As we in the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library work with USFSP faculty and discuss the open-access publishing model, we have started to receive questions about the integrity and reliability of different publishers. Many publishers indicate that they will allow an article to be open access (freely and openly available over the Internet) if the author or the author’s institution pays a fee. We are happy to take a look at publishers’ agreements and point out areas of concern or questions that the agreements raise in our minds. However, we are not disciplinary experts in most fields and we do not have the time or the proper background to make a determination about the suitability of publishers on behalf of our faculty.

When reviewing an open-access publisher to determine if it is a good fit for publication, the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library strongly recommends that faculty consult Beall’s List of Predatory Publishers that can be found on the blog at: http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/

Jeffrey Beall is an academic librarian with more than twenty-four years of experience who works at the University of Colorado Denver. He has served on the editorial board of a peer-reviewed journal, Cataloging & Classification Quarterly, and has an extensive list of peer-reviewed publications.

In the past few years, Beall has investigated the practices of open-access publishers to determine if they are legitimate publishers or if they are instead preying on authors who are trying to support the open-access publishing model. As he states on his blog, “Many of these publishers are corrupt and exist only to make money off the author processing charges that are billed to authors upon acceptance of their scientific manuscripts.” With the assistance of librarian and faculty colleagues from around the world, he has identified over 400 so-called open-access publishers whose practices seem designed only to make money for the publisher without providing the academic rigor and quality peer review standards that the academic world demands. He updates the list periodically and has documented the growth of questionable publishers over the last few years. He also publishes the criteria he uses to assess the legitimacy of publishers’ practices (http://scholarlyoa.com/2012/11/30/criteria-for-determining-predatory-open-access-publishers-2nd-edition/)

Beall provides practical information to help authors assess the legitimacy of publishers and he also provides updates in the field of open-access scholarly publishing at http://scholarlyoa.com/ He has also begun to provide a list of Misleading Metrics http://scholarlyoa.com/other-pages/misleading-metrics/ which documents companies that “purport to provide valid scholarly metrics at the researcher, article, or journal level.”