

Research Intelligence

# The Scopus solution to predatory journals

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## Agenda

- Predatory publishing is on the rise
- Scopus content curation program:
  - Re-evaluation
  - Radar
- ‘The rule of three’



# Predatory journals and publishing



predatory publishing



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In academic **publishing**, **predatory** open access **publishing** is an exploitative open-access **publishing** business model that involves charging publication fees to authors without providing the editorial and **publishing** services associated with legitimate journals (open access or not).

[Predatory open access publishing - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Predatory_open_access_publishing)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Predatory\\_open\\_access\\_publishing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Predatory_open_access_publishing)

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## Predatory journals are on the rise

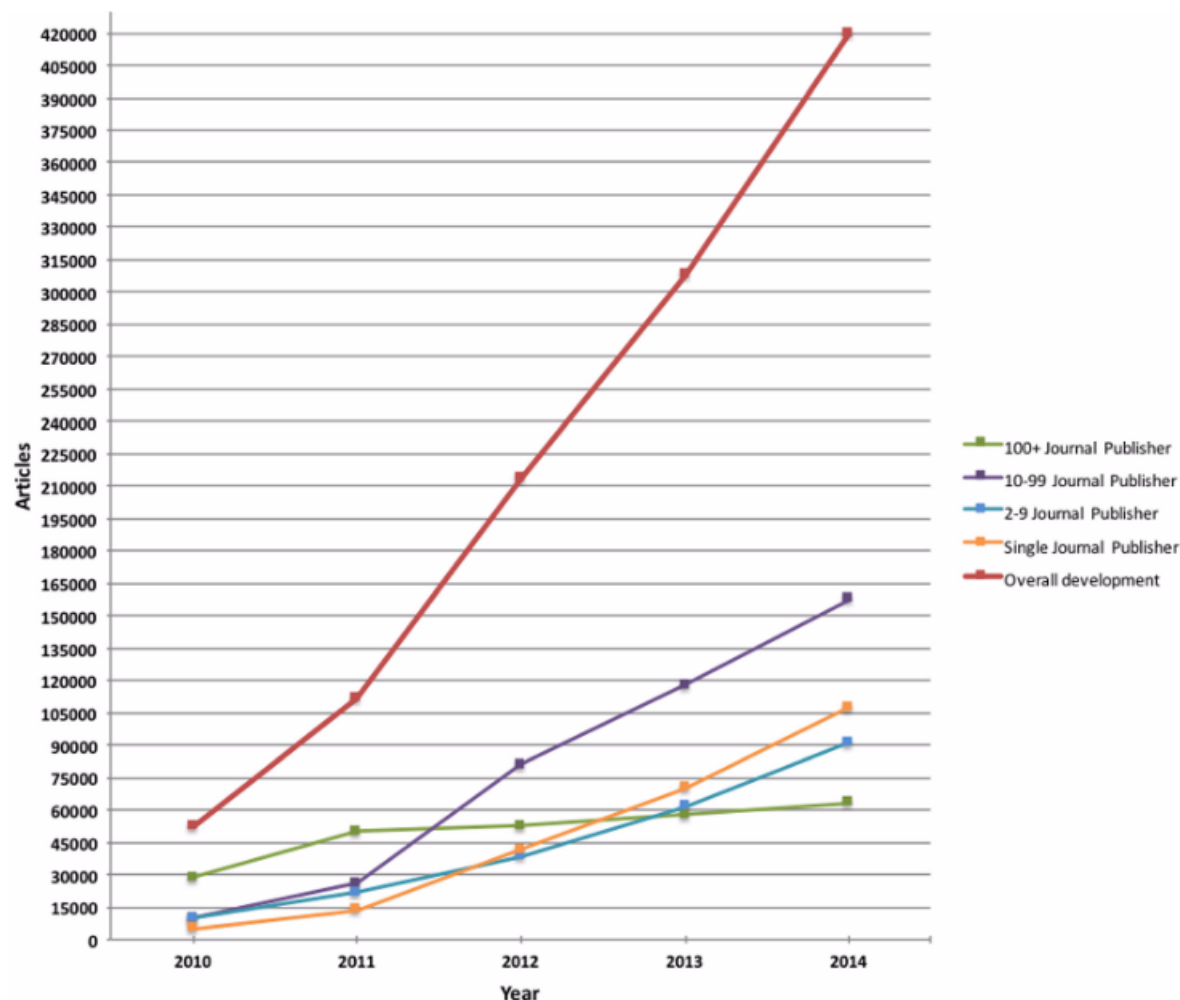


Fig. 3 The development of predatory open access article volumes from 2010 to 2014

*‘Such Open Access journals, of which there are thousands, charge authors hundreds of dollars in return for nonexistent peer review and rapid publication.’*

*‘...the journals dumped more than 420,000 articles into the market in 2014, up from 53,000 in 2010.’*

# Scopus is dealing with this situation on regular basis



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## Why Kazakhstan scientists is not necessary to feed the "predatory journals"

Process The science

June 17, 2016

In awarding academic degrees and titles of Kazakhstan scientists to consider exclusively the scientific articles included in the international citation database Web of Science Core Collection of Thomson Reuters

According to the order № 128 Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan from March 31, 2011, by the applicant for the degree of Doctor PhD requires at least one publication in an international scientific journal, which has a positive rating in the bases of the world's media companies. Similar requirements are set for applicants for the title of associate professor (at least **two articles**) and professors (**five articles**). The state encourages this process is the fact that since 2011 pays a subscription to information resources of companies such as Thomson Reuters and Springer. As a result of the end of 2015 the number of publications of Kazakhstani scientists in the ranking international journals has increased dramatically: in the database Web of Science Core Collection (ThomsonReuters) - **2.2 times**, Scopus' (of Elsevier) - **2.7 times**. It should be noted that the quality of the articles published in the journals of these



Thomson Reuters has awarded scientists of Kazakhstan and Central Asia

Thomson Reuters Company, a global leader in providing analytical ...

Studies conducted in the JSC "National Scientific and Technical Information Center" (JSC NCSTI), showed that the problem of placement of articles Kazakhstan authors in **"predatory journals"** caught in the "list of Jeffrey Bill", is connected with the database Scopus citation, owned by Elsevier. **For example, in 2011 out of 569 articles written with the participation of Kazakhstan authors and caught in the citation database Scopus 'in' predatory journals "were placed all 3 of the article. In 2012 the number of such articles has increased dramatically to 89 of the 830 caught in Scopus. However, already in 2013, "predators" published nearly a third of all articles Kazakhstan authors (533 from 1643). This number has increased even more in 2014, accounting for 715 of the 1784 articles of our scientists noted in Scopus.**

It should be noted that the base of citing company Thomson Reuters (Web of Science Core Collection) shows half the number of publications by Russian scientists (in 2014 - 881 article), but the "predatory" editions hardly fit into this framework.

**In this situation, it is possible, Kazakhstan should completely abandon the use of the base citation Scopus of the Elsevier. When conferring the degree of Doctor of Science and Doctor of a PhD.**

## Predatory journals in Scopus

Facebook posting on 10 predatory journals covered in Scopus:

№	Журнал	ISSN	Издательство	Количество статей
1	Research Journal of Pharmaceutical Biological and Chemical Sciences	0975-8585	RJPBCS	41
2	International Journal of Environmental and Science Education	1306-3065	iSER Publications	29
3	Indian Journal of Science and Technology	0974-6846	Indian Society for Education and Environment	22
4	International Review of Management and Marketing	2146-4405	Econjournals	17
5	Social Sciences Pakistan	1818-5800	Medwell Journals	14
6	International Electronic Journal of Mathematics Education	1306-3030	iSER Publications	13
7	International Journal of Applied Engineering Research	0973-4562	Research India Publications	12
8	International Journal of Economics And Financial Issues	2164-4138	Econjournals	10
9	Journal of Theoretical and Applied Information Technology	1992-8645	ARPN Journals	8
10	International Journal of Chemical Sciences	0972-768X	Sadguru Publications	6

All 10 titles have been Re-evaluated by the CSAB and 8/10 were discontinued from Scopus coverage.

2/10 Were deemed as meeting the Scopus content selection criteria and coverage is continued in Scopus.

**Next to discontinuing predatory  
& underperforming journals  
from Scopus, we also aim to:**



# Try to prevent authors from submitting papers to predatory journals

From: Elsevier public media:

Efforts to detect and eliminate predatory journals are leading to results, but are only part of the story. **Real success requires discouraging authors to submit to predatory journals. Most authors are not aware of the malpractices of these journals.** They are lured into submitting their manuscripts by being promised indexation in abstract and citation databases while their submission fees end up in the pockets of illegitimate 'publishers' that do not provide any value to the content like established publishers do. This **problem is especially prevalent** in emerging science nations such as **China, Russia, India and Brazil and Kazakhstan.**



Is a title indexed in Scopus? A reminder to check before you publish



*"Elsevier has also done extensive work addressing the issue of journals that have been suspended from its research publication database Scopus for inappropriate publishing behaviour – this is an ongoing task that ensures that the papers that we do measure really represent good quality research and those from suspended are not counted."*

— Times Higher Education: World University Rankings blog: what's new for 2016-2017?

This quote is a testament to the positive impact of the independent Scopus Content Selection and Advisory Board (CSAB) working with the Scopus Content Product team to ensure that both quality standards and publication practice standards are in place for Scopus. As part of this effort, several initiatives have been adopted over the past two years helping to reinforce that content indexed in Scopus represents "good quality research," and that underperforming titles (as determined by the CSAB re-evaluation process), or titles for which concerns have been raised, are identified and their ongoing content coverage discontinued.

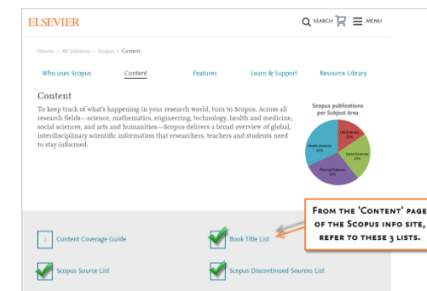


When a title no longer meets the quality standards of Scopus it is added to the 'Discontinued Sources list,' maintained on the Scopus info site. Publishing this list, along with both the source title and book title lists, provides transparency into what is, or will no longer be, covered in Scopus; important information to have at hand when you are looking for which titles you want to publish in.

In fact, just over two years ago we published [this](#) blog post about journals that purport to be indexed by Scopus but really are not, and how to check if a title is truly indexed in Scopus before you publish. Both the large number of daily reads this post still receives, and feedback we receive from authors about journals claiming to be indexed in Scopus but indeed are not, indicates that now is a good time for a quick refresher on how to know which titles are indexed in Scopus, which are not, and which will no longer continue to be indexed going further.

Here's how to verify if a title is indexed in Scopus:

- **Check our title lists.** You don't need access to Scopus to find out what is and what is NOT covered, the information is publicly available from our info page. There are 3 lists to check against:
  - Scopus Source List: The complete list of indexed journal titles
  - Book Title List: The complete list of indexed book titles
  - Scopus Discontinued Sources List: The list of journal titles for which indexing has been discontinued (and as of which volume and issue)
- **Find it in Scopus.** You can also go to [Scopus.com](#) itself to check. Open the "Sources" page and search for a title, publisher or ISSN.
- **Ask!** When in doubt, contact the [Scopus Helpdesk](#) and one of our Customer Service representatives can let you know if a title is indexed (or is going to be indexed).



*Note:* There are some instances where a journal might be listed as 'discontinued' in Scopus.com, but not be included in the 'Scopus Discontinued Sources List.' This includes:

- If Scopus has not received journal content from the publisher in the last three years, the title will appear as 'discontinued.' Once recent material is received from the publisher and loaded to Scopus, then the 'discontinued' note will be removed once the Scopus Source page is refreshed.
- When a journal is truly discontinued by the publisher. When this happens, the 'discontinued' notification will appear 3 years after the discontinuation. This is an automated process.

As an additional reminder, Scopus does not ask authors to pay in order to be indexed. For a journal (and consequently its articles) to be indexed in Scopus, a publisher must proactively suggest the title for indexing. The journal title is evaluated by the independent CSAB as to whether or not it will be included in the Scopus (see more on [Scopus journal evaluation](#))

Source: <https://blog.scopus.com/posts/is-a-title-indexed-in-scopus-a-reminder-to-check-before-you-publish>

# Re-evaluation

## Structural approach: Ongoing content curation to ensure continuous high quality content

Curation of the full journal base is essential and expected by our customers and users.



Direct feedback from users and stakeholders on poor performing journals

Identification of poor performing journals using metrics and benchmarks

“Radar” to predict journals with outlier performance

Review:

Re-evaluation by the Content Selection & Advisory Board (CSAB)

Curate:

Content Curation

# Scopus

# Transparent, annual re-evaluation process to ensure titles continue to meet high quality standards

## Full Scopus Journal base

### Year 1

Analyze full Scopus journal corpus performance based on set metrics & benchmarks

Flag underperforming journals & inform journal publishers

### Year 2

Analyze full Scopus journal corpus performance based on set metrics & benchmarks

Flag underperforming journals & inform journal publishers

### CSAB review

If a journal underperforms for 2 consecutive years, CSAB will re-evaluate the title based on Scopus selection criteria

Flagged journals for which concerns are raised, CSAB will re-evaluate the title based on Scopus selection criteria

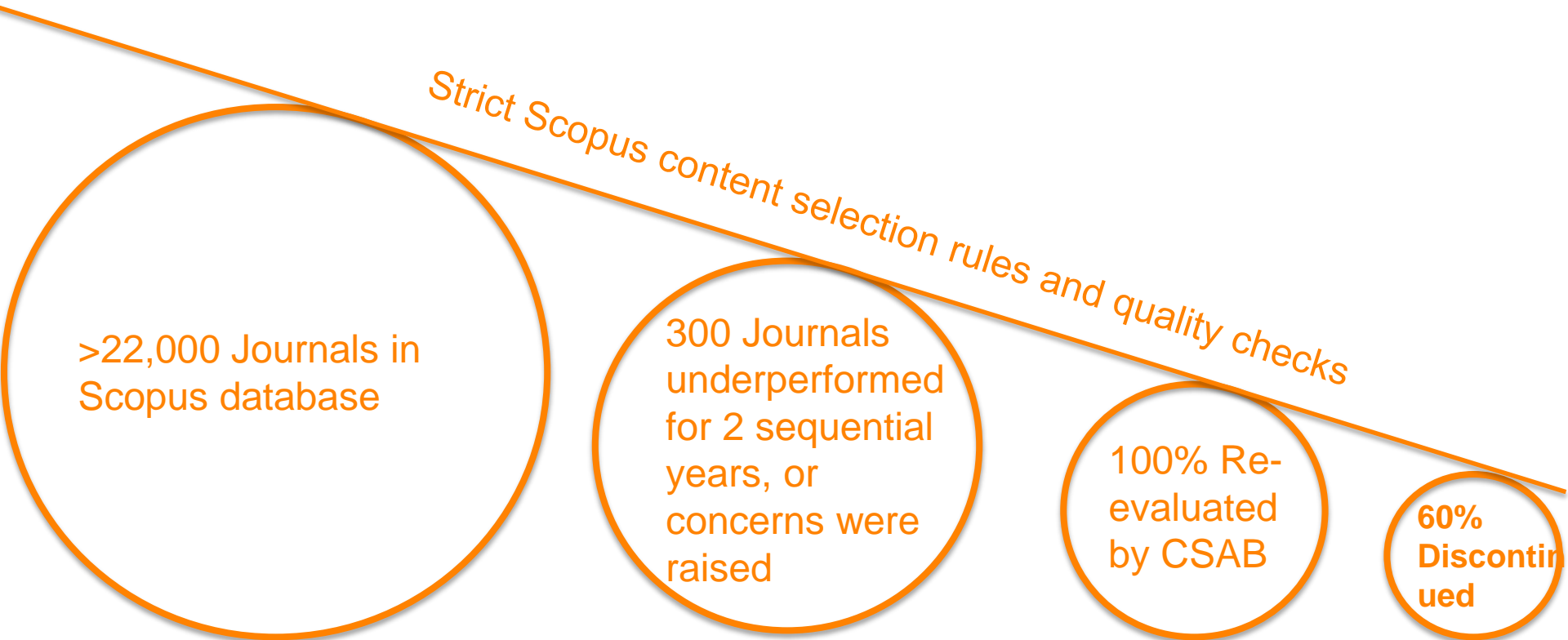
### CSAB decision

Continue forward flow

or

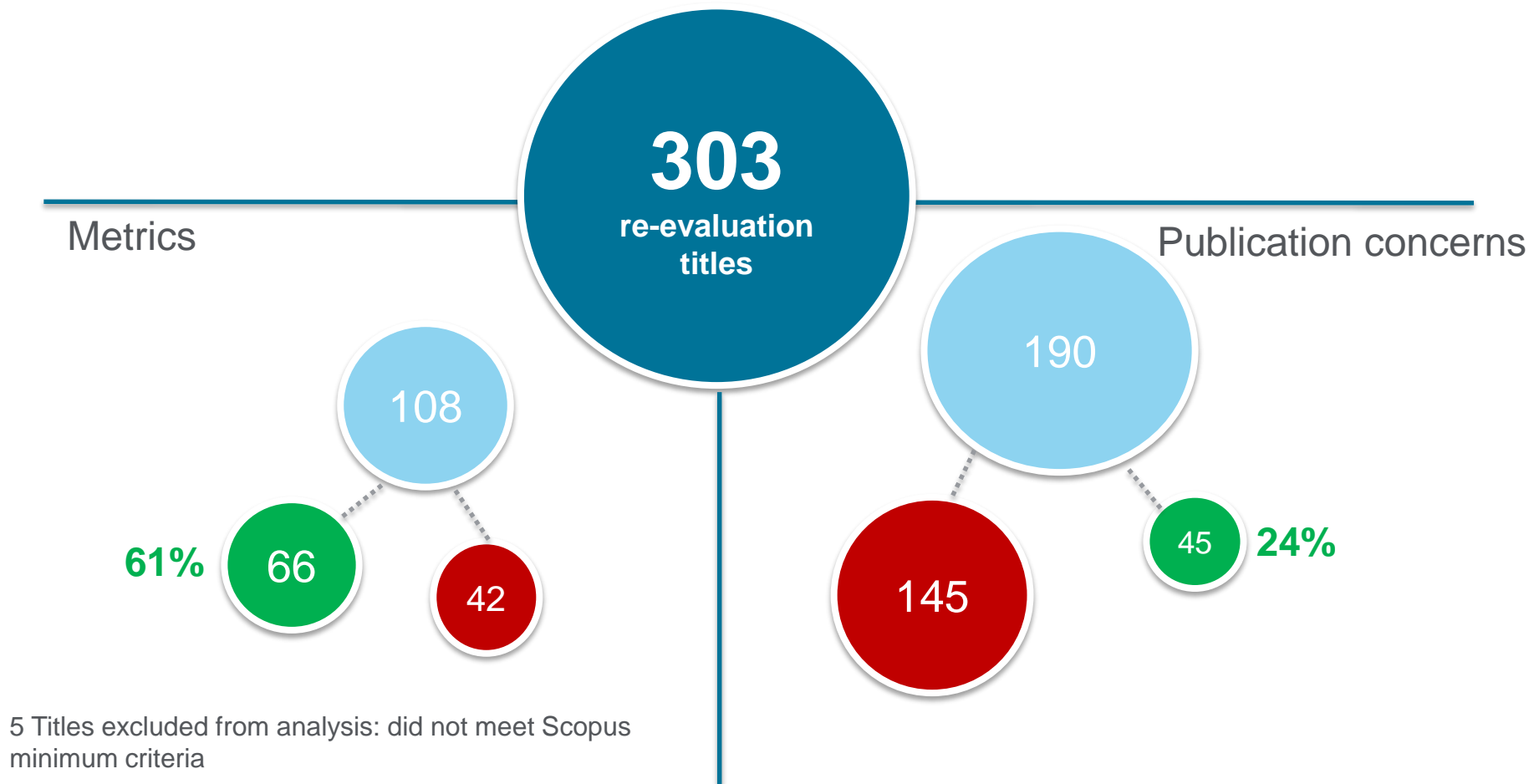
Discontinue forward flow

## First round of Re-evaluation: the results



- All journal publishers were informed by Scopus of the Re-evaluation outcome of their journal in December 2016.
- If discontinued = Journal forward flow discontinued per January 1, 2017.

## Re-evaluation 2016 results broken down



WoS suppressed 18 titles in total in 2016, per <http://ipscience-help.thomsonreuters.com/incitesLiveJCR/JCRGroup/titleSuppressions.html>.

## Radar: Identify and filter out outlier journals


**Outlier journals** are journals indexed in Scopus which show **outlier behavior** and **rapid, unexplainable changes in behavior**.

Journals showing that behavior are **red flags** as this may point to (the beginning of) **malpractice**.

# Example of outlier behavior and changes in trends

Source: a biotech journal

Year	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> 2014	(991)
<input type="radio"/> 2013	(375)
<input type="radio"/> 2012	(63)
<input checked="" type="radio"/> 2011	(61)

 Rapid output surge

Country/Territory		Country/Territory	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> India	(45)	<input checked="" type="radio"/> China	(1,233)
<input type="radio"/> Nigeria	(3)	<input checked="" type="radio"/> India	(142)
<input type="radio"/> China	(2)	<input type="radio"/> Iran	(29)
<input type="radio"/> Morocco	(2)	<input type="radio"/> Morocco	(13)
<input type="radio"/> Algeria	(1)	<input type="radio"/> Egypt	(11)
<input type="radio"/> Brazil	(1)	<input type="radio"/> Nigeria	(10)
<input type="radio"/> Iran	(1)	<input type="radio"/> United States	(9)
<input type="radio"/> Japan	(1)	<input type="radio"/> Malaysia	(8)
<input type="radio"/> Palestine	(1)	<input type="radio"/> South Korea	(8)
<input type="radio"/> South Korea	(1)	<input type="radio"/> Algeria	(5)

Unexplainable change in publishing country, its an Indian journal

Affiliation		Affiliation	
<input type="radio"/> Sri Venkateswara University		<input type="radio"/> Hebei United University	(30)
<input type="radio"/> Shree Ramkrishna Institute of Applied Sciences		<input type="radio"/> SASTRA University	(22)
<input type="radio"/> University of Ibadan		<input type="radio"/> Wuhan Institute of Physical Education	(20)
<input type="radio"/> University of Mysore		<input type="radio"/> Jilin University	(19)
<input type="radio"/> NMAM Institute of Technology		<input type="radio"/> University of Science and Technology Liaoning	(16)
<input type="radio"/> St Francis College For Women-Begumpet		<input type="radio"/> North China University of Water Conservancy and Electric Power	(16)
<input type="radio"/> Kuvempu University		<input type="radio"/> Sri Venkateswara University	(15)
<input type="radio"/> Kakatiya University		<input type="radio"/> Jilin Normal University	(15)
<input type="radio"/> Kurukshetra University		<input type="radio"/> Jiangxi University of Finance and EcoNomics	(15)
<input type="radio"/> P. A. College of Engineering		<input type="radio"/> Zhejiang University	(14)

Indian institutes

Chinese institutes

Chinese authors publishing in a journal with title 'An Indian Journal'



## Radar, to be launched Q3 2017

Journals flagged by the Radar tool will be added to the Re-evaluation program and will be re-evaluated by the CSAB.

To keep track of which titles have been discontinued from Scopus coverage due to underperformance, check **Scopus Discontinued Sources list** (300 titles):

### Content

To keep track of what's happening in your research world, turn to Scopus. Across all research fields—science, mathematics, engineering, technology, health and medicine, social sciences, and arts and humanities—Scopus delivers a broad overview of global, interdisciplinary scientific information that researchers, teachers and students need to stay informed.

> Content Coverage Guide

> Book Title List

> Scopus Source List

> Scopus Discontinued Sources List



# Why is it important to keep track of Scopus Discontinued Sources list?

Elsevier > All Solutions > Scopus > Content

Who uses Scopus

Content

Features

Learn & Support

Resource Library

## Content

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- **National Research Assessments** and **University Rankings** must be aware as coverage changes will alter their output.
- **SciVal** outputs will be impacted due to the discontinued sources.
- **Authors** to not publish their articles in underperforming journals.

## ‘The rule of three’

- **Predatory publishing** is on the **rise** around the globe
- **Re-evaluation** is an **annual** running program where **all journals** covered in Scopus are checked against set **metrics & benchmarks**. If journals do not meet any of the benchmarks for **2 years in a row**, the journal will be re-evaluated by the **CSAB**.
- **Radar** tool will flag **outlier journals**. These titles will be **re-evaluated** by the **CSAB**.



# Research Intelligence

Спасибо!

**Scopus info site:** <https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/scopus>

**Scopus blog:** <http://blog.scopus.com>

**Webinar series:** <http://blog.scopus.com/webinars>

**Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/scopus](http://www.twitter.com/scopus)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/elsevierscopus](http://www.facebook.com/elsevierscopus)

**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/scopus-an-eye-on-global-research>

**YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/c/ScopusDotCom>

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