

## **The Rigorous Peer-Review Process in WSEAS Journals. Avoiding Predatory Publishers**

**BADEA LEPADATESCU**  
Transylvania University of Brasov, ROMANIA

**KLIMIS NTALIANIS**  
University of West Attica, Egaleo, Athens, GREECE

**AIDA BULUCEA**  
University of Craiova, Craiova, ROMANIA

**DIMITRIS KAZAKOS**  
Life Fellow of IEEE, (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers)  
and Professor of Mathematics in Texas Southern University, USA.

**MICHAEL N. KATEHAKIS,**  
Management Science and Information Systems Department, Rutgers University, USA

**VINCENZO NIOLA**  
University of Naples, "Federico II" Via Claudio, 21 - 80125, Naples, ITALY

**IMRE J. RUDAS**  
IEEE Life Fellow, IFSA Fellow, Óbuda University, HUNGARY

**IGOR NEELOV**  
Institute of Bioengineering, ITMO University, RUSSIA

**NIKOS BARDIS**  
Hellenic Army Academy, Vari, Attica, GREECE

*Abstract:* - In the realm of academic publishing, the integrity and rigor of the peer-review process are paramount. They serve as the foundation upon which credible scientific knowledge is built and disseminated. A thorough, fair, and transparent peer-review process ensures that published research meets high standards of quality, originality, and relevance. Without this critical filtering mechanism, the reliability of academic literature would be severely compromised. Within this framework, the WSEAS has firmly established itself as a beacon of excellence. Its commitment to upholding stringent peer-review standards is not only consistent but in many cases exceeds those applied by journals under well-known publishing houses. Manuscripts submitted to WSEAS journals undergo meticulous evaluation by qualified reviewers with expertise in the relevant fields, ensuring that only methodologically sound and impactful research is accepted for publication. Furthermore, WSEAS maintains full transparency in its editorial procedures, including clearly defined author guidelines, conflict-of-interest policies, and ethical standards, aligning with internationally recognized best practices in scholarly publishing. This transparency reflects the organization's dedication to academic integrity and distinguishes it from predatory publishers, which often lack proper peer review and

editorial oversight. WSEAS is not only *not* predatory — it actively plays a constructive role in advancing global scientific communication, particularly in the domains of engineering, applied mathematics, and computer science. Through its reputable journals and well-organized international conferences, WSEAS provides a platform for researchers from around the world to share innovative ideas, foster interdisciplinary collaborations, and stay informed about the latest developments in their fields. Its dedication to accessibility through open access publishing further enhances its impact, allowing researchers from institutions with limited resources to engage with and contribute to cutting-edge scientific discourse. In this way, WSEAS helps bridge knowledge gaps across geographical and economic boundaries, reinforcing the truly global nature of science. In an era where the academic publishing landscape is increasingly complicated by the rise of predatory journals, WSEAS stands out as a trustworthy and valuable ally to researchers, institutions, and the broader scientific community.

*Key-Words:* - Academic Publications, Academic Journals, Academic Research, Peer Review

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## 1. WSEAS Transactions: Upholding Rigorous Peer Review

WSEAS is a multidisciplinary publisher that primarily focuses on conference proceedings, journals, and books in fields such as engineering, computer science, mathematics, and economics. It has published numerous academic papers over the years and has attracted a global community of researchers.

### Pros of WSEAS Publications:

- \* **Wide Range of Topics** – Covers multiple disciplines, which allows for cross-field research.
- \* **Open Access** – Many WSEAS journals offer free access, increasing visibility.
- \* **Rapid Publication** – Papers are often published quickly, which can be advantageous for researchers needing timely dissemination of their work.
- \* **Indexed in Important Databases** – Some WSEAS journals are indexed in databases like Scopus (though indexing varies by journal).

WSEAS has implemented a multifaceted approach to ensure the highest quality in its publications:

We have discovered that in the WSEAS journals, there exists a Pre-Screening Quality Control. What does it mean: Before initiating the formal peer-review, WSEAS conducts a thorough pre-screening that includes:

Another important thing in WSEAS Publications is the Plagiarism and Self-Plagiarism Detection: WSEAS uses tools like Turnitin and iThenticate to ensure originality. WSEAS has also

- a) Language Proficiency Assessment: Ensuring the manuscript meets high linguistic standards.
- b) Author Affiliation Verification: Confirming the authenticity of authors' institutional associations.
- c) Reference Evaluation: Assessing the relevance and recency of citations.
- d) Contribution Assessment: Verifying that all listed authors have made significant contributions to the research.

This meticulous pre-screening results in the rejection of approximately 20% of submissions, effectively filtering out manuscripts that do not meet WSEAS's stringent criteria.

WSEAS applied Triple-Blind Peer Review. That means that each manuscript undergoes evaluation by at least three independent reviewers who are experts in the relevant field. This process ensures an unbiased and comprehensive assessment of the research.

An important and impressive feature in WSEAS publisher that makes this Publish unique is the Mandatory Author Certification: Authors are required to submit a certification confirming that their manuscript has received positive recommendations from all reviewers. This certification is published alongside the article, promoting transparency and accountability.

## 2. The Peer-Review Standards of WSEAS Journals

WSEAS journals follow a double-blind peer-review system, where neither authors nor reviewers know each other's identities. This system eliminates potential biases, ensuring objective and merit-based evaluations. The key characteristics of the WSEAS review process include:

1. **Multiple Rounds of Review:** Manuscripts typically undergo multiple rounds of rigorous evaluation. Initial screenings filter out papers that do not meet the journal's scope or quality standards, ensuring that only high-caliber submissions proceed to peer review.
2. **Expert Reviewers:** WSEAS assigns papers to reviewers who are recognized experts in the respective field. Reviewers are selected based on their academic credentials, citation impact, and previous contributions to high-quality research.
3. **Strict Plagiarism Checks:** Every submitted manuscript is subjected to thorough plagiarism detection using advanced tools such as Turnitin and iThenticate. WSEAS enforces a strict zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism and self-plagiarism.

4. **Comprehensive Editorial Oversight:** The editorial board, composed of leading scholars, actively participates in ensuring that the peer-review process adheres to ethical guidelines and maintains the highest standards of scholarly excellence.
5. **Transparency and Constructive Feedback:** Authors receive detailed, structured feedback, enabling them to improve their manuscripts significantly before publication. The constructive nature of the reviews ensures that only well-developed, high-quality research is accepted.

## 3. Predatory Publishers. How Can I Identify a Predatory Journal?

Predatory journals are deceptive publishing outlets that prioritize profit over scholarship. They charge authors publication fees—often under the guise of open access—but do not provide the essential services expected of academic journals, most notably **genuine peer review**. Instead of rigorously evaluating the quality, novelty, and validity of a submitted paper, they often accept and publish virtually any manuscript, as long as the author pays the fee. The result is a body of literature that lacks scientific credibility and integrity. Publishing in such journals not only damages an author's academic reputation but also devalues their CV, as work in predatory outlets is generally not recognized by academic institutions, promotion committees, or reputable funding bodies. These journals exploit authors—especially early-career researchers or those from under-resourced institutions—who may be unaware of proper scholarly publishing practices.

## The Grey Zone Between Predatory and Legitimate

Not all questionable journals are clearly predatory. There exists a spectrum of publishing quality, and many journals fall into a grey area: they are not overt scams, but they are far from rigorous. These journals may charge fees, conduct minimal or superficial peer review, and have lax editorial oversight. Even though their publishers may have good intentions, the lack of academic rigor and selectivity means that publishing in such outlets does not enhance your scholarly standing. These journals often publish a very high percentage of submissions, rarely reject papers, and have editorial boards that lack active academic engagement. The scientific value of what they publish is low, and readers should be cautious about citing or relying on their contents.

## Legitimate Journals and the Role of Open Access

On the other hand, there are numerous high-quality, legitimate journals—including many open access journals—that charge article processing charges (APCs) but uphold rigorous academic standards. The existence of publication fees alone is not a red flag. Many respected journals charge fees to support editorial work, peer review, archiving, and open access availability. Conversely, a journal that does not charge any fees may not necessarily be of high quality either. It could be funded by a university or society, or it may lack proper editorial infrastructure. Therefore, the business model alone cannot determine legitimacy.

## How to Select a Suitable Journal

The most effective strategy for selecting a journal for your manuscript is to be actively involved in your research field. You should:

- Regularly read recent publications in your area.
- **Note** where top researchers publish their best work.
- Examine the journals cited in your own manuscript—these often serve as a guide to where your work would fit best.
- Consider the journal's scope, audience, and publication history to see if your work aligns with its editorial direction.

If a journal is frequently cited by your peers and mentors, it's likely to be a trusted venue. On the other hand, if none of the papers you rely on are published in a journal you're considering, it might not be a good fit.

## Evaluating a Journal Outside Your Expertise

When assessing a journal from a different field—or when encountering a new journal—use a multi-factorial approach. No single factor definitively proves a journal is predatory, but a combination of warning signs and positive indicators can guide your judgment.

## Key Factors to Consider

### 1. Website Quality and Language Proficiency

Legitimate journals usually have a **professional website** with clear information in grammatically correct English. Poorly designed sites with errors, broken links, and vague language often indicate low-quality or predatory operations.

### 2. Email Solicitations

Be wary if a journal contacts you unsolicited, especially with **generic or overly flattering language**. While some reputable journals announce calls for papers, predatory journals routinely spam authors—even those

outside the field—with urgent requests.

### 3. Promises of Fast Publication

A hallmark of predatory journals is the promise of rapid review and publication—sometimes within days or a couple of weeks. In contrast, real peer review is a time-consuming process and can take 3 to 12 months or longer, depending on revisions and reviewer availability.

### 4. Citation Metrics and Impact Factor

Be cautious of journals claiming fake or misleading metrics. A true *Impact Factor* is provided by Clarivate's Journal Citation Reports. Many predatory journals use deceptive terms like “Global Impact Factor” or “Universal Indexing Score,” which are not recognized by the academic community.

Use **Scopus, Web of Science, or Google Scholar Metrics** to verify a journal's citation influence.

### 5. Database Indexing

Inclusion in **Web of Science or Scopus** indicates a journal has passed certain quality checks. However, inclusion is not a guarantee of excellence—some weaker journals do slip through. Still, it's a **positive sign**, especially if maintained over time.

### 6. Citation Record and Author Reputation

Search the journal's recent articles. Are they **cited by others**? Are the authors **affiliated with well-known institutions**? Does the journal publish work by active researchers in the field?

### 7. Publisher Reputation

Journals published by major academic publishers—such as **Springer, Elsevier, Wiley, Taylor & Francis, and IEEE**—are typically reliable. That said, **newer or smaller publishers** can also produce quality journals if they are transparent, peer-reviewed, and supported by credible editorial boards.

### 8. Support from Professional Societies

Journals backed by **recognized scientific societies** often maintain high standards. This affiliation is a **strong endorsement**, although many legitimate journals are independent.

### 9. Editorial Board Transparency

Check if the editorial board includes **academics with verifiable credentials**, working at reputable institutions. Be cautious if the same individuals appear on the boards of many unrelated journals, or if the listed individuals are difficult to trace or verify.

### 10. Recent Content Quality

Read a few articles. Are they **well-written, scientifically sound, and relevant**? Poorly structured or shallow content is a strong warning sign, even if everything else appears legitimate.

## 5. Are WSEAS Journals Predatory? No — And Here's the Proof\*\*

Based on the accepted academic standards for identifying predatory publishing, WSEAS journals consistently demonstrate transparency, rigor, and scholarly credibility. Here's a detailed evaluation of WSEAS journals using the very checklist used to spot predatory journals:

### 5. 1. Professional Website and Clear Information

WSEAS journals have well-structured, modern websites with clear formatting, detailed author guidelines, peer review procedures, ethics policies, and indexing information. The language used is professional, and the websites are regularly maintained and updated — all hallmarks of legitimate publishing.

**Our Conclusion: Positive indicator of legitimacy.**

### 5.2. Peer Review Process

All WSEAS journals clearly describe their multi-stage peer review process, involving at least two expert reviewers per paper. Reviewers are encouraged to provide detailed feedback, and authors are asked to revise accordingly. The process includes plagiarism detection and editorial oversight.

**Our Conclusion: Demonstrates authentic peer review — not predatory.\***

### 5.3. Email Invitations

WSEAS journals do occasionally send out calls for papers especially related to special issues or conferences. However, they do not indiscriminately spam authors or use flattery. Calls are typically sent to authors who have attended WSEAS conferences, submitted previously, or are in related research areas.

**Our Conclusion: Appropriate communication; not a red flag**

### 5.4. Publication Timeframe

WSEAS journals do not guarantee ultra-fast publication. Depending on reviewer availability and the number of revisions required, the process may take several months. This is consistent with normal academic publishing timelines and shows that shortcuts are not taken.

**Our Conclusion: No false promises — peer review takes time.**

### 5.5. Valid Citation Metrics and Indexing

15 WSEAS journals are indexed in Scopus, one of the most respected citation databases in academia. Some WSEAS journals also appear in Google Scholar Metrics, with respectable citation numbers. **WSEAS does not advertise fake impact factors or use dubious metrics.**

**Our Conclusion: Proper indexing and transparency in metrics.**

### 5.6. Citation Record and Quality of Publications

WSEAS journals contain well-cited papers by authors affiliated with globally recognized universities and institutions. Many papers are referenced in conference proceedings, doctoral theses, and technical reports. The diversity of contributors and citations further testifies to the journals' scholarly visibility.

**Conclusion: WSEAS has real academic impact.**

### 5.7. Publisher Reputation

WSEAS has been active in scholarly publishing since 1996 and has hosted hundreds of international conferences across Europe, Asia, and North America. It maintains an active network of researchers, conference organizers, and editorial board members worldwide.

**Our Conclusion: A longstanding academic institution with a stable reputation.**

### 5.8. Editorial Boards

WSEAS journals list editorial board members with clear affiliations, typically professors, researchers, and senior scientists from universities and research institutes in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. These names and institutions are verifiable.

**Our Conclusion: Transparent and qualified editorial leadership.**

### 5.9. Professional Society and Conference Support

Many WSEAS journals are associated with major conferences, including IEEE-supported events, and often publish extended versions of top conference papers after peer review. This integration of journals and conferences adds credibility and ensures active scholarly engagement.

**Our Conclusion: Connected to reputable scientific activities.**

## 10. Quality of Published Work

Recent issues of WSEAS journals include thematic special issues, state-of-the-art surveys, and well-structured research papers. Topics cover cutting-edge engineering, mathematical modeling, computational techniques, control systems, AI, renewable energy, and more.

**Our Conclusion: Consistently professional content of high technical relevance.\***

## Final Verdict: WSEAS Journals Are NOT Predatory

When measured against all accepted scholarly publishing criteria, WSEAS journals clearly demonstrate the characteristics of legitimate, peer-reviewed academic outlets. Their inclusion in Scopus, adherence to peer review ethics, transparent operations, and long-standing academic presence strongly validate their credibility.

WSEAS is not only not predatory — it is actively contributing to global scientific communication in engineering, applied mathematics, and computer science.

## 6. WSEAS Journals Do Not Exhibit Predatory Characteristics

Predatory journals are characterized by deceptive practices, including lack of peer review, excessive publication fees, and lack of editorial oversight. WSEAS journals do not exhibit any of these features for the following reasons:

- **Strict Editorial Policies:** WSEAS follows the COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) guidelines, ensuring ethical publishing.
- **Scopus and High-Impact Indexing:** Many WSEAS journals are indexed in Scopus and other reputable databases, confirming their legitimacy and impact.
- **No Unethical Article Processing Charges (APCs):** Unlike predatory

journals that exploit authors through excessive APCs without offering genuine editorial services, WSEAS maintains reasonable fees that reflect the actual cost of high-quality editorial and peer-review work.

- **Rejection of Low-Quality Work:** WSEAS rejects a significant proportion of submissions that do not meet its stringent academic standards, reinforcing its commitment to quality.

Shemelis Kebede Hundie, from Ethiopian Civil Service University asks: How reliable are the various blogs of predatory journals?

He says: *I have seen many journals which are indexed in DOAJ, Scopus, EconLit, etc but listed under predatory journals by predatory journals' fake lists. The journals are not predatory, but the fake blogs are predatory themselves. I think paper which are indexed in Scopus, for example, are not predatory. I need clarification on the reliability of these blogs of predatory journals.*

In this query [4]. Marlon Subido Alejos, from the University of the Philippines Visayas replied:

*I strongly believed that the some fake lists of predatory journals are not reliable. Huge number of journals are included in the list but consistently indexed in Scopus or Clarivate analytics. There are also publishers that are single out to be predatory but some if not most of their journals are also indexed in Scopus or Clarivate analytics.*

Many important scientists argued that fake blogs' criteria were not always applied consistently and that personal biases might have influenced listings. Journals and publishers had no formal way to contest their inclusion. Several blogs with "predatory publishers" are obsolete and they faced lawsuits and institutional pressure, leading to the list's takedown in 2017. While archived versions exist, the academic publishing landscape has evolved, and some journals may have improved (or worsened) over time.

## 7. Conclusion

**WSEAS is not only *not* a predatory publisher — it is, in fact, a respected academic platform that actively contributes to the advancement of global scientific communication, particularly in the fields of engineering, applied mathematics, and computer science.** Through its rigorous peer-review process, transparent editorial policies, and commitment to open access, WSEAS ensures that high-quality research reaches a worldwide audience. Unlike predatory publishers, which often bypass scholarly standards and prioritize profit over quality, WSEAS upholds academic integrity by collaborating with experienced editors, qualified reviewers, and reputable academic institutions. Its conferences and journals serve as hubs for knowledge exchange, innovation, and interdisciplinary dialogue, fostering collaboration among researchers from diverse backgrounds and regions. Moreover, WSEAS journals are indexed in well-known databases, and the organization regularly updates its processes to align with best practices in academic publishing. This ongoing commitment to excellence not only enhances the visibility of authors' work but also strengthens the credibility and reliability of the scientific literature as a whole.

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