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Review Article

Renaming the Problem: Why 'Non-Recommended Journals' Is Preferable To 'Predatory' in Academic Publishing

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Abstract

The term "predatory journals" is widely used to describe publishing practices that exploit authors, compromise research quality, and mislead readers. Its use, however, has frequently led to legal threats and professional conflicts for individuals and institutions who call out such deceptive practices. Most notably, Jeffrey Beall, the creator of Beall's List, faced legal threats and personal harassment, which ultimately led him to discontinue his work. To address these challenges, scholars have proposed replacing "predatory journals" with more neutral alternatives, such as "questionable journals". This study recommends using the term "non-recommended journals," which similarly avoids accusatory language while signaling the need for caution by scholars and institutions. By avoiding direct allegations of unethical conduct, the term "non-recommended" reduces the likelihood of legal repercussions and professional disputes. Adopting this terminology enables researchers and institutions to continue addressing concerns about low-quality or deceptive publishing practices while fostering a more constructive dialogue. This reframing encourages constructive dialogue, broader institutional engagement, and stronger collective efforts to uphold high ethical publishing standards and protect academic integrity.

1. Introduction

Since the 1990s, scholarly publishing has undergone a significant transformation from a subscription-based print model to a digital, open-access framework [1]. However, this shift has been accompanied by the rise of unethical and deceptive publishing practices [2]. Predatory journals, typically operating on a 'pay-to-publish' model, exploit the open-access system primarily for financial gain, prioritizing profit for their editor–owners rather than maintaining scholarly integrity [3].

In 2019, a panel of scholars and publishers from ten countries established a consensus definition of predatory publishing aimed at protecting the integrity of scholarly communication. According to this definition, predatory journals and publishers

are “Entities that prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are characterized by false or misleading information, deviation from best editorial and publication practices, a lack of transparency, and/or the use of aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation practices” [4]. Such journals often employ unethical practices, including persistent and unsolicited requests for submissions, inadequate or entirely absent peer review despite claims to conduct it, opaque or excessive publication charges, and poor editorial or technical standards. Most importantly, their failure to ensure rigorous peer review threatens the credibility and trustworthiness of the scientific record [4].

The impact of these journals extends across a broad spectrum of researchers, affecting not only readers and early-career, inexperienced, or uninformed scholars, particularly those from developing nations and high- to upper middle-income countries, but also well-established academicians [5,6]. In response, various blacklists, whitelists, and institutional guidelines have been developed to help researchers identify these journals.

The continued use of the term "predatory journals" has created conflicts and legal challenges for individuals and organizations addressing these practices. Jeffrey Beall, a librarian at the University of Colorado, curated "Beall's List," a compilation of potential predatory open-access publishers [3]. In 2013, the OMICS Publishing Group, featured on this list, threatened Beall with a 1 billion $ defamation lawsuit, leading him to feel "personally threatened" [7]. Similarly, the Canadian Center of Science and Education accused him of defamation, labeling his list as "actionable libel" and challenging his recommendations against engaging with certain publishers [3].

Importantly, Beall faced online harassment, including websites that attacked his character, labeling him an "academic terrorist" and making unfounded personal accusations [8]. Institutions such as the University of Montreal and initiatives like Cabells Predatory Reports have also faced lawsuits and threats. To mitigate these conflicts, we support the proposal of Kakamad et al. in the 18th general assembly of the European Association of Science Editors (EASE) to replace the term "predatory journals" with "non-recommended journals" [9].

In this article, we examine the historical and linguistic evolution of the term “predatory”, evaluating its institutional and ethical implications, and propose “non-recommended” journals as a pragmatic and defensible alternative. By analyzing the trajectory of terminology and policy responses, we argue that adopting more neutral language can help to protect academic integrity while reducing legal and reputational risks.

2. The Evolution of "Predatory": From Plunder to Modern Exploitation

The term "predatory" is deeply associated with exploitation and harm, evolving from its original meaning of physical plundering to its modern usage across various domains, including finance, publishing, and interpersonal interactions. The word "predatory" originates from the Latin "praedator," meaning "plunderer," which comes from "praedare" ("to plunder") and "praeda" ("prey"). Its earliest documented use in English dates to the late 1580s, describing acts of plundering or pillaging. This establishes its historical link to aggressive acquisition and territorial violation. By the 1660s, the term extended to zoology, describing animals that "habitually prey upon other animals." This shift expanded its meaning beyond human acts of looting to natural behaviors in the animal kingdom [10, 11].

The related term "predation" first appeared in the late 15th century as "predacioun," meaning "act of plundering," from the Latin "praedationem" ("a plundering") and "praedari" ("to rob"). The word "predator," specifically referring to an animal that preys on others, entered English in 1862. This relatively late adoption suggests a growing interest in the scientific study of animal behavior. Wiktionary traces "predator" back to the Latin "praedātor," meaning "loot" or "pillage." The word "prey" has an equally long history, dating to the mid-13th century as "preie," meaning "animal hunted for food." It was also used metaphorically to describe "souls captured by Satan" or "goods taken in war," stemming from the Old French "preie" and Latin "praeda," meaning "booty" or "game hunted." This linguistic evolution reinforces the concept of exploitation inherent in the term "predatory" [11, 12]

In modern times, "predatory" has expanded to describe unethical or exploitative practices in multiple fields. "Predatory lending" refers to abusive loan terms imposed on vulnerable borrowers, while "predatory pricing" describes pricing strategies intended to eliminate competition. Vocabulary.com defines a predator as "an animal that eats other animals, or people or companies who act like they do," illustrating its figurative application [13, 14].

One of the most significant contemporary uses of "predatory" is in academic publishing. Initially coined by Beall in 2010 [15,16].

3. Tracing the Origins of Predatory Publishing

The issue of what is now recognized as predatory publishing was first addressed as early as 2008. For instance, Gunther Eysenbach wrote a blog post [17], and Katharine Sanderson published an article [18], both discussing the prevalence of low-quality and potentially fraudulent publishing practices. They described such publishers using terms like "black sheep among open-access publishers" [17,18].

Beall’s early works on predatory publishing, all published in the Charleston Advisor, examined and analyzed several publishers. Of the 18 publishers discussed, only one was not categorized as predatory. In his first paper [19], Beall focused on Bentham Open, detailing its practices, such as charging membership and article processing fees, indexing methods, and search functionality on its website. He pointed out that Bentham Open published 236 journals, most of which featured articles that Beall deemed of low quality, suggesting they would likely not have been accepted by higher-tier journals. Because the journals were less than three years old, none yet had an impact factor. Beall concluded that Bentham Open, which entered scholarly publishing in 2007, primarily served as a platform for disseminating research of dubious quality. He argued that the

publisher exploited the open access model for financial gain and inundated the scholarly community with substandard and questionable research [19].

In April 2010, Beall published another article, marking the first instance where he introduced the term "predatory" in a scholarly context. This article examined an additional nine publishers, with publication fees varying between $99.95 and $1,699. However, due to the differing pricing structures, direct comparison across all publishers was challenging and four of the nine publishers did not disclose their fees. Each publisher was assessed based on four criteria: Content, User Interface/Searchability, Pricing, and Contract Options. In this article, Beall highlighted that he was not the only one recognizing this emerging trend in academic publishing. He referred to prominent figures in the open access movement, including Stevan Harnad, who had also begun to criticize its implications. Beall cited Harnad's blog, which discussed the increasing prevalence of rapidly established gold open-access journal networks. These journals often lack substantial scholarly or publishing expertise and primarily rely on aggressive online solicitation [20, 21]. In 2010, Beall published another paper analyzing three additional predatory publishers [22]. Then, in 2012, he expanded his investigation to include five more publishers. Of these, Beall identified four as predatory, while one was deemed legitimate [23]. These four studies collectively examined 18 publishers, responsible for publishing 1,328 journals at the time.

In 2013, Beall published his final article on this topic [24], focusing not only on publishers, but on specific journals, such as British Journal of Science, International Journal of Current Research, International Journal of Science and Advanced Technology, International Journal of Sciences, and World Journal of Science and Technology. Beall highlighted that these journals operated independently without a publisher, had broad scopes, minimal peer review, and seemed to prioritize quantity over quality by accepting as many papers as possible. His analysis pointed out several red flags now associated with potentially fraudulent behavior, such as misleading contact information, false or unclear details about the country of origin, websites with sparse content, editorial boards that appeared fabricated, misleading or absent impact factors, poor language, and the assignment of copyrights to journals even though authors paid to publish [24]. Between 2009 and 2018, Beall authored 40 articles addressing the issue of predatory publishing. Many of these were brief reviews, likely invited, that highlighted the risks associated with such practices. Some articles focused on the specific issues within the open-access model, while others were published in discipline-specific journals [15].

4. The Predatory Lists

4.1. Beall's list

In 2010, Beall created his first blog, which listed fewer than 20 publishers, but this initial list was largely ignored [15]. By 2012, Beall transitioned the blog to a WordPress platform, renaming it "Scholarly Open Access" [25] though it is more commonly referred to as "Beall's List." The blog included a "Watchlist," and was, although being listed there, often viewed as equivalent to the main list [25]. He decided to create his list after receiving numerous unsolicited invitations to join editorial boards of various journals. Initially, the list garnered little attention but gained significant recognition among academicians by the mid-2010s. The entries on Beall's list were organized into categories or sub-lists: suspicious publishers, predatory stand-alone journals, and journals that had hijacked legitimate ones [26]. An archived version of the list is available at Beallslist.net, which continues to be updated with notes on the original entries and new additions [27].

4.2. Kscien's list

Following the discontinuation of Beall's list, the non-profit organization Kscien, based in Iraq, took on the responsibility of developing its list of predatory publishers. The creation and ongoing maintenance of this list fall under the purview of the "Predatory List Committee," which is composed of several emerging researchers dedicated to tracking and identifying the evolving strategies and tactics employed by predatory entities. The criteria for identifying such practices focus on journal misconduct, fabrication, and the presence of inadequate peer review procedures [28]. Initially, Kscien's list mirrored Beall's list by categorizing entities into four distinct groups: "predatory publishers," "predatory stand-alone journals," "hijacked journals," and "misleading metrics" [28]. As predatory practices continue to evolve, Kscien has expanded the scope of its list by introducing two additional categories: the "Conference List" and the "Cumulative List." The "Conference List" highlights predatory conferences, whether independently organized or associated with specific institutions. The "Cumulative List" designed to compile and track all journals associated with predatory publishers in one place, providing a centralized resource for researchers to identify potentially risky publication venues [29]. The list is available at: https://kscien.org/predatory-publishing/

4.3. Cabells' lists

Following the cessation of Jeffrey Beall's lists in 2017, another list maintained by Cabell Publishing Co. (Cabells), a U.S.-based organization, emerged as an alternative, aiming to provide a reliable resource in the same domain. Cabells' lists, which are primarily based on Beall's original compilation, were developed. The criteria for Cabells' lists are comprehensive, encompassing a total of 74 distinct factors, as specified in version 1.1, released on March 13, 2019 [30]. While Beall's list relied heavily on subjective judgments and limited transparency, Cabells established two curated lists: one identifying journal that meet recognized publishing standards and another identifying those that exhibit deceptive practices. These were originally labeled the "whitelist" and "blacklist," terms that drew increasing criticism for their racially charged connotations. In response to broader social awareness around racial justice following the murder of George Floyd in 2020, Cabells rebranded the lists as *Journalytics* (formerly the whitelist) and *Predatory Reports* (formerly the blacklist) [30, 31].

4.4. Predatory Reports

Predatory Reports is an anonymous organization with limited publicly available information, including an unknown establishment date. It has published two lists: the Predatory Journal List and the Predatory Publisher List. According to the organization, it is composed of volunteer researchers who have been affected by the negative impact of predatory publishers. Their mission is to assist researchers in identifying reliable journals and publishers. The organization offers its resources for free to the public, ensuring the information is widely accessible and usable. Operating a website free of advertisements, Predatory Reports is self-funded without external corporate backing. The decision to remain anonymous is due to concerns over potential legal actions from companies with aggressive practices. The organization clarifies that its aim is not to make authoritative claims but to compile and share publicly available information. All published content on its website is backed by referenced reports, allowing individuals to independently assess the material [32].

Several resources have been developed to guide researchers in navigating the complex landscape of scholarly publishing, ranging from blacklists of potentially deceptive journals to whitelists and ethical guidelines. Table 1 provides a summary of these key resources, their types, public accessibility, and focus areas.

Table 1. Key Resources for Navigating Scholarly Publishing.

Resource	Type	Public Access	Focus
Beall's List	Blacklist	Yes	OA publishers
Cabells	Whitelist & Blacklist	No (paid)	All journals
Kscien	Blacklist	Yes	Publishers, journals, conferences
DOAJ	Whitelist	Yes	OA journals
COPE	Membership org.	Yes	Ethics policies
Retraction Watch	Database	Yes	Retractions & misconduct
Think. Check. Submit.	Guideline/Checklist	Yes	Decision support

OA: Open access, DOAJ: Directory of Open Access Journals, COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics

5. Predatory Lists Criticism

Criticism of predatory journal lists often centers on issues of transparency, bias, and the unintended consequences for legitimate publishers. While these lists are designed to protect researchers from deceptive journals, they have faced scrutiny for their methodologies and the broader impact on academic publishing.

A notable case is Beall's list, which was abruptly taken down on January 15, 2017, without warning. Two days later, Andrew Silver reported on its disappearance, prompting speculation about the reasons behind its removal [33]. In a paper published on June 15, 2017, Beall explained that he had deleted his blog due to mounting pressure from his employer and concerns over potential job loss. During the five years that Beall maintained his list, many universities relied on it to advise their researchers against submitting to questionable journals. However, this led to backlash from publishers who sought removal from the list through various means. Some directly contacted Beall, defending their journals, while others escalated their complaints to university officials, including the Chancellor, questioning his ethics and judgment. Beall also faced criticism from the academic librarian community [25]. Other sources have also explored the circumstances surrounding the list's closure. Basken suggests that Beall faced significant peer pressure, resistance from a Swiss publisher he had listed, and exhaustion from his university, which was frequently targeted with complaints regarding the list [34].

Another issue often raised is that Beall himself made the sole decision regarding which publishers or journals to include on his list. This subjectivity became particularly controversial in 2015 when Frontiers was added to Beall's list, sparking a debate on social media. One Associate Editor of Frontiers remarked [35], "Frontiers being added to Beall's list reveals the big weakness of Beall's list: It's not based on solid data but on Beall's intuition." The editor further argued, "Having a single influential individual cast doubt on such a huge journal feels very unfair". The same Associate Editor from Frontiers expressed concern that articles published in Frontiers journals might be undervalued due to the publisher's inclusion on Beall's list, suggesting that such articles could be perceived as less valuable because of this association [35]. Some have suggested that this controversy played a significant role in the eventual closure of the list [36]. Teixeira da Silva raised ethical concerns regarding Beall's actions, specifically his decision to remain silent about the reasons for discontinuing his list. Additionally, Beall's failure to issue an apology to those affected, coupled with the resulting void for those who relied on the list for guidance and decision-making, was also criticized. Furthermore, Teixeira da Silva noted that Beall continued to discuss his blog even after its removal [37]. Such ethical debates emphasize the need for transparency and accountability in the management of predatory journal lists to maintain trust within the scholarly community.

Bisaccio highlights that Cabell's scoring system for its blacklist was specifically designed to prevent the misclassification of legitimate journals, particularly those that are new, from developing countries, or of lower quality, as "predatory "[38]. Another major issue was the criteria and transparency of its evaluations, with some critics arguing that the evaluation process was subjective and lacked transparency. For example, the indicator "no policies for digital preservation" has been criticized for its varying interpretations, and some journals have been blacklisted based on a limited set of criteria, raising concerns about the thoroughness of the evaluation process. Additionally, the list includes numerous "empty journals," or journals that have never published an article, which has led to questions about whether this accurately reflects the status of a journal. There are also concerns about the accuracy and timeliness of the information provided; some journals may be blacklisted without sufficient evidence, while others that engage in questionable practices may be overlooked. The lack of regular updates can lead to outdated information, affecting researchers' decisions [39].

Given these challenges, some scholars argue that focusing on "whitelists" curated collections of journals meeting recognized quality standards, may be a more effective approach than maintaining blacklists. Initiatives such as the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and other vetted journal indexes aim to guide researchers toward trustworthy publication venues, thereby achieving the goal of safeguarding scholarly integrity while avoiding the controversies associated with blacklists [38-40].

6. Concerns About the "Predatory Term"

The term "predatory" has increasingly been challenged by scholars who argue that it may inappropriately label certain journals, particularly those that are low in quality but still legitimate or those that have yet to achieve indexation. Over the past decade, since Beall introduced the concept and term 'predatory publisher', his work has elicited both acclaim and criticism in nearly equal measure. While there is broad agreement on the need to address the growing proliferation of low-quality scholarly publications, Beall's contributions are widely acknowledged as instrumental in initiating efforts to regulate publishing practices and uphold quality and ethical standards in Open Access journals. However, his work has also faced considerable criticism, particularly regarding the terminology and definition of a predatory publisher.

Critics have challenged the use of the term 'predatory', arguing that it carries negative connotations and poses a potential threat to academic freedom. As noted by Kimotho, many opponents of Beall's List view the term as pejorative and problematic. Some dictionaries, including the Cambridge Dictionary, have classified predatory with a "disapproving" usage label. These critics further contend that advocating for a ban on predatory journals may conflict with freedom of speech and restrict researchers' autonomy in selecting publication venues [20, 6, 41]. These perspectives highlight the broader debate surrounding the limitations and ethical implications of labeling journals as "predatory," emphasizing the need for more transparent and objective criteria in evaluating academic publishing practices [15, 37].

Publishers themselves have consistently opposed the use of the term 'predatory', and there have been instances where librarians and researchers faced legal action for labeling publishers as potential predators. New [42] recounts a case in which a librarian and his Canadian university employer were sued after the librarian referred to a publisher as "dubious" on his personal blog. Similarly, Todd [43] reported that another Canadian researcher was suspended for identifying certain publishing practices at his institution as predatory, only to be reinstated after a prolonged legal dispute. Even Beall ultimately ceased maintaining his list in 2017 following legal threats [44].

An analysis conducted by Buitrago Ciro and Bowker of 20 university library websites in Canada and the United States revealed that while nearly half of these institutions continued to use the term predatory, many adopted alternative terminology, including deceptive, suspicious, and undesirable. Similarly, Memon notes that terms such as dodgy, fraudulent, pseudo, questionable, sham, and illegitimate have previously been used to describe so-called predatory journals. Beall himself initially employed terms such as perfidious and unscrupulous and continued to incorporate alternative descriptors, including questionable and counterfeit, in later works. Notably, Beall has since acknowledged that the term predatory publisher may not be the most appropriate choice. Reflecting on the persistence of the term nearly seven years later, Beall conceded that it may not be the most precise descriptor of the phenomenon [20, 21, 39,45, 46].

7. Alternative Terminology

The evolution of concepts often necessitates adjustments in terminology, leading to either refinement or expansion of the original term's scope. Similarly, no universally accepted definition of "predatory publishing" exists, as scholars debate its criteria. Grudniewicz et al. attempted to define it during the 2019 Predatory Summit in Ottawa, characterizing such entities as those prioritizing self-interest over scholarship through misleading practices and lack of transparency. However, critiques persist regarding the omission of peer review concerns, while Cobey et al. highlight the risks posed by this definitional ambiguity to funding bodies and institutions [4, 47].

Anderson advocated replacing "predatory" with "bad faith" to account for unethical behavior by publishers, authors, and reviewers alike. Similarly, Eriksson et al. propose distinguishing between deceptive and low-quality journals, though Memon argues this distinction remains insufficiently clear. Alternative perspectives suggest that predatory publishers function as parodies, exposing systemic flaws in academic publishing, such as its commercialized nature and biases favoring central institutions over peripheral ones. Furthermore, the concept of predatory practices has expanded beyond publishing to include predatory conferences, authors, and broader concerns about fraudulent science. Although Eriksson et al. introduced a set of comprehensive criteria aimed at eliminating the misnomer "predatory." They classified journals into two categories: 1)

low-quality journals, and 2) deceptive journals. However, these criteria lack the necessary rigor to distinctly separate these two types of journals [20, 6, 39]. Such challenges further demonstrate the need for careful reconsideration of the terms and categories used in scholarly publishing discourse.

Despite its entrenched use, discussions have arisen about whether the term “predatory” should be replaced. At the 2019 Predatory Publishing Summit in Ottawa, Cukier et al. (2020) reported that participants debated alternative terminology. The participants were divided on the issue, with 29% opposing the change, 37% in favor, and 34% remaining neutral. Among the proposed alternatives, dark publisher, deceptive publisher, illegitimate publisher, and publisher operating in bad faith, deceptive publisher received the most support (67%). However, participants recognized significant obstacles to changing the term, including difficulties in literature indexing, dissemination, and the need to update educational materials and funding policies. The summit ultimately concluded that replacing an established term would likely create confusion within the scientific community and hinder progress in addressing the issue [48]. These discussions, along with prior and subsequent milestones in the evolving terminology debate, are summarized in Table 2.

At the 2025 EASE conference, Kakamad et al. introduced and strongly supported the term “non-recommended journals” as a more appropriate alternative to the widely used but controversial term “predatory journals”. The authors argued that while “predatory” suggests malicious intent and deliberate academic misconduct, the term often provokes legal challenges and emotional backlash. They emphasized that “non-recommended” is a neutral, cautious descriptor that avoids passing moral judgment while still guiding researchers away from journals that exhibit low editorial standards, questionable practices, or a lack of rigorous peer review. By doing so, the term encourages wider institutional and individual participation in curbing the spread of poor-quality publishing—without the threat of litigation or reputational damage [9]. This proposal represents the latest milestone in the chronology of terminology development, as illustrated in Table 2. Furthermore, systemic factors can complicate efforts to label journals strictly as “predatory.” For instance, some journals gain inclusion in respected databases such as PubMed not because of rigorous peer review, but due to public research funding, which can inadvertently legitimize research of uncertain quality [49]. In addition, the quality of articles varies widely: some journals traditionally labeled as “predatory” may publish high-quality work when authors submit diligently, whereas even reputable journals occasionally fail to detect flawed or falsified studies [50]. These nuances highlight the challenges of categorical labeling and reinforce the value of adopting a more neutral designation, such as “non-recommended journals,” which encourages careful evaluation of publishing venues without overgeneralization.

8. Limitations and Counterarguments

One clear advantage of the term “predatory” is its moral precision and clarity because it explicitly signals condemnation of exploitative publishing practices and conveys the seriousness of their questionable and unethical practices. This clarity can help to deter authors and institutions from engaging with such outlets, while also holding deceptive publishers publicly accountable. The legal resistance such bad actors have shown to this label demonstrates its power and perceived legitimacy. However, adopting a more neutral term such as “non-recommended” carries the risk of diluting this moral and communicative force. By softening the language, there is a possibility that the actual harm caused by deceptive journals or publishers could be understated, which might inadvertently normalize their existence or reduce researchers’ vigilance or concerns. In this sense, the shift could serve the interests of questionable publishers more than those of the scholarly community. While the proposed terminology may indeed mitigate legal and professional conflicts, its broader impact on awareness, deterrence, and public perception would need to be carefully monitored and empirically assessed

9. Conclusion and Future Perspectives

The term "predatory" in academic publishing has generated persistent legal, ethical, professional, and conceptual concerns, prompting a proposed shift to the more neutral description of "non-recommended" journals and publishers. This proposed shift in terminology avoids direct accusations while still emphasizing the need for caution. Beyond its legal advantages, it functions as a form of pragmatic reframing, softening evaluative language, lowering social costs, and promoting a more inclusive and constructive dialogue. Its implicit contrast (“non-recommended” versus “recommended”) invites critical reflection on the criteria for quality publishing and maintains a degree of strategic ambiguity, which can foster broader engagement from stakeholders.

To maximize its effectiveness, future efforts should focus on developing transparent, consensus-based criteria for classifying non-recommended journals and linking these to curated “whitelists” of trustworthy venues (e.g., DOAJ). Adoption of this terminology can enable researchers, institutions, and policymakers to evaluate journals more objectively, address low-quality or deceptive publishing practices, and minimize the risk of legal disputes, reputational harm, or professional conflicts.

Implementation will require global consensus among academic institutions, publishers, indexing bodies, and policymakers, as resistance may arise due to the entrenched use of “predatory” in literature, teaching, and policy documents. Clear, measurable guidelines and internationally recognized frameworks, developed in collaboration with bodies such as COPE, ICMJE, and EASE, will be critical for consistent application.

Future research should empirically test whether adopting “non-recommended” measurably reduces litigation risks, promotes ethical publishing practices, and improves researchers’ ability to evaluate journals. Comparative analyses across disciplines and regions would help to clarify how this linguistic shift affects scholarly communication in practice.

Table 2. Key Milestones in the Recognition, Debate, and Regulation of Predatory Publishing (2010–2025).

S. No	Year	Event	Description
1	2010	Creation of Beall's List	Jeffrey Beall, a librarian at the University of Colorado, publishes an online list of suspected predatory journals and publishers.
2	2013	Widespread Media Attention	Major outlets such as *Nature* and *The New York Times* cover predatory publishing, amplifying global awareness.
3	2016	OMICS Lawsuit by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC)	FTC files a complaint against OMICS Group for deceptive practices, including fake peer review and hidden fees.
4	2017	Beall's List Taken Offline	Beall abruptly takes down his list, allegedly under institutional pressure; the list is later mirrored unofficially.
5	2017	Cabell's International Introduces Journal Blacklist	Cabell's launches a commercial and curated "Blacklist" of predatory journals, using defined criteria.
6	2019	UNESCO and Global South Advocates Raise Terminology Concerns	Scholars call for decolonizing the term "predatory" and exploring more constructive alternatives.
7	2020	Proposal for Alternative Terminology: "Deceptive Publishing"	Some experts suggest using less stigmatizing language like "deceptive" or "questionable" journals.
8	2022	Renewed Academic Debates on Grey Zones in Publishing Practices	Editorials in *Nature*, *Science*, and *BMJ Open* question binary classifications of journals.
9	2025	EASE (European Association of Science Editors) Proposal to Mitigate Conflicts and Advance Ethical Publishing	Shifting from 'Predatory Journals and Publishers' to 'Non-Recommended Journals and Publishers

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