

Description

What is a Hijacked Journal?

After [open access](#) lowered publishing costs, threw the peer review process into complete turmoil, and made the latest research accessible worldwide, it wasn't long before researchers were confronted with the plague of [predatory publishers](#)!

Such ill-intentioned publishers have a common modus operandi. They launch author-pay journals that are very closely related to established quality journals, and thus lure in novice researchers who are eager to get their research published.

It was only a matter of time before some nefarious publishing companies would do away with the aggravation of publishing a fake journal altogether and simply focus on the website of a legitimate journal that is under-used or poorly managed. Why not just set-up a better looking website, solicit manuscript submissions on the author-pay model, and simply pocket the money?

As an example, [Scholarly Open Access](#) maintains a database of suspected hijacked journals. Compare the authentic journal of earth sciences in Iceland, [Jökull](#), and it's suspected hijacker, [The Jökull Journal](#). At least the authentic site took steps to warn potential customers about the hijacked site.

Perpetrators Use Highly Sophisticated Tactics

Most of the companies that pursue this apparently lucrative business are, not surprisingly, based in offshore locations, making them extremely hard to track down, let alone serve them any kind of cease and desist warnings.

In the example above, the hijacked site has the *.com URL, which conveys greater legitimacy on the web. Even though the authentic site is by no means amateur or antiquated in it's design, the fact remains that search engines will give priority to *.com websites as being legitimate, unless they are given reason otherwise. In addition, the designers of the hijacked site were smart enough to make their fake site look more like an old academic site rather than trying to beat the contemporary design of the legitimate site.

If you were a new researcher looking to get your research published on the world stage, would you know the difference between *Jökull* and *The Jökull Journal*? Is there anything on the fake site to make you suspicious?

Do the Research Journals Bear Any Responsibility Here?

The fact that sites can be hijacked with *.com web addresses clearly suggests that many journals treat their websites as calling cards rather than critical marketing tools. Established journals that still only deliver print editions, however narrow their target market niche may be, are simply asking to be hijacked. At the very least, assign someone in your company to do regular web searches and set up a

Google Alert so that you can be notified of any new web presence that bears your name.

As for the novice researchers who trustingly send off their money in the excitement of seeing their name in a research journal, there are only two words: *caveat emptor*.

Category

1. Publishing Research
2. Submitting Manuscripts

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