



ADVISOR REVIEWS—STANDARD REVIEW

Internet Scientific Publications

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Composite Score:

★ 1/8

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Abstract

This review critically analyzes Internet Science Publications, a one-man operation that falsely claims to be “one of the world’s largest online medical publishers.” The publisher’s site is merely a deceptive endeavor aimed at making money, for it is replete with advertising on every page, including ads for an anti-aging tonic the owner markets himself. Exploiting the author-pays model of Open Access publishing, Internet Science Publications charges authors upon acceptance of an article, essentially functioning as a scholarly vanity press. The analysis includes a look at libraries’ policies of including records for this (and similar) publishers’ e-serials in library online catalogs and questions the practice of promoting low-quality works vanity publishers make available.

Pricing Options

All the articles in Internet Scientific Publications’ journals are Open Access, so there is no cost to readers. Author fees fund the publisher’s operations, making the funding an example of the gold, Open Access publishing model. Because the journals are Open Access, the pricing analysis in this review is based on the author fees.

For each article submitted, there is a \$25 submission fee (currently waived for all submissions) and a \$225 publication fee, payable upon acceptance of an article. Two correction fees also apply after publication of an article: \$25 for corrections or additions to author names and \$40 for any correction within the text of an article.

The publisher may grant discounts for “lower income countries, students, and authors experiencing financial hardship.” However, the publisher warns that “it is a privilege to receive a discount and this generosity ... should not be abused.”

Product Description

Internet Science Publications (abbreviated by the publisher as ISPUB) is a publisher of Open Access online journals. A banner at the top of its Web page boasts, “One of the world’s largest online medical publishers.” ISPUP publishes 89 titles, mostly in the area of health sciences. Each journal title begins with the phrase, “*The Internet Journal of ...*” Example titles include *The Internet Journal of Cardiovascular Research* and *The Internet Journal of Podiatry*. The publisher began operations in 1996.

Internet Scientific Publications states that the articles in all its journals are peer reviewed. Every journal home page bears this statement: “This is a peer reviewed journal. Every published article has been

reviewed by members of the editorial board and the editor-in-chief.” Some journals do not list an editorial board, however. For example, the *Internet Journal of Energy Medicine* lists only an editor in chief and an associate editor. On the other hand, the *Internet Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics* lists an editor in chief and an editorial board with three members, and the *Internet Journal of Spine Surgery* has an editor in chief, and associate editor, and an editorial board with 23 members.

The articles are only available in HTML; there are no PDF versions. Many include illustrations. Most articles on the site tend to be short. For example, the article “Lateral Condylar Fractures of Humerus in Children Following Varus Malunion of Supracondylar Fracture” in *The Internet Journal of Orthopedic Surgery*¹ has only 853 words, including the abstract (but excluding the references).

Although ISPUB purports to be a scholarly publisher, much of its content appears elementary and unsophisticated, especially when analyzed in the context of medical publishing in general. One example is the article, “A 48-Year-Old Man with an Excruciating Pain in His Left Knee” that appears in *The Internet Journal of Rehabilitation*.² In fact, this article doesn’t appear to be a research article at all, for it has discussion questions at the end of it.

THE PUBLISHER

There is one man behind all of Internet Scientific Publications, and he is Dr. Olivier C. Wenker. A disclaimer that appears on every journal’s home page states, “President [sic] and owner of Internet Scientific Publications, L.L.C. is Olivier C. Wenker, MD.” An online biography from the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center states that Dr. Wenker is “Professor, Department of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine, Division of Anesthesiology and Critical Care, The

1. Mohd Iqbal Wani, et al. “Lateral Condylar Fractures of Humerus in Children Following Varus Malunion of Supracondylar Fracture.” *The Internet Journal of Orthopedic Surgery* 17, no. 2 (2010). <http://www.ispub.com/journal/the_internet_journal_of_orthopedic_surgery/volume_17_number_2/article/lateral-condylar-fractures-of-humerus-in-children-following-varus-malunion-of-supracondylar-fracture.html>.
2. Ioannis Sioutis, Georgios I. Vasileiadis, P.J. Papagelopoulos. “A 48-Year-Old Man with an Excruciating Pain in His Left Knee.” *The Internet Journal of Rehabilitation* 1, no. 1 (2010). <http://www.ispub.com/journal/the_internet_journal_of_rehabilitation/volume_1_number_1_73/article/a-48-year-old-man-with-an-excruciating-pain-in-his-left-knee.html>.

University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX.”³ Further, the biography says,

Dr. Wenker's special interests involve electronic publishing and the use of digital information for education. In 1996, he founded “Internet Scientific Publications, LLC.” This online platform became the world's largest independent electronic medical publishing house.

The Contact Us page that Internet Scientific Publications links to from its home page gives the address 23 Rippling Creek Drive, Sugar Land, Texas, a residence, so it appears the publisher operates out of his home.

ADVERTISING

The entire site is filled with advertising, a means of enhancing revenue. The home page, for example, has both horizontal and vertical Ads by Google columns. Most other pages also contain Ads by Google as well. Many pages also contain an ad for an anti-aging formula called Youth Juice, which is endorsed by the editors of two of ISPUB's journals (one of which is Dr. Wenker). The cost is \$200 for a month's supply, but “readers of our journals” are granted a \$60 discount.

At the top of many pages is a link called Books and Links. This leads to a page that consists chiefly of links to books on Amazon.com, so most likely the publisher is an associate of Amazon.com and takes a percentage of Amazon.com's sales made after readers link to Amazon from the ISPUB site.

The publisher appears to be closely associated with BioScience Writers, a Houston firm that offers editing and proofreading services for authors of journal articles. There is a link to the firm from the banner at the top of most of ISPUB's pages.

INDEXING

Some, but not all, of the journals have an ISSN, but none of the articles has a DOI. The publisher claims that the journals are “Indexed with Directory [sic] of Open Access Journals DOAJ, Google Scholar, Embase, Scopus, CINAHL, Ebsco, and Gale.” To test this claim, we randomly selected ten articles from ten different journals. To allow time for indexing, we only searched and selected articles published in 2009 where possible. Some of the journals indexed did not have any issues published in 2009, so in these cases we selected an article from the issue closest to 2009. Then for each journal, we searched to see if the journal itself was listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). We found that five of the ten journals were indeed listed in DOAJ.

Next, we searched the individual journal article titles in Google Scholar, CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature), EBSCO, and Gale. (We did not have access to Embase or Scopus and were unable to search these databases.) The EBSCO database we used was Academic Search Premier Plus, and the Gale database we searched was Gale Cengage Learning Expanded Academic ASAP. We got the following results:

Google Scholar:	10 of 10 = 100%
CINAHL:	0 of 10 = 0%
EBSCO:	2 of 10 = 20%
Gale:	2 of 10 = 20%

3. The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. “Olivier C. Wenker, M.D., MBA, D.E.A.A.” <http://faculty.mdanderson.org/Olivier_Wenker/Default.asp?SNID=1486718363>.

These data aren't scientific, but they do raise serious doubts about the publisher's claims that the journals are all indexed in each of the databases he states they are.

Even though ISPUB's journals and articles are poorly indexed in the commercial abstracting and indexing services, they are heavily represented by holding libraries in OCLC. One example is *The Internet Journal of Alternative Medicine*, which was cataloged by the Library of Congress and has over 550 holdings in WorldCat, an impressive number for any journal. This likely means that metadata records for this journal appear in over 550 online catalogs in libraries throughout the world.

LICENSING

Authors must sign over copyright to the publisher for all accepted articles. Under the Instructions for Authors page, the publisher states, “The author(s) transfer(s) the copyright to her/their article to Internet Scientific Publications, L.L.C., effective if and when the article is accepted for publication.” This practice is nonstandard among Open Access publishers, most of whom allow the author to retain copyright. However, the publisher also states, “We will grant every author the right to republish all material that appeared in our online journals under the provision that the original source ... is mentioned.”

There is a link at top of every page to PubMed. It is common among questionable Open Access publishers to provide links to legitimate organizations, conferences, and companies prominently on their Web pages. This is done in the expectation that the hard-earned legitimacy of the other corporate bodies might rub off on them.

Regarding licensing of individual articles, every page of every article has this copyright statement: “Copyright Internet Scientific Publications, LLC., 1996 to 2011.” No Creative Commons licenses are assigned. Thus it appears that although the site's content is Open Access, the publisher retains copyright on all of it.

Internet Scientific Publications is not a member of the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association.

SEARCHING

The only search functionality the site offers is a Google Custom Search box and an A-Z list of the journals.

Critical Evaluation

This site is a one-man operation that is set up to make money. The ubiquitous advertising present on the site, including ads for an anti-aging potion marketed by the publisher, the incorporation of an Amazon.com affiliate Web site within the site, and the general low quality of articles and their presentation make the site a poor, unprofessional, and even offensive attempt at scholarly publishing.

It's clear that this publishing operation is a mere hobby of its owner, Dr. Wenker, whose entrepreneurial efforts ramify in many directions. Internet Science Publications is an illegitimate and deceptive scientific publisher. The publisher falls into the category of what we have previously termed “Predatory Open-Access Publishers.”⁴ Many of its journals lack authentic editorial boards, though the publisher claims that all of its journals are peer reviewed. Much of the site's content originates in the Third World and lacks sophistication; it appears that nothing is rejected.

4. Jeffrey Beall. “Predatory Open-Access Publishers.” *The Charleston Advisor* 11, no. 4 (2010):10–17.



Internet Scientific Publications Review Scores Composite: ★ 1/8

The maximum number of stars in each category is 5.

Content:

★

Many journal titles have only a few articles, and many of the articles are short, simple works that add little value to their fields.

User Interface/Searchability:

★

Very little thought is given to searching. There is only a Google custom search box and an A-Z list of the journal titles.

Pricing:

★ 1/2

Among gold, Open Access publishers, the author fees ISPUB charges are on the low side. The publisher charges for corrections to published articles, a practice that discourages making corrections.

Contract Options:

★

Nonstandard. The publisher retains copyright on all works, even though they are Open Access.

The site cunningly attempts to present itself as a legitimate medical publisher. It uses commanding titles for its journals, such as *The Internet Journal of Endovascular Medicine*, which has only six articles listed (some of which are reviews and case reports) and has only two members on its editorial board, one of whom is listed without any affiliation. The site deceptively attempts to declare itself legitimate, displaying a link to PubMed on every page, and boasting that it is “One of the world’s largest online medical publishers.”

The fact that so many libraries have records for this publisher’s journals in their online catalogs speaks to the scale of the deception and demands an assessment of the libraries’ actions. Why burden your users with junk? Is your library’s collections policy “Link to everything, regardless of its quality?” Librarians are supposed to be specialists in building collections, collections that match the needs of the library’s users. The proliferation of Open Access publishers makes the library collection-building function even more important, for it demands that libraries help their users avoid low-quality and irrelevant pseudo-re-

search that only wastes others’ time. Part of collection building involves rejecting titles from the collection, for the benefit of library patrons.

Internet Scientific Publications is chiefly a hobby and a place to sell advertising for its owner, Dr. Wenker. ISPUB purports to be a scholarly publisher, but its disguise is thin, and behind the mask we see an exploitative venture designed to fool the unwary, be they authors or readers.

Contract Provisions and Authentication

The publisher retains copyright on all material it publishes. The disclaimer section of the Web site is extensive and absolves the publisher from any responsibility or liability.

Because all of the site’s content is Open Access, authentication is unnecessary.

About the Author

Jeffrey Beall is Metadata Librarian at Auraria Library, University of Colorado, Denver. He earned his M.S.L.S. degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and he also holds an M.A. in English from Oklahoma State University. He has worked as an academic librarian for over twenty years. His research and articles have been published in numerous journals including *American Libraries*, *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, *College and Research Libraries*, and *Cataloging and Classification Quarterly*. ■

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