

New project led by ISSN US Centre: Assessing Scholarly Journals: Predatory or Just ‘Born’ in the Wrong Country?

The U.S. ISSN Center is hosting three interns who are undertaking a project entitled, “Assessing Scholarly Journals: Predatory or Just ‘Born’ in the Wrong Country?” The project, overseen by director of the U.S. ISSN Center, Regina Romano Reynolds, with the assistance of ISSN senior librarian, Karen Ross, is being conducted remotely by an intern, Lashanah Thomas from the Library of Congress Internships and Fellowships Program and two interns from the University of Michigan’s School of Information, Annika Gidley and Joseph Starks.

The project’s goal is to explore the risk that characterizing journals as “predatory” might pose to legitimate journals from countries with less-developed publishing practices and to explore the role that the ISSN Network has in determining a journal’s quality. Many indexing services require a journal to have an ISSN before it can be considered for inclusion. Exploration of forces that might result in a journal from, for example, the Global South being mis-characterized as predatory can help prevent incorrect characterizations and promote a more global distribution of quality scholarly journals and publishing opportunities for scholars worldwide. Incorrect characterizations might also result in diminished chances of advancement for authors published in that journal; lack of visibility for valuable--possibly life-saving--research contained in that journal; or lack of visibility for important niche topics or disciplines presented in that journal. The interns will research scholarly and popular literature, conduct interviews, and observe U.S. ISSN Center processes. They will report their findings in a research report.

Interviews are currently underway with Gaëlle Béquet, director of the ISSN International Centre (ISSN IC) and Nathalie Cornic, Head of the Bibliographic Section at the ISSN IC, as well as with representatives of Latindex, DOAJ, CrossRef, Africa Journals Online, OASPA and potentially others. The understanding gained from this project may be helpful to journal publishers, the scholarly research community, Library of Congress recommenders, and the ISSN Network. The report will be made available within the Library of Congress and the ISSN Network and potentially form the basis of a professional article.

Regina Romano Reynolds, Director of the U.S. ISSN Center

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