Predator and Prey: A Study in the Prevalence of Articles Originally Published by “Predatory Publishers” in an Institutional Repository

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The Issue
Academics publishing articles in journals of dubious quality, often published by "predatory publishers," is becoming an increasing problem. In the summer of 2015, a group of IPFW faculty members, concerned about the problem, approached the IPFW Helmke Library about examining the issue as manifested within Opus, our institutional repository.

Major Faculty Concerns
• Effect on departmental reputation—“guilt by association”
• Fear that having their articles listed in a repository next to articles from dubious journals might taint their reputation—“guilt by association”
• Professors earning promotion and tenure via questionable means
• Concern for the academic and professional futures of graduate students unwittingly accepting co-authorship credit on articles published in “predatory journals”
• Concern for the Open Access Movement and the danger of open access being equated with poor quality and “predatory”

Methodology
• Requested full report of repository content from bepress (a “snapshot”)
• Assigned Assistant to go through all journal articles to determine publishers—priority given to those departments expressing concern
• Compared publishers of articles in repository against Beall’s List (https://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/), noting caveats
• All articles from publishers deemed “predatory” double-checked by Scholarly Communications Librarian
• Compiled confidential report of data by individual, department, and school for administrators

Results in Brief
• Problem considerably smaller than initially feared
• Problem confined to only a few individuals and departments
• There were repeat offenders