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What are 'predatory' conferences and how can I avoid them?

Andy Nobes provides a checklist of questions to consider before you register for your next conference

- ❑ It's very important to make sure that the conference you attend is suitable for your purposes, whether it's a small, niche conference or a large, international conference – will you be presenting your valuable research to the right audience and making useful contacts? Will the conference presentation look good on your CV?**
- ❑ To help you decide, we've put together some questions you should ask if you are in any doubt about registering for a conference:**

Conference subject and scope

- ❑ Have your peers and senior colleagues in your field heard of, or attended this conference? Would they recommend it?**
- ❑ Is the content of the conference relevant to your field?**
- ❑ Is the topic of the conference focused enough for you to a) hear about relevant research and b) meet relevant researchers? For example, an “International Conference of Social Sciences” or “International Conference on Business and Economics” may be too broad and probably raises questions about the purpose of the conference.**
- ❑ Does the conference prioritize the academic value of the conference more than the tourist destination? (You should judge the conference on its content rather than its location.)**
- ❑ If the conference title includes the word ‘international’, are you confident that it is a good-quality, truly international event?**

Conference website

- Does the conference website seem knowledgeable about your subject field? Does it spell key technical terms correctly, and is it up-to-date on key themes in your field?
- Does the conference programme list respected speakers who you or your colleagues have heard of? Consider checking their credentials on Google if you are unsure.
- Does the conference website have full contact details (email, phone and postal address) so that you can contact them to ask questions?
- Is there a report on the previous year's conference? (Unless this is a new conference.)
- Does the website look reputable, with good spelling and grammar?
- Is the conference listed on a source (e.g. a magazine, journal, blog, website, or sector-specific source) that you trust? This is especially important if you heard about the conference via an unsolicited email.

Conference organizers

- Who is organizing the conference, and for what reason? Is the goal or theme of the conference clear and specific? (Please note that generic phrases such as ‘to promote scientific innovation’ or ‘to facilitate dissemination of research findings’ are not specific.)
- Do the organizers seem fully focused on making this a high-quality conference? Or are they involved in multiple events in the same day/week/month?
- If the conference is being hosted by a university or research institution, do they seem like the most appropriate host? Are they also advertising the conference on their website or at their campus?
- Is the conference organized by a scholarly or non-profit organisation who you have heard of? Does this organization list the conference on their website?
- If the conference is organized by a commercial company:
 - Is there a clear partnership with a reputable institution/society/research institute, either international or local to the conference?
 - Is there a partnership with a reputable publisher or publication?

The answer to most of these questions should be 'Yes' then you are in the right way to participate in the conference(this end text slightly modified from the original in order to give more clear conclusion)

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