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Junkification and the power of bibliodiversity

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Abstract

Junkification is a word used to describe the proliferation of low quality digital materials. A recent peer-reviewed article has applied this term to academic publishing. To configure this alignment, these researchers build and reinforce the ideological confluence between open access and predatory journals. This inelegant assumption reifies the capacity of refereed research to circulate beyond paid subscriptions and high 'author processing fees.' Noting the corporatization of academic publishing, this article demonstrates the power of bibliodiversity, and the necessity to separate the word 'predatory' from the rigorous, transparent processes of refereeing in diamond open access journals.

Keywords: *Junkification, bibliodiversity, predatory publishing, open access, diamond open access, university journals.*

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1. Introduction

Junkification is a provocative word. The term originally tracked the impact of mass produced, cheap, and poor quality food on both obesity and starvation rates (Albritton, 2013). The scope of its application widened to describe an expansive cheapening of life goals and directions (Brooks, 2024). From these origins, the term transformed from an analogue description of excessive food cultures and into a metaphor for pervasive digitization (Brabazon, 2016). It was a semiotic container to describe inferior quality content, carried via digital platforms (Lubin, 2024). The markers or proxies for this junkification include the proliferation of third party sellers on Amazon (Herrman, 2023; Dubé, 2024), the transformation of Etsy from a craft site and into a mass produced, AI-fuelled, global mall (Kaitlyn, 2023), and the expansion of 'sponsored content' that marginalizes and squeezes the quality search returns from the Google search engine. Cory Doctorow deployed a distinct word to describe a similar process: "enshittification" (2022; 2023a; 2023b, 2024). It became the word of the year in 2023. Low-quality materials – delivered at speed - provide the dopamine hit of engagement, but without quality control, guardrails, currency, accuracy or appropriateness. Commodification is valued more than quality.

In 2025, junkification was activated to probe the nature of academic publishing, and particularly academic journals. While a recent word to be circulating in academic life, Rhodes and Linnenluecke revisited old intellectual debates through this new trope (2025). They argued that through the commodification of academic outputs, academic research is also being junkified. They particularly focused on peer-reviewed articles. Junkification describes the proliferation of low quality content online that – argued Rhodes and Linnenluecke - was noticeable in 2023 and 2024. They stated that, "as commercial publishing interests converge with new technologies, a system emerges where scholars increasingly bear the costs of low-esteem publishing that limits genuine scholarly contributions" (2025). From this first taste of their analysis, the challenges and concerns with their argument emerge.

Their assumption is that when commercial publishing converges with new technology, then scholars must pay – financially - for low esteem publishing, which subsequently limits the capacity and quality of scholarship. There is then an unfortunate detour in their argument. Certainly, particular neoliberal alignments of commercial publishing and new technology can cause problems. But the next step is not inevitable: that scholars then pay for low-quality publishing. In reality, there are myriad options available for dissemination through a diversity of journals, including platinum or diamond open access. Bibliodiversity is powerful.

My article activates (post)junkification, deploying the prefix in alignment with (post)colonialism and (post)modernism. The bracketed prefix problematizes the word that follows, asking for revisionism and interrogation. The goal of my research is to empty the contents of Rhodes and Linnenluecke's deployment of junkification, to evaluate the welcome complexity of open access through platinum and diamond open access publishing, including university journals. With no cost demanded of authors/researchers or readers, this different and defiant trajectory for academic dissemination deserves both scrutiny and attention. Particularly, these international movements must be disconnected from the assumptions of either junkification or – the unfortunate phrase once more revisited by Rhodes and Linnenluecke – predatory publishing. The importance of bibliodiversity, to widen the languages of academic publishing and the geographic origin of articles, also addresses the disciplines excluded from aggregators such as Scopus and Web of Science. Therefore, the (post) in front of junkification opens a space for a new way of thinking, researching, writing, and disseminating, creating opportunities for (post)corporatization of academic publishing.

2. To the junk yard

Rhodes and Linnenluecke use junkification as a lens to critique particular modes of research dissemination, conflating junkification with the institutional pressures to publish in "elite journals" (2025, 2). The binary opposition they construct is junkified journals and elite journals. This taxonomy is both reified and simplistic. There are so many ways to value and evaluate research beyond this binary, spanning impact narratives (Hellström and Hellström, 2017), engagement strategies (Bowen et al., 2022), altmetrics (Erdt et al., 2016), research education, development and training (Ramkalawan and Dieppe, 2008), and a diversity of quality measures (Lansley, 2007).

Noting this plurality of research assessment options and audiences for academic research, the focus on Tier 1 journals is inelegant and incorrect. National review systems such as the RAE in the United Kingdom, which activated peer review protocols for all disciplines and articles rather than journal quality or impact proxies, found no correlation between the tier of journals and the quality of the actual article. This lack of correlation was confirmed by the disciplines most invested in journal rankings, including the business disciplines (Kelly, Morris, and Harvey, 2009). This dissonance in a national research assessment, which did not align journal ranking and the quality of research, is meaningful and important. However, the journal ranking as a proxy for quality remains. Noting such an assumption, the testimony of two senior researchers, including a member of an RAE assessment panel, is crucial.

> *We can find no credible basis for substituting the use of a journals list for the assessments made by a panel ... We are also concerned about the impact of fetishized journal ranking lists on innovative work. Important new theories and perspectives can be difficult to publish in established outlets (Tourish and Willmott, 2015).*

They reported that the proxy of a highly ranked journal receiving a '4' – that is world-leading research – was incorrect when verified by peer review. Instead, these articles, through peer review, were granted a '3.' From this empirical intervention, their argument was even more concerning. Tourish and Willmott argue that journal tiers, ranks, and lists narrow the capacity of research and reveal a "conservative effect on scholarship by exerting a homogenizing influence over research activity" (2015). Put another way, and inserting their argument into the (post)junkification trope offered in this article, journal ranking reduces bibliodiversity.

Instead of recognizing the complexity of this history and argument, Rhodes and Linnenluecke create a very simplified system of Tier 1 journals with long review times, Tier 2, with increasingly long review times, and a third category, which they log as the pay to publish, commercialized open access, which they label "predatory journals" (2025, 1) Quality sinks through each step down their tiers. Through this three-tier taxonomy, they confirmed that,

> *Digital and OA models, initially showing great promise for democratising access to research findings through nearly universal digital access, have in many cases been co-opted by for-profit publishers for commercial publishing gain (2025, 2).*

It is important to note the lack of precision and specificity in their analysis. 'In many cases' is not an accurate modifier for the scope and scale of 'the problems' in academic publishing, particularly when longitudinal data sets are available. There are also diverse types and modes of open access, and attendant international verification organizations and policies. Green Open Access, also described as self-archiving, enables provisionally published work, often in a preprint version, to be available from a personal or institutional repository. Gold Open Access describes a peer-reviewed publication that is disseminated at no cost to readers, but authors pay a 'processing fee' to publish their work. Thirdly, there is platinum or diamond open access, where neither the reader nor the author pays for the dissemination of the research.

Intriguingly and significantly, platinum or diamond open access is not mentioned in the Rhodes and Linnenluecke article (2025). In research, as in life, what is not discussed is more important than what is presented, evaluated and analysed. As early as

2013, Fuchs and Sandoval stressed the importance of scholars, universities, libraries, policy makers and the union movement recognizing the value and importance of diamond open access (Fucks and Sandoval, 2013). This axiological imperative was dissonant from Rhodes and Linnenluecke, who ignore the diversity of open access models and pathways. Instead, their axiological configuration is founded on the binary opposition of 'quality' and 'predatory' journals. They tracked quality articles through the proxy of journals listed in Web of Science and Scopus, without any questioning, discussion, or recognition of the structural and disciplinary limitations of these 'services.' While described as "the titans of bibliographic information" (Pranckutė, 2021), these 'titans' have been replaced by a faster, cheaper, more reliable, and more expansive disciplinary aggregator. This service also activates greater bibliodiversity, with some inclusions of NTROs (Non Traditional Research Outputs). Google Scholar is – objectively – better than Web of Science and Scopus in terms of speed of updating and the scope and scale of disciplinary coverage. Early after the introduction of Google Scholar, critiques were offered, frequently involving the scope and scale of coverage through arbitrary applications of 'research quality' of 'scientific works' (Vine, 2006), or metadata issues (Jacsó, 2008). Even critiques during this early period recognized the important incorporation of grey literature, which was lacking from other interfaces such as PubMed (Shultz, 2007). More recent studies confirmed that Google Scholar's coverage caught up and surpassed Web of Science, for example (de Winter, Zadpoor and Dodou, 2014: 1540). But these studies also limited their disciplinary coverage to chemistry, physics, mathematics, molecular biology, psychology, computer sciences, and economy (de Winter, Zadpoor and Dodou, 2014: 1551). These disciplines, while important, are not representative of the diversity of methodologies and knowledge systems at the university. Noting the focus on bibliodiversity in this article, the disciplinary limitations of these studies are important to note and must be addressed.

Broadening these studies beyond finite disciplines, bibliodiversity is being studied by Library and Information Scientists. Martin-Martin, Orduna-Malea, Thelwall and Lopez Cozar in 2018 published an analysis of Scopus, Web of Science and Google Scholar. They reported that,

> *The results by broad areas showed that Google Scholar was able to find most of the citations to Social Sciences articles (94%), while Web of Science and Scopus found 35% and 43%, respectively. Moreover, Google Scholar was able to find 93% of the citations found by Web of Science, and 89% of the citations found by Scopus. Last but not least, over 50% of all the citations to Social Science articles were only found by Google Scholar (2018).*

This study also confirmed that Google Scholar incorporates documents published in languages other than English. However, their findings are startling: over 50% of citations in the Social Sciences were only found by Google Scholar. Therefore, Web of Science and Scopus have configured an ideology of quality, rigour and precision, while excluding not only journals, but entire disciplines. These inequalities are layered, with Web of Science and Scopus also perpetuating regional inequalities in their journal coverage, with North America and European journals proliferating (Asubiaro, Onaolapo and Mills, 2024).

Google Scholar indices are higher than Web of Science or Scopus because of the scale of the coverage and speed of the update of Google Scholar. A majority of the social science and humanities journals are not included in Scopus. Books are rarely included in Scopus. Scopus actively marginalizes and erases a large minority of disciplines in universities. The question is why this corporate 'service' continues to be used, while its absences and exclusions are so serious and pervasive.

The answer to my question reveals the legacy assumptions of research metrics, measurement and assessment. Citation analysis-based decisions, which feed into grants and university promotions, are considered unbiased and objective. They are not. Scholars are influenced by books and articles that are not cited. Therefore, the foundational argument that influential research is cited is not accurate. Indeed, MacRoberts and MacRoberts confirmed that only between 5% and 30% of research influences are cited (2018).

If Scopus or Web of Science is used as a proxy for quality, standards or ranking, then errors, absences and marginalization must result. Such proxies are based on ignoring the evidence. Why would research metrics or research leaders deploy interfaces that ignore 50% of the humanities and the social sciences? That is a powerful and disturbing question. If an interface ignored 50% of the physics or biology journals, would it continue to be used? But because an array of journals is excluded from these interfaces, this absence is loaded with ideologies about important, relevant, and significant research.

Rhodes and Linnenluecke conflated open access journals, predatory publishing and junkification (2025). That is an incorrect correlation. As shown through post-RAE national research measurement processes, which concluded in 2008, shortcut cultures have proliferated. University audit cultures created research metrics to simplify the valuation of research, without reading that research. Peer review is time consuming and delicate, requiring attention to individual articles and research projects, rather than allowing assumptions about the journal to permeate the articles within it. Therefore, the

next part of this article explores an alternative theorization of predatory publishing, disconnecting it from open access and junkification for specific analysis.

3. Pondering the corporate predator

Instead of locating and labelling 'predatory' journals while valuing the tiering and ranking of journals as a proxy for quality, the commodification that emerges in and from the Tier 1 journals is displaced, marginalized and masked. There are biases in elite journals that perpetuate wider elitism. This is termed "letterhead bias" (Thomson, 2019), where particular journals value specific universities, resulting in the under-representation of researchers outside of the United States, and under-representation of women and scholars of colour (Nickel, 2015). The bias that overvalues the English language in academic publishing is continued.

There are commercial publishers that use author processing charges. There are open access publishers that use author processing charges. The problem for the development of social justice, internationalization, and bibliodiversity is author processing charges. The traditional publishers, Elsevier, Springer Nature, and Wiley, deploy Gold Open Access Modes. That is, the authors pay to be published. The readers do not pay to read. These charges can be enormous. Springer charges €9500 per paper to publish in Nature. The key question to be asked of publishers is who (do they believe) pays these 'charges'? The individual or collective of researchers? A university? A funding agency? The inequalities confronting universities, particularly since Covid-19, have resulted in restructures, precarity and the retraction of public funding. The arbitrariness of these fees is mired in wider neoliberal ideologies and assumptions. There are interventions and alternatives to such ideologies. The power of diamond or platinum open access, where no 'author processing charges' are required, is to "counteract … systemic inequality in open access publishing" (Andringa et al., 2024). Researchers and universities with funding can pay these fees. Researchers and universities without funding cannot pay these fees. This is injustice and inequality and has no alignment with the calibre or quality of the research, but perpetuates already existing historical disparities.

Instead, Rhodes and Linnenluecke aligned the trope of junkification with, "pseudo-scholarly, hijacked and fraudulent journals" (2025, 8). They do not discuss the inelegance, immorality, and exploitation of commercial publishers – who sell the journals to universities and libraries after charging authors and libraries to publish. Researchers are not paid by journals for their research time or their authorship. Peer reviewers are not paid for their peer reviews. Instead, authors must pay (again) to be published. Yet, for Rhodes and Linnenluecke, that is not junkification. The behaviour and practices of corporate journals are not described as predatory.

The corporatization of academic journals is founded on the exploitation of the labour of researchers and peer reviewers. The language is also fraudulent. This 'gold' open access is not open. It is subsidized access, funded by either authors or universities. The power and potential of platinum or diamond open access are not discussed. Rhodes and Linnenluecke did critique Springer Nature, Elsevier, Wiley-Blackwell and Taylor and Francis (2025). However, they published the article on junkification in SAGE, another commercial publisher. The article does not mention the innovative models of academic journals emerging from universities themselves in university-based journals, or UJs. There are nations that are committing to increasing the quality of their peer-review publications, built through university journals, particularly in Algeria (ASJP, 2026), Indonesia, and Turkey.

There are foundational errors in the argument built by Rhodes and Linnenluecke. As demonstrated earlier in my article, there is a confusion between the quality of research and the tiering of journals. They further argued that academic quality has been impacted by the proliferation of online journals (2025). Most significantly, they confuse the different modes of open access publishing, and repeat the ideology that aligns open access with predatory publishing. This analytical foundation means that the key alternative argument is not explored: that corporate academic publishers are predatory. Why are authors charged to publish their research? Why should public research, produced by academics from public universities, be paid for (again) by public universities, for public dissemination?

At no point in their article do they mention the governance models for open access, including the Directory of Open Access Journals (2026), with a transparent and rigorous strategy and oversight to maintain standards in open access journals. There is also a wider international movement to safeguard quality assurance in open access journals. Many of these historical models, reviewed in the edited collection We so loved open access (Packer et al., 2023), are unmentioned. Similarly, Rhodes and Linnenluecke did not review or mention the Open Society Foundations (2026) or the Budapest Open Access Initiative (2026). The avoidance of regulatory and governance infrastructure encircling open access journals is telling and significant. Open access academic publishing is not predatory, but activates international regulation and governance, not exploitation and discrimination.

To build a more meaningful and precise argument, it is necessary to separate the junkification of research and open access publishing. To reform academic dissemination, which is the major goal beyond labels like junkification, the advice from Peter Suber remains resonant:

Reform research assessment
Reform irrational metrics
Stop confusing impact with quality
Stop confusing impact and citations
Stop confusing quality and citations
"Stop outsourcing judgements of quality to publishers" (Suber, 2012).

The research ecosystem changes the moment national and international research assessments measure and reward diamond open access as one variable in the formulation of disciplinary and institutional success. For example, the Wellcome Trust was the first research funding agency with a mandatory OA policy, from 2005. They put these policies in place so that the quality of the work was recognized, not the proxies of a journal name or impact factor. This is bibliodiversity.

There are international movements and initiatives to build and sustain the principles and directives from Peter Subers. These span from CoARA (the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment) (2026) to HELIOS (the Higher Education Leadership Initiative for Open Scholarship) (2026), and the Action Plan for Diamond Open Access (Science Europe, 2022), endorsed by 140 institutions and funders, including French National Research Agency, German Research Foundation and Swiss National Science Foundation. From these governance movements and initiatives, why are the proxies of journal tierings still deployed? One answer is that the global academic publishing system, through commercial publishers, is one of the most profitable industries in the world. Larivière et al. (2015) described these academic publishers as an "oligopoly." The profit level is so high because it is based on the free labour of researchers and peer reviewers. Long-term and extreme profits are derived from unpaid work. Indeed, through author processing charges, the free work from researchers then requires further payments to increase even further the profit-generating academic publishing industries.

It is in the interests of the publishers to maintain this profit-generating model and perpetuate the lie of junkification and open access. What is required, to cite Barbour and Nicholls, is a "huge ecosystem of open access models" (2019, 3). Affirming and discussing the multiple models of open access enables honesty in research dissemination and the building of bibliodiversity. This transparency activates a consciousness of the political economy of academic publishing and provides a radical reflection on the ownership of journals, but also the problematic contexts around the history of scholarly outputs. Web of Science and Scopus understate the articles and citations for disciplines outside of the sciences. This error-fuelled system is then used to build a messy alignment between bibliometrics and university rankings. How could flawed citation measurement protocols be used to build a league table of universities? With all the

variables used in such ranking systems, there is still little recognition for universities that have committed to publishing diamond open access journals.

4.The undervalued capacity of University Journals to enable (post)junkification

The absence, denial, and marginalization of university journals and platinum or diamond open access are telling and problematic. Noting Nazarovets et al. research in the global academic publishing environment, there are currently 19,414 active peer-reviewed journals based in universities, from 148 countries (2026). These university journals are nonprofit, with the goal of supporting disciplinary communities while also disseminating regionally diverse scholarship. This is a non-commercial model of publishing, promoting Diamond Open Access. Yet they are marginalized or ignored by Web of Science and Scopus because they gain – commercially - from narrow and brittle journal hierarchies. This UJ movement involves universities committing to peer review, and absorbing the costs of dissemination through the publishing of journals. These journals are more linguistically diverse. They publish particularly in the social sciences and the humanities (Nazarovets, 2026). Of these university journals, less than one quarter are listed in Scopus, and one fifth in Web of Science. Three-quarters are indexed in Open Alex, and half in the Directory of Open Access Journals (2026).

When tracking, supporting, and following the trajectory of university journals, a different global open access future can emerge. To cite the inspiration of Stephen Pinfield (2024), this future is scientifically open, epistemically open, and open in terms of participation. This culture is not composed of junkified research. Rhodes and Linnenluecke used this phrase as a bludgeon to attack open access without subtlety or care. There was no recognition of the three decades of work in building anti-corporate academic dissemination and innovative models of international regulation and governance.

There are alternatives. Noting Stephen Pinfield's insights, research can activate the axiological question: "who gets to say what is valid and valuable?" (2024). There are logical strategies to avoid predatory journals. Crucially, researchers can deploy the Directory of Open Access Journals (2026), which verifies the journals included in their lists and links. Certainly, there are also lists of predatory journals, including Predatory Journal (2026). However, the DOAJ is more reliable, with active, dynamic, and ongoing verification protocols.

Therefore, there is value in returning to the word 'junkification' in a different way: as a diagnostic to locate the problems and inelegances in the configuration of research metrics. Open access and predatory publishing are distinct entities. Predatory

publishing refers to the exploitation or victimization of authors or readers for personal, corporate, commercial, or financial gain. Predatory publishing can exist anywhere. It is not tethered to open access publishing. The Directory of Open Access Journals checked and verified all OA journals and confirmed that 67% did not require any fees or subscriptions from authors or readers (DOAJ, 2026). Compare this information with commercial publishers, which require high subscriptions from readers, libraries, and universities. Only one branch of these payments is clustered under the phrase, 'author processing fees.'

But instead, 'predatory' as an adjective only applies to open access publishing, the least exploitative of all modes of publishing. It is Orwellian, in the 1984 sense. War is peace. Open access is predatory. Wikipedia continues this ideology, aligning predatory with open access in its entry (Wikipedia, 2026). How was this Orwellian sleight of hand commenced and perpetuated? The answer is that one man fused this relationship, and this alignment is continued through articles such as that written by Rhodes and Linnenluecke. Jeffrey Beall and his Beall's List received profile and publicity on the basis of his attacks, discrimination and prejudice towards open access journals. Now retired, Jeffrey Beall was a University of Colorado librarian and researcher, and he created the phrase predatory publishing. He started publishing his 'list' in 2010, responding to the emails arriving from supposed journals and editors expressing an opportunity to publish (Beall, 2012; Beall, 2013; Beall, 2016).

How pervasive is this problem located by Beall? We, as scholars, receive an email, often delivered to a junk folder, from an unknown person and journal. They suggest researchers spend $200 or $1000 to publish. To make this situation worse, a scholar in cultural studies is asked to submit to an engineering journal. How deep and pervasive is this situation? It remained a major issue for Jeffrey Beal. He independently established criteria for evaluating publishers, and listed publishers he believed were predatory, alongside an appeal process for publishers. He decided what is 'predatory.' If a journal disagreed, then it could appeal.

What made this situation bizarre – and, indeed, Orwellian – is that he placed all his attention on the non-corporate, non-commercial academic publishers (Beall, 2012; Beall, 2013; Beall, 2016). Indeed, he stated that "the open-access movement is not really about open access" (Beall, 2013). This statement exemplifies the Orwellian inversion. Commercial academic publishers were not mentioned, discussed, or evaluated in terms of their exploitative practices for researchers, peer reviewers, or librarians. Beall particularly targeted publishers and journals in Asia and Africa, as universities and scholars in these countries moved up international rankings. European and North American commercial publishers were normalized, valued, and validated.

Open access journals, based in African and Asian nations, were problematized. This is irrational, xenophobic, and not based in fact.

One of the key critics of the Beall's list was Walt Crawford (2015a; 2015b). He attempted the repeatability of the determinations, probing the Beall's list in terms of whether his judgements could be validated independently. He ruled that they could not. There was too much ambiguity and inconsistency. Instead, he recommended that researchers deploy the Directory of Open Access Journals to verify the publications in which to publish. The Directory of Open Access Journals has taken up this governance challenge (2026). While Beall creates a Blacklist, they configured a Whitelist. Governance and oversight are possible.

The Beall's list was subjective, obstructionary, and is not required. The Directory of Open Access Journals and the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association are enacting powerful regulatory work and displacing the requirements for 'blacklists.' While exploitative academic journals exist, they can be avoided through a straightforward verification process. This checklist welcomes (post)junkification and bibliodiversity.

1. Be wary of unsolicited emails promising publication.
2. Check that publishers of journals list a physical address as much as an online address.
3. Ascertain the fee policy before submitting an article. Remember that 67% of Open Access journals do not have fees of any kind.
4. Verify the peer review process. Double-blind peer review is the highest standard.
5. Check that the journal is listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals. Indeed, start at the Directory of Open Access Journals and verify the quality assurance of the publication.
6. Read some articles in the journal. Are they innovative, well researched and well written?
7. Assess the copyright required for authors to grant to the publisher. Read the contract. Be clear about what is being signed away.
8. Verify the editorial board. The moment you see editorial board 'coming soon,' then make a different choice.
9. Check the quality of the website. If it looks unprofessional, then it probably is. But also, recognize that many colleagues are using English as a second or third language. Look for professionalism, but do not read the work of international colleagues through a xenophobic lens.

10. Check if there is a disconnection between the title of the journal and the contents of the journal. Make sure you verify a tight link between the project of the journal and its title.

Part of research training must be an assessment of publishing options, alternatives, and opportunities. It is important that such training and decision making must not be outsourced to corporate academic publishers or aggregators who sell a service to rank and tier journals. By investing in information literacy and valuing the research from information science and library studies, considered decisions about dissemination can be made.

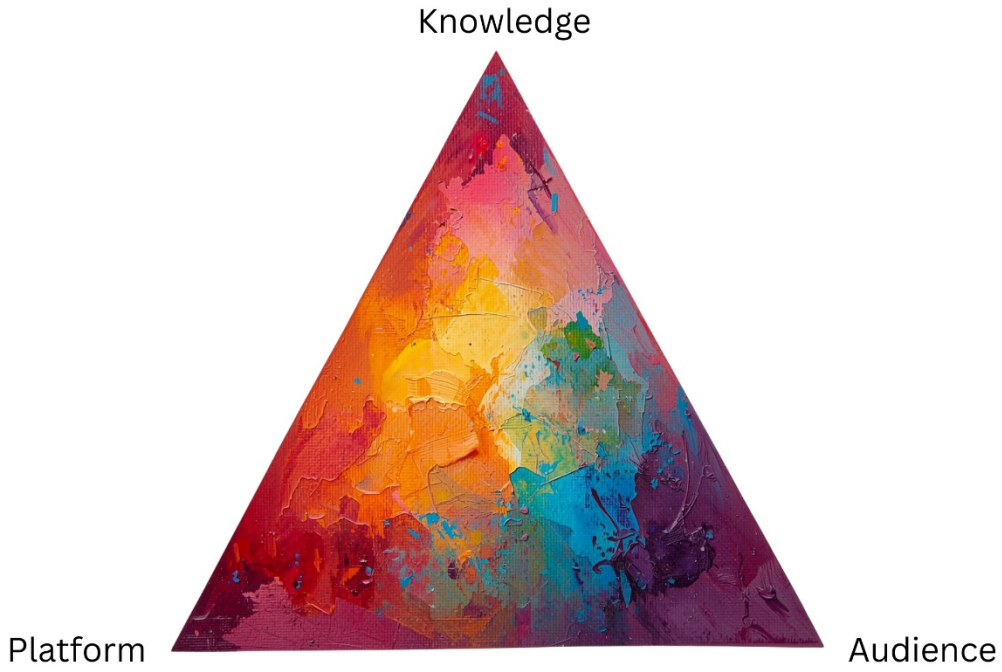
5.Conclusion

Most academics have horror stories to share about commercial scholarly publishers. The arbitrariness and subjectivity of these lived experiences seem antithetical to the rigour, transparency, and ethics required of research. Examples include the rules of refereeing changing from the submission to the acceptance process, or asking for money without warning and after refereeing has been completed. In my case, both these 'process changes' emerge from supposedly distinguished and credible academic publishers. Conversely, fine journals and editors are committing to diamond open access journals in many nations, including Algeria and Indonesia. Professionalism and integrity remain integral to the publishing process. Through the Directory of Open Access Journals, regulation, refereeing, and scholarship can be confirmed.

T-shirt slogans of junkification simplify the struggles, conflicts, and changes in academic publishing. Instead, a renewed commitment to regulation, refereeing, and scholarship is required. The DOAJ offers a directive: "Think. Check. Submit" (2026). Diamond open access is profoundly important to the future of academic dissemination. An elegant strategy in managing peer review and dissemination, it remains as Peruginelli and Faro described it: "a viable approach to scholarly communication" (2024, 66). The clarity of this statement belies its importance.

The imperative for all researchers is to contexualize and shape dissemination planning. This article offers a first methodology. Three variables must be considered when considering how to disseminate our research.

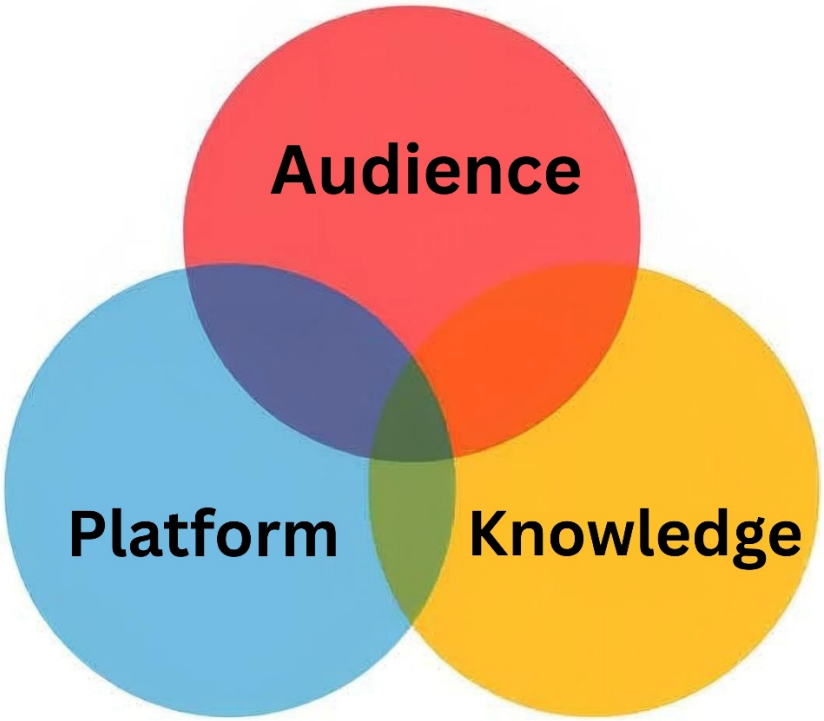
Figure 1 :
The three variables to consider in research dissemination



Source: **(Brabazon, 2026)**

The activation of these three variables requires an understanding of the knowledge to be disseminated. Once this innovation has been isolated and specified, the next step is to consider the desirable audience or audiences for this knowledge. From this step, the sociology of media platforms and interfaces is required, so that the most appropriate platform can be selected to connect knowledge with an audience.

Figure 2 :
The dissemination methodology



Source: **(Brabazon, 2026)**

To provide an example of this process, a research innovation from paediatric physiotherapy will have an academic audience, accessed through peer reviewed physiotherapy journals, but also a podcast about the research would also locate parents of young children to enable changes in sleeping positions and conditions for babies (Charlton and Brabazon, 2020; Charlton and Brabazon, 2022; Brabazon and Charlton, 2019; Brabazon and Charlton, 2018). The audience for the research configures the platform for the relevant communication system.

This new model for research dissemination shows that the binary oppositions of junk and quality, or predatory and peer reviewed, are not only inelegant and incorrect but prevent a robust discussion of the diverse audiences for academic work. Junkification, when applied to research cultures, is based on inversion and absence. The binary of 'elite' and 'predatory' journals is masking the real junkification. Pendergrass et al. recognized the profound and emerging threat: "AI feculence" which is building "a strategic cycle of slop" (2025, 417). The commitment to research ethics, judicious dissemination, social inclusion, and bibliodiversity requires maintaining standards without standardization, and valuing quality without financial caveats. But it also requires an understanding of the capacity of digitization and multimodality, without the

gatekeeping of corporate publishers and the research metrics that perpetuate exploitation, flawed proxies for quality and assumptions about academics, audiences and readerships. Future trajectories live in our present, through international university journals.

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