



Science-Adjacent Conferences: Beware of Predatory Conferences

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Dear Editor-in-Chief

In addition to specialized conferences aimed at the specialty and sub-specialty, we (especially early-career researchers and graduate students) also need to attend 'science-adjacent' (multidisciplinary) conferences for new collaborations and ideas (1). At these specialty conferences, participants gather quickly among researchers/graduate-students who know each other (1). However, the high heterogeneity in multidisciplinary conferences means that each participant cannot find his/her existing links (networks) and then may not know each other. Therefore, social pressures encourage spontaneous introductions and connections in multidisciplinary conferences (1). The contacts and conversations at general science-adjacent conferences would have the greatest impact on attendee's research and career path, which could lead to unexpected concepts and collaborations.

But when looking for these science-adjacent conferences, early-career researchers and graduate students should beware of predatory (or fake) conferences with multidisciplinary programs, which often held by companies for profit purposes, using desire that academics and early-career researchers are willing to publish and present their work (2). Since the open-access journal

movement began in the 2000s, many predatory publishers based on the weaknesses of this movement has begun to emerge. Jeffrey Beall, a Scholarly Initiatives Librarian at the University of Colorado Denver, was the first to ring the bell (3). He and other scientists pointed out the danger of predatory publishers aiming at the researcher's wallet (3, 4), and he shared a list of suspected predatory publishers holding predatory conferences and publishing fake journals (<https://bealllist.weebly.com/>). There is another list of questionable (or predatory) conferences at the Caltech Library (<https://libguides.caltech.edu/c.php?g=512665&p=3503029>).

Many researchers think that fake conferences are only an issue for early-career researchers in underdeveloped countries, but it is frequently difficult to distinguish a predatory conference from a genuine one due to splendid-looking websites with a boastful (lie-filled) list of distinguished scientists.

Researchers should find predatory conferences by some online digging to know whether a multidisciplinary conference is fake or not, as can be seen on an informative website (<https://www.exordo.com/blog/9-signs-this-is->



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a-fake-conference/). In this website, there are nine criteria for determining whether a conference is fake or not. The criteria are as follows:

- First, do you think the conference name is over-exaggerated than its contents? "International" and "Global" are two buzzwords used by predatory conference organizers. Be careful if the conference asserts "International" status but the organizers or representative participants appear to be in one country only.
- Second, is the description of the technical program of the conference going to cover everything except kitchen sinks? Conferences with programs that are not likely to specialize in any way, or that attempt to combine multiple disciplines in unusual ways can be unreliable.
- Third, is the conference website written bizarrely or littered with spelling and grammar errors? Improperly written content can be a good sign that the organizers behind it are less than legitimate.
- Fourth, are there any major discrepancies between the conference and its sponsor? Predatory conferences frequently misrepresent large organizations as sponsors.
- Fifth, is it difficult to find clear contact detail for the conference organizer? Predatory conferences often try to hide behind fake phone numbers or to tuck away contact details.
- Sixth, when to search the conference name on Google, does the conference be closely related to another conference? A favorite of fake (or predatory) conferences is to use a name that is almost identical to a respected conference.
- Seventh, do you find links to known predatory conferences or journals when searching for the conference or its organizer? Check out Caltech Library's list of predatory conferences and Beall's list of predatory publishers that were described in the above.

- Eighth, are the conference fees higher than standard in your area? Although conference fees can vary, the common practice of predatory conference organizers is to charge high registration fees to maximize their profits.

- Ninth, when to search the conference or the organizer on Google, do many different listings pop up. If the same conference is held multiple times in another city, or if the organizer holds several conferences at the same time, proceed with extreme caution.

Then researchers (especially principal investigators with information on these predatory conferences) lead early-career researchers and graduate students to attend un-predatory science-adjacent conferences with space left open for ideas or collaborations to grow.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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