

Communication

Jaime A. Teixeira da Silva*

Reflections on the disappearance of Dolos list, a now-defunct “predatory” publishing blacklist

<https://doi.org/10.1515/opis-2022-0136>

received August 10, 2022; accepted October 31, 2022.

Abstract: After the closure of Jeffrey Beall’s open access “predatory” publishing blacklists in mid-January of 2017, a new “predatory publishing” blacklist emerged in 2018, Dolos list. This blacklist, curated by “Professor Alexandre Georges”, became defunct sometime in late 2020 or early 2021 based on publicly available clues. In this paper, several aspects of this blacklist, as retrieved from the Internet Archive and ResearchGate, were examined, including the profile of “Alexandre Georges”. The veracity of this individual’s identity is questioned. Discussion is provided about the citation, use and promotion of Dolos list in the literature and on websites as a solution and/or resource pertaining to “predatory” publishing. Given the questionable nature of the now-defunct Dolos blacklist website, and the uncertainty regarding the veracity of its curator’s identity, the author holds the opinion that sites that continue to promote the Dolos list may also be spreading inaccurate information (i.e., misinformation) to academics.

Keywords: blacklists; false discovery; profiling and stigmatization; misinformation and disinformation.

1 The Dolos list, based on Jeffrey Beall blacklists, was born

One of the most reverberating events of the modern publishing era was the sudden closure of the open access (OA)-based “predatory” publishing blacklists and blog that were curated by Jeffrey Beall, a US librarian, who himself unilaterally closed down both (Beall, 2017). Mindful reflection is needed on the impact that Beall’s blog and actions had on many academics, policy groups, academic institutions, libraries, funders and others who had relied on those blacklists and blog to provide reliable information about select OA journals and publishers (Teixeira da Silva, 2020a). Most likely to reduce legal liability, Beall referred to entities on his blacklists as “potential, possible, or probable” predatory OA journals and publishers. Even though the Beall blacklists and blog no longer exist in their original format, the term “predatory publishing” continues to be intensively studied (Buitrago-Ciro and Bowker, 2021; Kendall, 2021).

After Beall’s blog and blacklists were deleted, Cabells’ blacklist, rebranded as Predatory Reports, emerged as the next likely contender for information on “predatory” publishing journals (Teixeira da Silva, 2020b; Kendall, 2021). However, that blacklist also has reliability and data integrity issues (Dony et al., 2020). One of the distracting elements behind the “predatory publishing” discourse was the abundance of editorials that relied on highly emotive language to bias the opinion of readers and thus academia, leaving many academics unclear of what journals or publishers, except for patently obvious cases, might actually be “predatory” (Inoue and Mills, 2021).

In 2018, another “predatory publishing” blacklist emerged, Dolos list, which claimed to have been based on Beall’s blacklists¹, and thus suffered from the same ills and flaws of Beall’s blacklists (Teixeira da Silva, 2017; Teixeira da Silva et al., 2022). Whereas Beall focused exclusively on OA, the curator of the Dolos list, “Alexandre Georges”, expanded or updated Beall’s blacklists with both OA and non-OA journals and publishers. Indeed, Olivarez et al. (2018) had already

¹ <https://www.professeur-alexandre-georges.info/dolos-list> (now defunct, and possibly with links to sites with malware, so readers are cautioned not to click this link, but instead to explore the content using the Internet Archive links in footnote 2)

*Corresponding author: Jaime A. Teixeira da Silva, Independent researcher, Ikenobe 3011-2, Kagawa-ken, 761-0799, Japan, E-mail: jaime-tex@yahoo.com

indicated that the issue of “predatory publishing” behavior was not limited exclusively to OA journals and publishers. Kendall and Linacre (2022) indicated further, in a post-publication analysis, that dozens of journals that were blacklisted by Beall were in fact also members of COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics), or indexed in Scopus or the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). Two contentious entries on those blacklists were Thieme and Taylor & Francis, which are widely considered to be whitelisted, status quo and safe-to-publish-in publishers with a wide repertoire of indexed, ranked and metricized journals, and both Open Access Scholarly Publisher’s Association (OASPA) members that purportedly follow rigorous codes of ethical conduct (OASPA, 2022). Kratochvíl et al. (2020) noted indexed journals and journals that did not meet COPE, OASPA, DOAJ and the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) criteria for reputable scholarly publishing practices, suggesting that not only were there classification weaknesses with Beall’s blacklists, but also with journals claiming to follow COPE, OASPA, DOAJ and the WAME best publishing practices. The Dolos list was short-lived, disappearing possibly in early 2021, as was appreciated from existing entries at the Internet Archive (Fig. 1A).²

The reasons behind the termination of the Dolos blacklist are unclear and unknown. Dolos list received some high-profile praise, and even an interview on the Editage website³. It was also cited by some papers on “predatory publishing” (Koçak, 2020; Koerber et al., 2020; Bakri and Shah, 2021; Pecorari, 2021). Based on clues left at ResearchGate and the Internet Archive, the Dolos list seems to have suddenly, without public notice or reason, been terminated or removed, resembling, in some ways, the termination of Beall’s blog and original blacklists. Also very similar to the problematic characterization- and classification-related issues that undermined the credibility of Beall’s blacklists, “Alexandre Georges” also did not indicate the precise criteria for blacklisting entries on the Dolos list, very importantly failing to indicate what criteria made them “predatory” (or other characteristics: see characterizations in the Fig. 1A legend). “Alexandre Georges” also failed to provide concrete evidence of publishing behavior that would have led to these entities meriting the “predatory” label. For example, an indication of language-related issues or 19 other ‘alarm signals’ assigned to each entry (Nejadghanbar and Hu, 2022) would have provided greater guidance to those academics who might have wanted to use, or rely on, the Dolos list.

It can thus be argued that the Dolos list was a source of at minimum, unreliable information, and at an extreme, misinformation. ResearchGate has several entries related to Dolos list within the context of “predatory” publishing⁴, as do some “medical publishing” websites.⁵ Similarly, some libraries, such as the University of Southern Mississippi in the US, promote Dolos list (Fig. 2). Some universities, such as the University of Indianapolis in the US, had promoted Dolos list until about May of 2021 (Fig. 3). Libraries and librarians play a core role in guiding academics about safe and reliable choices of journals for publication (Teixeira da Silva, 2022). Apt and appropriate classifications of journals or publishers by librarians can lead to their fair promotion (Frandsen et al., 2022).

2 Who is “Alexandre Georges”?

The veracity of the identity (as well as gender, affiliation, academic background and other academic aspects) of the Dolos list creator and curator, “Alexandre Georges”, is questioned because the identity could not be independently, confidently and/or reliably verified using publicly available documents. In such a circumstance, it cannot be ruled out that “Alexandre Georges” may be a group or a collective, although this possibility is currently conjecture. Although the name is French-sounding, some claimed “facts” on the *curriculum vitae*⁶ (Fig. 1B) and on the ResearchGate profile⁷ undermine the reliability of those documents (Teixeira da Silva et al., 2020). The emails provided in the “papers” by

² https://web.archive.org/web/2021*/https://www.professeur-alexandre-georges.info/dolos-list

³ <https://www.editage.com/insights/predatory-and-pseudo-scientific-publishing-a-major-threat-to-scientific-rigor-and-research>; <https://www.editage.com/insights/ja/node/11508> (March 14, 2019)

⁴ <https://www.researchgate.net/post/The-Dolos-list-and-the-scientific-community-A-special-relationship> (November 5, 2018); <https://www.researchgate.net/post/How-to-identify-a-predatory-publisher> (March 18, 2019)

⁵ <https://thepublicationplan.com/2020/11/10/predatory-journal-safelists-and-watchlists-who-decides/> (November 10, 2020)

⁶ <https://www.professeur-alexandre-georges.info/about-me>; <https://web.archive.org/web/20210127233158/https://www.professeur-alexandre-georges.info/curriculum-vitae>

⁷ <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Alexandre-Georges>

A Dolos list

List of predatory, parasitic, or pseudoscientific **publishers and journals**

Because Science does not need lack of rigor and seriousness, we do not need them ...

To begin, I welcome some of our newcomers to the list:

Nexus Magazine
 Taylor & Francis and Dove Press
 (Parts of Informa - Statement [here](#))
 La Revue d'Homéopathie
 Regulatory Toxicology and Pharmacology
 Homeopathy
 Directory of Open Access Journals
 l'Opinion
 (Statement [here](#))
 NoFakeScience
 IREF

(A political organization disseminating pseudo-scientific information by presenting itself as a research institute)

VDM Publishnig

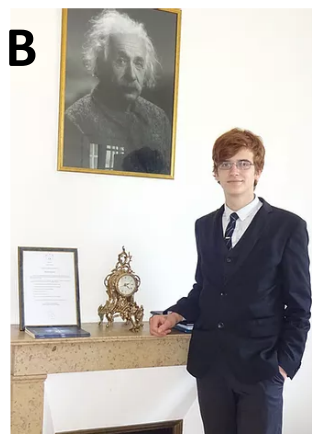
(With all their academic publishing subsidiaries, including Lambert Academic Publishing)

And to all others newcomers ...

For an element to be added, it is necessary that it has committed one of the aforementioned faults in the 6 years preceding its examination. For a withdrawal request to be validated, it must be justified by an error on the part of my office or by irreproachable behavior in the 6 years following the addition to the list. Threats of lawsuit and other pressures could be published or simply not considered. Some journals are definitely on the list. The reasons will be indicated and it will be useless for these journals or publishers to request a withdrawal.

To submit another suspect publisher or journal, please use the [contact section](#) of this website and indicate in subject: Dolos list - request for addition.

There are other lists from which this list is based, including <https://beallslist.weebly.com> which is based on the [Beall's List](#). In addition to the publishers and journals they provide, the Dolos list provides additional elements and follows stricter rules for addition and withdrawal. Moreover, I think that when we designate a set of publishers to be parasitic or predatory, we should not do it anonymously - although I understand the problems and pressures that managers of other lists prefer to avoid.



Professor Alexandre GEORGES

Researcher in Theoretical Physics specializing in Cosmology, author, former director of research program in nuclear physics, Dolos list administrator, academic teacher ... But young scientist above all!

On my website, I will share with you my curriculum, informations about my professional activities, news about me, but also my publications, reactions, and passions.

Having retired to a small town in Great Britain (I returned to France a few weeks ago), I can, while continuing to manage my regular business, devote more time to my personal research work.

I hope you enjoy reading the articles I will publish here ...

Figure 1: Screenshots of select text from the Internet Archive showing how Dolos list, a blacklist that was based on Jeffrey Beall's blacklists, became defunct, perhaps in late 2020 or early 2021. (A) The website indicated that it "records predatory, parasitic, or pseudoscientific publishers and journals, doubtful newspapers, false whitelists, organizations promoting pseudoscientific informations, and dubious or fake conferences organizers", although the criteria to classify any entries, or the precise classification of any of the entries into these categories, were not described. (B) The curator of Dolos list was indicated as "Professor Alexandre Georges", although there is reasonable doubt regarding the veracity of the identity and/or associated stated qualifications. Sources: (A) <https://web.archive.org/web/20201130134954/https://www.professeur-alexandre-georges.info/dolos-list> (November 30, 2020); (B) <https://web.archive.org/web/20210118224123/https://www.professeur-alexandre-georges.info/> (January 18, 2021). Screenshots taken on January 6, 2022.

+ How to Identify Predatory Journals & Conferences

— Lists of Predatory Journals & Conferences

Please note: Just because a journal or conference is not on any of the lists below does not mean the journal or conference is not predatory.

Predatory Journals / Publishers

[Beall's List](#)

[Dolos' List](#) ←

[Stop Predatory Journals' List](#)

Figure 2: Example of a US library at the University of Southern Mississippi, curated by a librarian, Samuel Bruton, that continues to promote the Dolos list. Screenshot source: https://www.usm.edu/research-integrity/predatory_journals_conferences.php. Screenshot taken on January 6, 2022 (verified on October 12, 2022).

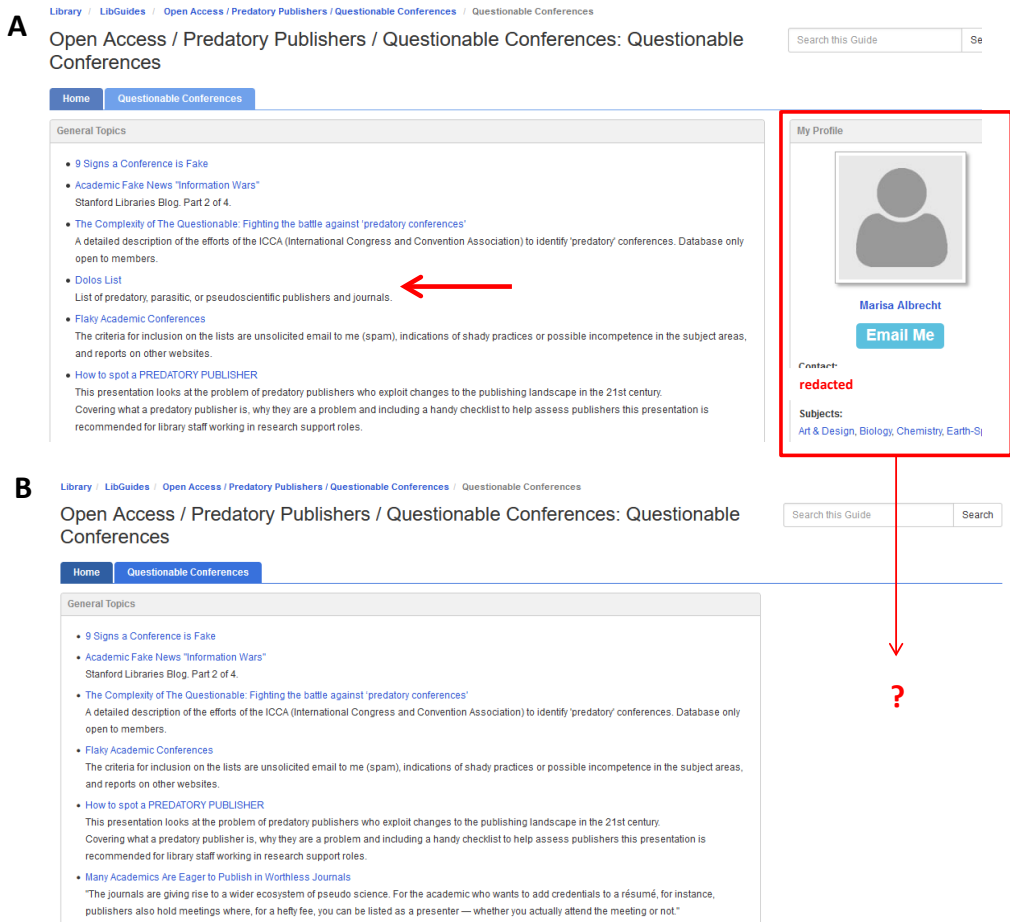


Figure 3: Example of a US library at the University of Indianapolis that was actively promoting Dolos list, until about May, 2021 (A), but has since removed that source (B). Notice the removal of the librarian contact name and contacts (A vs B). Screenshot source: <https://libguides.indy.edu/c.php?g=981357&p=7095715>. Screenshots taken on May 30, 2021 (A) and on January 6, 2022 (B).

“Alexandre Georges”, as well as on the Dolos list website, bounce, so the author cannot be contacted. Moreover, the stated affiliations do not seem to be accurate. In one case, the claim “a junior member of the Société Française de Physique”, was verified to be false in an email (July 12, 2021) by the Société Française de Physique. The qualifications⁸ could also not be independently or publicly verified, despite multiple contacts with French authorities by the author in 2021.

“Alexandre Georges” claims to be a “Professor”, suggesting an affiliation with an academic institute and a robust academic career, including publishing repertoire, which are not suggested by the 13 items at ResearchGate, most of which are preprints. Over eight years, these 13 publications have amassed four citations in total. One possibility is that “Alexandre Georges” is a pseudonymous identity. In the age of fake elements and fake science, it is difficult to hold pseudonymous identities ethically accountable (Rivera and Teixeira da Silva, 2021).

3 Reflection on the consequences of the continued use of or reliance on Dolos list

Apart from the potentially unscholarly aspects argued earlier related to the reliance on faulty, incomplete and potentially erroneous blacklists (Teixeira da Silva and Tsigaris, 2018, 2020; Tsigaris and Teixeira da Silva, 2021), as is the case with Beall’s blacklists and the Dolos list, the wider consequence would be the citation of these blacklists as useful or reliable sources of information in academic papers, or as sources of advice on websites, even if there is a risk that the Dolos list is a source of misinformation and/or disinformation.

A July 2022 search on Google Scholar revealed three research papers (Koerber et al., 2020; Bakri and Shah, 2021; Pecorari, 2021) and one editorial (Koçak, 2020) that cited the Dolos list. In the case of Koerber et al. (2020), the Dolos list was extensively cited, and some key advice and conclusions of that paper were based on this blacklist. Sensationalist media and erroneous editorials can promote, using bias and hype, flawed blacklists as if they were valid sources of reliable scholarly advice and information (Teixeira da Silva and Tsigaris, 2019). In much the same way, academic papers face the same risk.

4 Conclusion

Ultimately, the onus is on “Alexandre Georges” to publicly address why the Dolos list was terminated, and to provide reasons for the sudden termination of that website. “Alexandre Georges” should also offer clarity regarding several aspects related to the *curriculum vitae* and other aspects that were called into question in this opinion paper. The continued use of blacklists, without careful reflection of their flaws, weaknesses and limitations, risks deepening the culture of divisiveness, discrimination and potentially false accusations within academia (Mills and Inoue, 2021; Teixeira da Silva and Kimotho, 2022). The precise identities of many “predatory” journals and publishers will likely remain unclear and in a gray zone (Yamada and Teixeira da Silva, 2022), despite claims to the contrary by some policy and thought “leaders” in this field of research (Grudniewicz et al., 2019). Finally, referring to blacklists as “watchlists” or whitelists as “safelists” (Koerber et al., 2020), supposedly in order to give them a socially “acceptable” stature, does not remove their inherent flaws and weaknesses.

Funding: None.

Conflicts of interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Authorship: The author contributed to all aspects of the ideas, investigation, writing, development and editing of the paper, and all its drafts.

⁸ <https://www.professeur-alexandre-georges.info/information-and-documentation>

References

- Bakri, S. J., & Shah S. M. (2021). Predatory conferences: calling for vigilance from ophthalmologists and vision scientists. *American Journal of Ophthalmology*, 230, 178–180. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajo.2021.03.027>
- Beall, J. (2017). What I learned from predatory publishers. *Biochemia Medica*, 27(2), 273–278. <https://doi.org/10.11613/BM.2017.029>
- Buitrago-Ciro, J., & Bowker, L. (2021). Does a predator need prey? Examining the evolving terminology of predatory publishing. *Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science*, 43(3), 195–216.
- Dony, C., Raskinet, M., Renaville, F., Simon, S., & Thirion, P. (2020). How reliable and useful is Cabell’s blacklist? A data-driven analysis. *LIBER Quarterly*, 30(1), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.18352/lq/10339>
- Frandsen, T. F., Lamptey, R. B., Bortey, E. M., Teye, V., & Owusu-Ansah, A. A. (2022). Implementation of promotion standards to discourage publishing in questionable journals: The role of the library. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 48(4), 102532. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2022.102532>
- Grudniewicz, A., Moher, D., Cobey, K.D., Bryson, G.L., Cukier, S., Allen, K., Arden, C., Balcom, L., Barros, T., Berger, M., Ciro, J.B., Cugusi, L., Donaldson, M.R., Egger, M., Graham, I.D., Hodgkinson, M., Khan, K.M., Mabizela, M., Manca, A., Milzow, K., Mouton, J., Muchenje, M., Olijhoek, T., Ommaya, A., Patwardhan, B., Poff, D., Proulx, L., Rodger, M., Severin, A., Strinzel, M., Sylos-Labini, M., Tamblyn, R., van Niekerk, M., Wicherts, J.M., & Lalu, M.M. (2019). Predatory journals: no definition, no defence. *Nature*, 576(7786), 210–212. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-019-03759-y>
- Inouye, K., & Mills, D. (2021). Fear of the academic fake? Journal editorials and the amplification of the ‘predatory publishing’ discourse. *Learned Publishing*, 34(3), 396–406. <https://doi.org/10.1002/leap.1377>
- Kendall, G. (2021). Beall’s legacy in the battle against predatory publishers. *Learned Publishing*, 34(3), 379–388. <https://doi.org/10.1002/leap.1374>
- Kendall, G., & Linacre, S. (2022). Predatory journals: Revisiting Beall’s research. *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 38(3), 530–543. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12109-022-09888-z>
- Koçak, Z. (2019). Precise and immediate action against predatory conferences. *Balkan Medical Journal*, 37(1), 1–2. <https://doi.org/10.4274/balkanmedj.galenos.2020.2020.1.001>
- Koerber, A., Starkey, J.C., Ardon-Dryer, K., Cummins, R.G., Eko, L., & Kee, K.F. (2020). A qualitative content analysis of watchlists vs safelists: How do they address the issue of predatory publishing? *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 46(6), 102236. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2020.102236>
- Kratochvíl, J., Plch, L., Sebera, M., & Koriřáková, E. (2020). Evaluation of untrustworthy journals: Transition from formal criteria to a complex view. *Learned Publishing*, 33(3), 308–322. <https://doi.org/10.1002/leap.1299>
- Mills, D., & Inoue, K. (2021). Problematizing ‘predatory publishing’: A systematic review of factors shaping publishing motives, decisions, and experiences. *Learned Publishing*, 34(2), 89–104. <https://doi.org/10.1002/leap.1325>
- OASPA (Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association). (2022). Members. <https://oaspa.org/membership/members/> (last accessed: October 29, 2022)
- Olivarez, J.D., Bales, S., Sare, L., & van Duinkerken, W. (2018). Format aside: applying Beall’s criteria to assess the predatory nature of both OA and non-OA library and information science journals. *College & Research Libraries*, 79(1), 52–67. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.79.1.52>
- Pecorari, D. (2021). Predatory conferences: What are the signs? *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 19(1), 343–361. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-021-09406-4>
- Rivera, H., & Teixeira da Silva, J.A. (2021) Retractions, fake peer review, and paper mills. *Journal of Korean Medical Science*, 36(24), e165. <https://doi.org/10.3346/jkms.2021.36.e165>
- Teixeira da Silva, J.A. (2017). Jeffrey Beall’s “predatory” lists must not be used: they are biased, flawed, opaque and inaccurate. *Bibliothecae.it*, 6(1), 425–436. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2283-9364/7044>
- Teixeira da Silva, J.A. (2020a). The ethical and academic implications of the Jeffrey Beall (www.scholarlyoa.com) blog shutdown. *Science and Engineering Ethics*, 26(6), 3465–3467. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11948-017-9905-3>
- Teixeira da Silva, J.A. (2020b). Cabell’s International publishing blacklist: An interview with Kathleen Berryman. *Journal of Radical Librarianship*, 6, 16–23.
- Teixeira da Silva, J.A. (2022). Academic librarians and their role in disseminating accurate knowledge and information about the gray zone in predatory publishing. *New Review of Academic Librarianship* (in press). <https://doi.org/10.1080/13614533.2022.2039242>
- Teixeira da Silva, J.A., Dobránszki, J., Al-Khatib, A., & Tsigaris, P. (2020). *Curriculum vitae*: challenges and potential solutions. *KOME*, 8(2), 109–127. <https://doi.org/10.17646/KOME.75672.52>
- Teixeira da Silva, J.A., & Kimotho, S.G. (2022). Signs of divisiveness, discrimination and stigmatization caused by Jeffrey Beall’s “predatory” open access publishing blacklists and philosophy. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 48(3), 102418. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2021.102418>
- Teixeira da Silva, J. A., Moradzadeh, M., Adjei, K. O. K., Owusu-Ansah, C. M., Balehegn, M., Faúndez, E. I., Janodia, M. D., & Al-Khatib, A. (2022). An integrated paradigm shift to deal with “predatory” publishing. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 48(1), 102481. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2021.102481>
- Teixeira da Silva, J.A., & Tsigaris, P. (2018). What value do whitelists and blacklists have in academia? *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 44(6), 781–792. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2018.09.017>

- Teixeira da Silva, J.A., & Tsigaris, P. (2019). How hyped media and misleading editorials can influence impressions about Beall's lists of "predatory" publications. *Journal of Information, Communication & Ethics in Society*, 17(4), 438–444. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JICES-06-2018-0059>
- Teixeira da Silva, J.A., & Tsigaris, P. (2020). Issues with criteria to evaluate blacklists: An epidemiological approach. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 46(1), 102070. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2019.102070>
- Tsigaris, P., & Teixeira da Silva, J.A. (2021). Why blacklists are not reliable: A theoretical framework. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 47(1), 102266. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2020.102266>
- Yamada, Y., & Teixeira da Silva, J.A. (2022) A psychological perspective towards understanding the objective and subjective gray zones in predatory publishing. *Quality & Quantity*, 56(6), 4075–4087. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-021-01307-3>