reviewed journals (see e.g. Shao & Shen, 2011). It is hoped that most researchers receiving conventional socialization as scholars will recognize solicitation emails from POA journals and simply ignore them. However, the fact that the behavior of certain POA journals (such as *AJBM*) initially even misled Thomson Reuters demonstrates that it is highly likely that even some traditionally trained scholars will also be deceived. As we have documented, some POA journals have published hundreds (and others, thousands) of articles. Such prolific publication would not have occurred if a substantial number of management scholars had not been convinced that POA journals were a legitimate outlet for publication. Whereas it might be easy for more established European and North American scholars to view this phenomenon as primarily a problem for researchers who are newer to the field and/or working in less developed economies, they are both wrong and, in all too many cases, arrogantly wrong. The proof is in the fact that among POA management journals, there are publishers and articles written by scholars from the most economically privileged countries, including

Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United States, and a range of Western European countries.

Most traditional research universities are unlikely to “count” publications in POA or even legitimate OA journals as they typically use highly restrictive lists of preferred publication outlets, a practice that, for other reasons, we deplore (see Adler & Harzing, 2009). Nonetheless, a benefit of such journal lists is that academics at such universities would rarely consider publishing in non-listed journals, which would currently exclude all POA journals. Conversely, scholars at universities that include a wider range of acceptable research outlets might fail to distinguish legitimate new OA journals from those that are predatory. We therefore offer the following recommendations to both individual scholars and research organizations (including universities, publishers, granting agencies, etc.). As an individual scholars, before you consider a journal that is new to you, or submit a paper to such a journal, we recommend that you:

- **Avoid journals on Beall’s List;** if a journal is on Beall’s list, it is almost certainly a POA journal. Beall’s list of POA journals/publishers, which is regularly updated, can be found at: <http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/>
- **Check the editor’s and editorial board’s publication records;** if either the editor or the editorial board fails to have a credible publication record related to the journal’s content domain, avoid the journal; it is unlikely to be of high quality and might well be a POA journal.
- **Reject journals whose articles cannot be found in Google Scholar;** although Google Scholar’s listings of academic output is not fully comprehensive, most legitimate journals are found there. If you publish in such a journal, no one will be able to find or use your work.
- **Assess the quality of several previously published articles from the OA journal’s website;** given that OA journals are new, conduct some due diligence. All journal editors occasionally make selection errors, but if more than an incidental article is of very low quality, the journal is likely to be a POA journal and should be avoided.

Finally, as with any scam, remember that, “If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.” Organizations should base their assessments on similar caveats to those suggested above to individual scholars. Perhaps more importantly for research organizations, it is critical that you base your assessment on the quality of the individual article and not make assumptions, good or bad, based on the journal in which the article is published.

Our review revealed that although most articles published in POA journals are of very low quality, there were a number of exceptions. The authors of these higher quality articles might be the ultimate victims of POA publishing as their valid contributions are rendered almost invisible by having chosen a POA journal as their outlet for publication. Moreover, given the wide-spread, and yet extremely unfortunate, pattern of most promotion and tenure committees of making decisions based on the journal in which an article is published, rather than on the quality of the article itself, high quality articles published in POA journals are unlikely to be credited to the author’s publication record, leaving the author vulnerable to being negatively assessed for having failed to produce sufficient evidence of research competence and productivity.

Whereas this article focuses on POA business and management journals, there is no reason to believe that the described phenomena are unique to this one field. Far from it! A recent experiment by *Science* journalist John Bohannon (2013) reported that more than half of the 304 OA journals to which he submitted a fatally flawed bogus article in the field of medicine accepted the article without question or requests for substantive revisions, and often seemingly without any peer review. What appears to be unique is that, although credible OA journals with rigorous standards and peer review, such as PLOS (*Public Library of Science*) and *Biomed Central*, both founded in 2000, are already well established in medicine and the sciences, the same is not yet true in business and management. As a result, scholars in business and management might start to associate open access primarily with predatory journals, thus become dismissive of OA journals in general, a clear case of the good being thrown out with the bad.

Fortunately, there are a number of encouraging developments. Although not focused strictly on business and management, a recent exception is *Sage Open*, a journal that accepts papers in the full range of social and behavioral sciences and the humanities, including business and management, for a fairly low submission fee of \$99 per article. Although this innovative initiative is much appreciated by many scholars, it has not yet proven that a journal that publishes such a wide range of articles (from anthropology to computer science and from nursing to management) will become central to the reading lists of typical business and management scholars. Taking a more focused strategy than that of *Sage Open*, new OA journals in business and management that appear quite rigorous, such as *Tamara* and *ephemera*, have already come online.

Another emerging trend is the increasing number of high-quality, conventional management journals that have begun to offer authors the opportunity to publish individual articles in an OA format. Because these same journals are continuing to charge substantial subscription fees, many observers question if their new OA option is not simply another way for them to increase revenues and profits. Given that such conventional journals are charging fairly substantial OA publishing fees, approximately \$3000 per article, few scholars, to date, have chosen this option. A review of five top management journals published by commercial publishers (*British Journal of Management*, *Strategic Management Journal*, *Journal of Management*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, and *Organization Science*) revealed only one article, among the 326 articles published in 2013, chose the OA option. Our prediction is that the tepid interest will change only once publishers reduce their fees, government funding agencies assess the fees to be reasonable and more consistently subsidize their payment, and scholars both become more aware of the advantages of OA publishing and perceive the cost structure to be reasonable.

There are several ways in which our research could be extended. We sampled OA journals through the collection of unsolicited email, which, not surprisingly, revealed a large number of POA journals. Future studies could draw samples from the Directory of Open Access journals to assess the extent to which journals included in this fairly comprehensive database display either predatory or non-predatory characteristics. Second, longitudinal studies could investigate the longevity of both OA and POA journals and identify common factors leading to sustained open-access online success. Third, further research into the quality and impact of articles published in OA management journals could verify, and potentially alleviate, the concern that most work published in

such journals is of low quality. Finally, a survey of academics who have published in POA journals could uncover their motivations for publishing in such journals and discover how satisfied they are with their experience.

We urge the leading scholarly management associations, such as the Academy of Management, Asian Academy of Management, and the European Group on Organization Studies, to support the publication of high-quality OA journals that offer the types of high-quality scholarship and broad accessibility that are most needed in the 21st century. It is clear, however, that we need new governance mechanisms to control and guarantee the quality of such new publishing options. Governance mechanisms, whether provided by the existing organizations or new entities, need to establish fair and accurate procedures for assessing the quality of journals, articles, and authors, and thus establishing their reputations. More than 500 scholarly associations from a wide range of academic disciplines – but not yet from management – have assessed the aberrations and misleading implications in the conventional reporting and evaluation of scholarly work to be so serious that they have banded together, across disciplines, to create and become signatories to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment calling for immediate and comprehensive change (<http://am.ascb.org/dora/>).

These organizations need to carefully consider the modifications needed to equitably carry out their function in a world transitioning from conventional to open-access and other forms of digitally-enhanced publishing. There is no question that most individual scholars, their universities, relevant research granting organizations, and government agencies would likely be more than willing to pay reasonable submission and publication fees for publication in good quality OA journals. As we review patterns in the dissemination of scholarly knowledge in business and management, it becomes increasingly clear that not only are the modes of dissemination in transition, but also the business models that support them and the accrediting organizations that legitimize them. As with other significant societal transitions, it is important that those who care the most about scholarship carefully observe the patterns and continually seek to reinforce those practices that lead to the widest possible dissemination of high quality scholarship.

REFERENCES

- Adler, N.J. & Hansen, H. 2012. Daring to Care: Scholarship that Supports the Courage of Our Convictions. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 21(2): 128-139.
- Adler, N.J. & Harzing, A.W. 2009. When Knowledge Wins: Transcending the Sense and Nonsense of Academic Rankings. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 8(1): 72-95.
- Baruch, Y., Ghobadian, A., & Özbilgin, M. 2013. Open Access—the Wrong Response to a Complex Question: The Case of the Finch Report. *British Journal of Management*, 24(2): 147-155.
- Beall, J. 2009. Bentham Open. *The Charleston Advisor*, 11(1): 29-32.
- Beall, J. 2010. “Predatory” Open-Access Scholarly Publishers. *The Charleston Advisor*, 11(4):10-17

- Beverungen, A., Böhm, S., & Land, C. 2012. The poverty of journal publishing. *Organization*, 19(6): 929-938.
- Bohannon, J. 2013. Who's Afraid of Peer Review? *Science* 4 October 2013: 342(6154): 60-65.
- Cohen D. & Crabtree, B. 2006. Qualitative Research Guidelines Project. July: <http://www.qualres.org/HomeExtr-3808.html>
- Friedman, T. 2005. *The World is Flat*. New York, Thomas, Strauss and Giroux.
- Gargouri, Y., Hajjem, C., Larivière, V., Gingras, Y., Carr, L., Brody, T., & Harnad, S. 2010. Self-selected or mandated, open access increases citation impact for higher quality research. *Plos one*, 5(10): e13636.
- Gulati, R. 2007. Tent poles, tribalism, and boundary spanning: the rigor-relevance debate in management research. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(4): 775-782.
- Harnad, S., & Brody, T. 2004. Comparing the impact of open access (OA) vs. non-OA articles in the same journals. *D-lib Magazine*, 10(6).
- Lawrence, P.A. 2002. Rank injustice: The misallocation of credit is endemic in science. *Nature*, 415 (February 21): 835-836.
- Lawrence, P.A. 2003. The politics of publication: Authors, reviewers, and editors must act to protect the quality of research. *Nature*, 422 (March 20): 259-261.
- Lawrence, P.A. 2008. Lost in publication: How measurement harms science. *Ethics in Science and Environmental Politics*, 8(1): 1-3.
- Macdonald, S., & Kam, J. 2007. Ring a Ring o'Roses: Quality Journals and Gamesmanship in Management Studies. *Journal of Management Studies*, 44(4): 640-655.
- McGahan, A. M. 2007. Academic research that matters to managers: On zebras, dogs, lemmings, hammers, and turnips. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(4): 748-753.
- McGrath, R. G. 2007. No longer a stepchild: How the management field can come into its own. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(6): 1365-1378
- Mills, A.J.; Durepos, G. ; & Wiebe, E. 2010. *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*. Sage Research Methods. Sage: <http://srmo.sagepub.com/view/encyc-of-case-study-research/n142.xml>
- Norris, M., Oppenheim, C., & Rowland, F. 2008. The citation advantage of open-access articles. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 59(12): 1963-1972.

- Rynes, S.L. 2007. *Academy of Management Journal* editor's forum on research with relevance to practice. Editor's foreword: Carrying Sumantra Ghoshal's Torch: Creating More Positive, Relevant, and Ecologically Valid Research. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(4): 745-747.
- Rynes, S.L, Giluk, T. & Brown, K.G. 2007. The Very Separate Worlds of Academic and Practitioner Periodicals in Human Resource Management: Implications for Evidence-Based Management. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(5): 987-1008.
- Shao, J., & Shen, H. 2011. The outflow of academic papers from China: Why is it happening and can it be stemmed. *Learned Publishing*, 24: 95-7.
- Starkey, K., & Madan, P. 2001. Bridging the relevance gap: aligning stakeholders in the future of management research. *British Journal of Management*, 12(s1), S3-S26.
- Stratford, M. 2012. 'Predatory' Online Journals Lure Scholars Who Are Eager to Publish. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 4, available at: <http://chronicle.com/article/Predatory-Online-Journals/131047/>, accessed 12 September 2014.
- Tushman, M., & O'Reilly, C. III 2007. Research and relevance: Implications of Pasteur's quadrant for doctoral programs and faculty development. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(4): 769-774.
- Vermeulen, F. 2007. I shall not remain insignificant: Adding a second loop to matter more. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(4): 754-761.
- Wilhite, A. W., & Fong, E. A. 2012. Coercive citation in academic publishing. *Science*, 335(6068): 542-543.