

Predatory Conferences on the Rise

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Many academics have been pawned by predatory elements in scholarly publishing—predatory journals or conferences. These appear to be similar to legitimate academic journals or conferences and [exploit the need](#) of academics to publish and share their work. An invite to present at an international conference suggests that your work has significance and impact in the relevant research area. It is one of the parameters in assessing research profile when deciding on promotion or tenure of researchers. These conference organizers often dupe attendees by charging a huge amount of fees. Predatory conferences now [outnumber legitimate conferences](#).

Researchers can identify predatory conferences by observing following [red flags](#). For one, within a single session, speakers may address many topics. For example, you could hear a talk on crop rotation, a macroeconomic model, and a study of Baroque music. This means that instead of interacting with people working in a relevant field, researchers become stuck in a room with people who may have no interest in their work.

Another red flag is the [conference organizer](#). It is not uncommon for predatory conference organizers to have many different conferences on the same date and in the same location. Organizers may also have conferences running on almost every day of

the year.

These conference organizers do not use peer review process in their abstract selection process. This means that an abstract has a very short turnaround time and acceptance takes place in as little as 24 hours. A predatory conference organizer may also invite speakers from irrelevant backgrounds. For instance, a cardiologist keynote speaker at a conference on plant virology. The organizer does not have interest in the content quality but rather in collecting fees for the conference attendance.

A predatory conference invitation email is usually flattering and written in poor English. For example, "XYZ Group has acknowledged you as a world-class expert capable of providing deep insight into the latest developments in Radiology and Imaging."

What is a Predatory Conference Like?

A British cybersecurity expert was [recently duped](#) by a predatory conference organizer. When he arrived at the 19th International Conference on Political Psychology in Denmark, he realized the fraud. The conference consisted of three hours of talks over two days. He observed fewer than 10 people in the single room where the conference took place. During the conference, he heard talks on robotics, Islamic finance, and solar energy. It seemed that many "conferences" took place in the room.

The conference fee was £400 and organized by the World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology (Waset) that boasts of hosting 183 events in 2018 alone on its website. Each event will actually host about 320 "conferences" simultaneously.

James McCrostie, associate professor at Daito Bunka University, Japan also highlighted the point that researchers should also spend time to research about the conference to avoid such traps. He stated, "Scholars seem to spend more time considering the timing and location of a conference than doing basic research into the organisation behind it." In fact, [several criteria for identifying predatory conferences](#) have been proposed by publishing experts.

It is indeed important to create awareness about predatory conferences among researchers. Next time you are considering going to a conference, thoroughly search about the conference organizer. Are they hosting a large number of conferences every year? Do they host conferences in very different research areas? Have they asked you to speak at a conference which is outside your area of expertise? Are there hidden conference fees? If yes, you may be better off not going.

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