

All about predatory journals, publishers & congresses

Coffee Lecture, 04.11.2025

Barbara Schneider

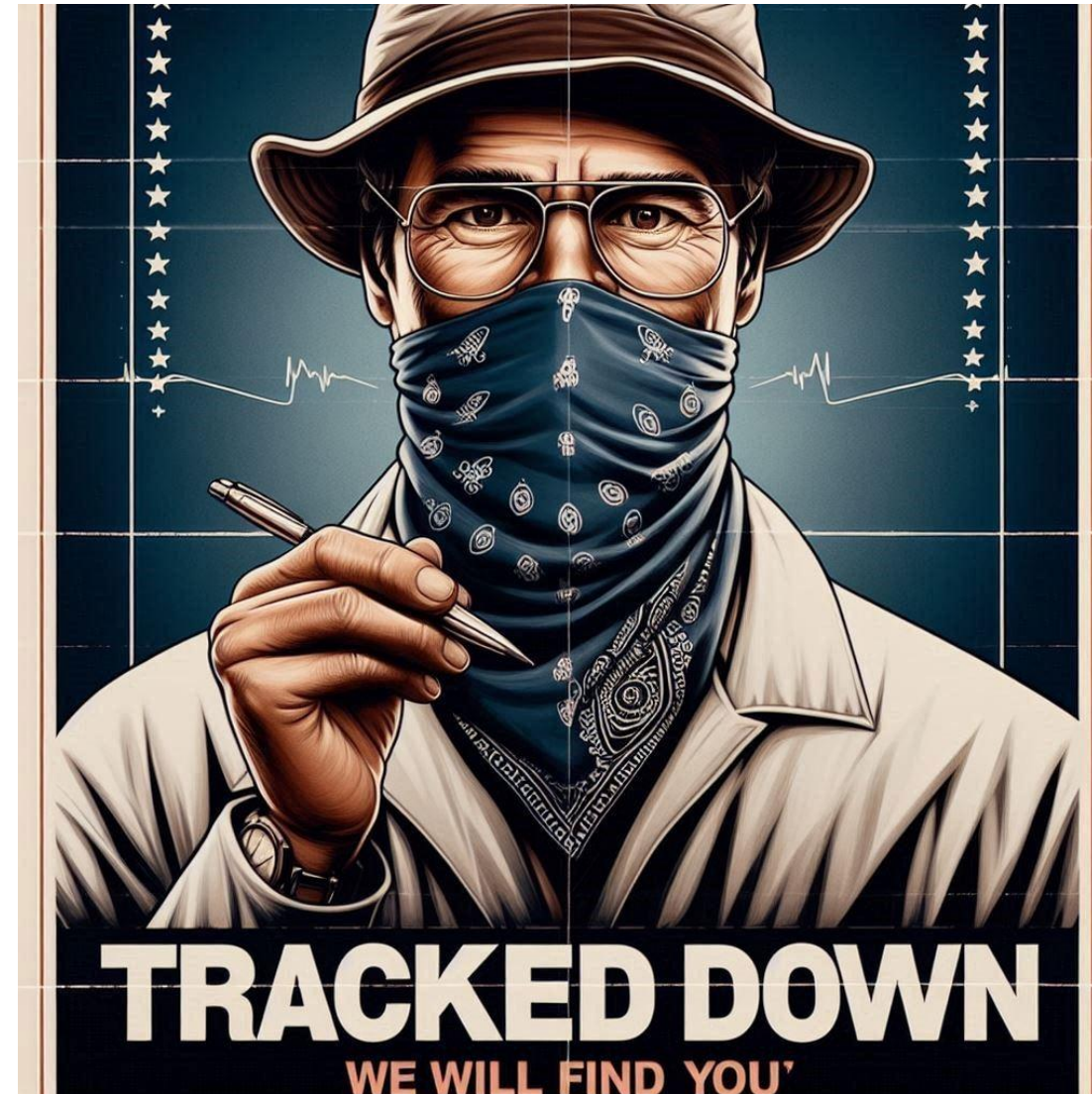
Liaison Librarian

University Library Natural Sciences



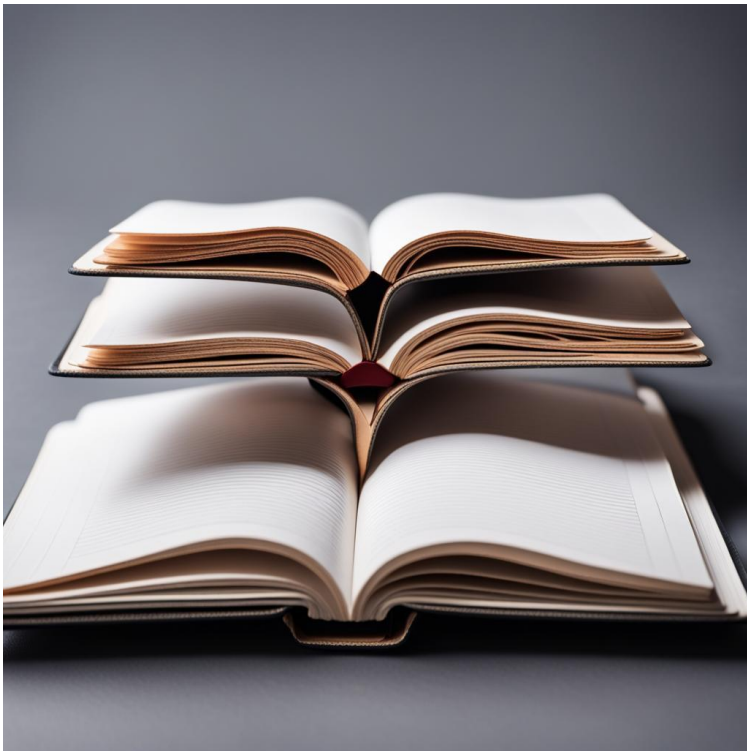
Agenda

- Identification: Predatory journals
- Identification: Cloned or hijacked journals
- Identification: Cloned or hijacked congress
- The danger to publish in such publications
- Tools
- Q & A



Identification: Predatory journals

Predatory Journals



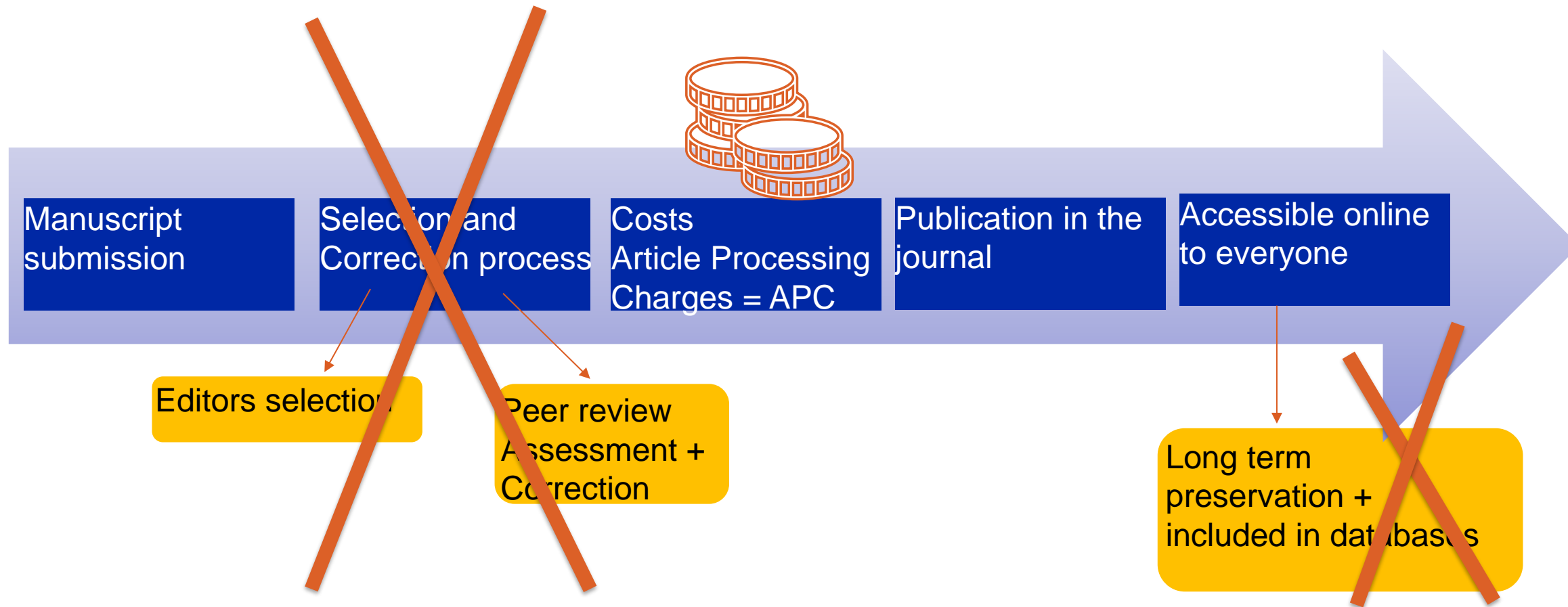
(generated using Creating Night Café SDXL 1.0).

“Predatory journals—also called fraudulent, deceptive, or pseudo-journals—are publications that claim to be legitimate scholarly journals, but misrepresent their publishing practices. Some common forms of predatory publishing practices include falsely claiming to provide peer review, hiding information about Article Processing Charges (APCs), misrepresenting members of the journal’s editorial board, and other violations of copyright or scholarly ethics...”

1. [Elmore SA, Weston EH. Predatory Journals: What They Are and How to Avoid Them. Toxicologic Pathology. 2020;48\(4\):607-610. doi:10.1177/0192623320920209](#)

Further information you can find under- [this link](#)

Predatory journals' process



Predatory journal' practices – a wide variety of dishonest and/or unethical practices, such as

- **No transparency:** about quality control, peer review fees, copyright, withdrawal and digital archiving.
- **Unrealistic time line**, with serious peer reviews – NOT REALISTIC
- **Poor editorial board** – Listing fake, unknown, or unqualified editors
- **Aggressively targets** potential authors through e-mails
- **Unclear indexing** – Claiming to be indexed in respected databases without proof (e.g. Scopus, Web of Science)
- Publishing articles submitted before the authors have signed the publishing agreement, then **refuses to take the article down** if the author withdraws the submission
- **Emails ending mostly .gmail** and not the publisher's name

Identification: Cloned or hijacked journals



Eight red flags for cloned or hijacked journals



Operate with fake lookalike website of the original journal.



Use fake/misleading Impact Factor/Metrics to lure the faculties and researchers.



Will publish the papers in less than 24 hours and sometimes in an hour after receiving the money.



Collect the money through international routes like Western Union, PayUMoney etc so that the trace of money laundering cannot be found.



No information under the tab **Contact Us** on these journals



They also publish any kind of plagiarized, fabricated paper after receiving the money.



They always misuse the Logos of prominent companies like Elsevier, Clarivate, CrossRef, Emerald etc.



No information will about the Editorial Board, many International names are cut, copied and pasted without their consent and official email id's.

Indentification: Cloned or hijacked congress

They use the same tactics as the predatory journals



A whole series of separate conferences (>1000!)
on the same dates and in the same hotel...
1 single programme for all these conferences! The actual
conference title 2025 is

The Definitive Resource for Trusted Open Science

I find this rather rude.

A recent report about a bad experience:



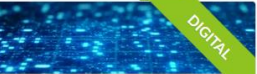





Ro, C. What is it like to attend a predatory conference?
Nature **631**, 921–923 (2024).

DOI: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-024-02358-w>

The Definitive Resource for Trusted Open Science

Search Conferences Search

Conference Locations

 November 2025 in Amsterdam Event Date: November 03-04, 2025 Submission Due: October 01, 2025	 November 2025 in Cape Town Event Date: November 03-04, 2025 Submission Due: October 01, 2025	 November 2025 in Nicosia Event Date: November 03-04, 2025 Submission Due: October 01, 2025	 November 2025 in San Francisco Event Date: November 03-04, 2025 Submission Due: October 01, 2025
 November 2025 in Dubai Event Date: November 10-11, 2025 Submission Due: November 12, 2025	 November 2025 in Istanbul Event Date: November 10-11, 2025 Submission Due: November 12, 2025	 November 2025 in New York Event Date: November 10-11, 2025 Submission Due: November 12, 2025	 November 2025 in Sydney Event Date: November 10-11, 2025 Submission Due: November 12, 2025

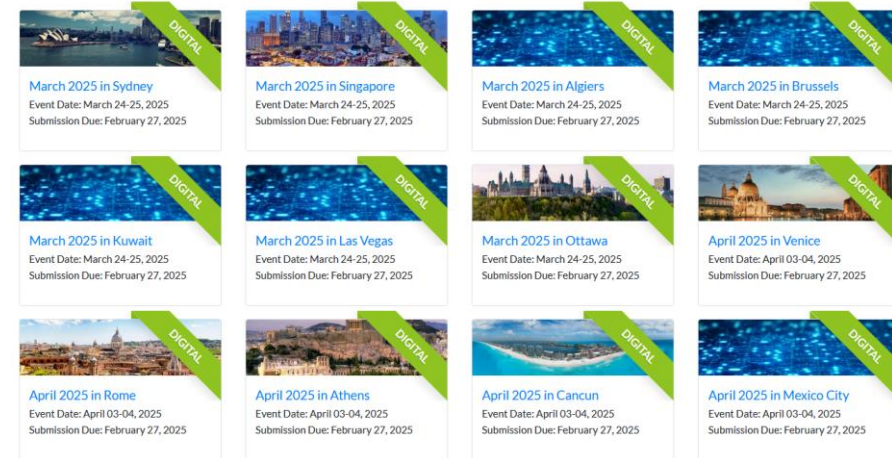
Some organizers to avoid

- <https://waset.org/conferences> - always at the same date

- <https://www.longdom.com/>



- <https://www.conferenceseries.com/>



The danger of such publications



ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL RISKS

- **Damage to your professional reputation** among peers and employers
- Potential career **advancement obstacles** when publications are scrutinized during promotion reviews
- **Academic credibility loss** when your work appears alongside low-quality or fraudulent research



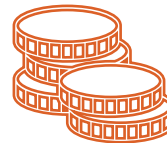
PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

- Papers may **disappear** if the journal ceases operations suddenly
- Work may be permanently **inaccessible** to intended audiences



RESEARCH INTEGRITY ISSUES

- Poor or non-existent peer review means errors or methodological **problems remain uncorrected**
- Your work may be published alongside pseudoscience, **undermining its legitimacy**
- **Limited visibility** in legitimate academic databases and indexing services



Financial Consequences

- **Wasted funds** on publication fees with minimal return on investment
- Potential **additional costs to republish** elsewhere if needed
- Some institutions **may not reimburse** expenses for predatory publications

Tools



<https://thinkchecksubmit.org/>

<https://app.lib.uliege.be/compass-to-publish/>

[Very good handout by Maastricht University Library](#)



[The Predation Index](#) – New since August 2025

The easiest way to find relevant journals in your discipline is to exchange information in your research community.

Lists/portals that help researchers to classify/evaluate

- Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers: *Transparency regarding publication channels*
- Scimago Journal Ranking: *The portal uses data from the Scopus database (Elsevier) and displays, among other things, the SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) value, the journal's H-index, quartile classification (Q1–Q4) within the subject areas. This allows you to assess whether a journal operates at a certain level in terms of citations, impact or prestige, at least according to these indicators.*
- List of all journals cited in PubMed: *but based upon the actual situation....*
- WAME: *can be used as a touchstone, but offers no guarantee*
- Retraction Watch Hijacked Journals Checker

Hijacked journals or congress:

If you check the URL at <https://whois.domaintools.com/> and see that a journal was registered a few months ago to a "John Doe in Arizona" and the **email address is via gmail or yahoo, that's a sign of fraud.**

Use UZH OA secure alternatives

The University Library of Zurich (UB UZH) actively supports researchers in secure publishing.

Recommended procedure:

1. Consult DOAJ [Directory of Open Access Journals](#) – for verified open access journals.
2. Use [oa.finder](#) – to check whether UZH will cover publication costs.
3. Check COPE and OASPA – to verify ethical standards.
4. [Where to publish OA?](#) – UZH OA recommended publication channels
5. Contact the OA team – if you are unsure: oa@ub.uzh.ch.

The UB OA team makes it clear that legitimate, free and ethical access to science is possible.

Q & A and further readings

Q & A

Is MDPI a predatory publisher?

There is no black or white.

Is Frontiers a predatory publisher?

here is no clear statement from UZH. We need to pay attention to further developments.

UZH has no longer been a member of Frontiers since 1 January 2025. This means that the 26% discount on the Open Access article fees will NO LONGER be accepted by UZH. The costs must be covered by you or via the institute.

Are there AI Tools available to detect predatory journals?

There is a database called [Cabells Predatory Reports](#). They use machine learning algorithms alongside human verification to maintain a database of predatory journals. But the UZH **has not licenced** this report

And it seems that there is a project going on in Taiwan – see reading list

Reading list

- Beall, J. (2012). Predatory publishers are corrupting open access. *Nature*, 489(7415), 179. <https://doi.org/10.1038/489179a>
- Chen, LX., Su, SW., Liao, CH. *et al.* **An open automation system for predatory journal detection.** *Sci Rep* 13, 2976 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-30176-z>
- Cobey, K. D., & Moher, D. (2020). Predatory journals threaten the integrity of science. *Physics in Canada*, 76(1), 18–21.
- Elmore, S. A., & Weston, E. H. (2020). Predatory journals: What they are and how to avoid them. *Toxicologic Pathology*, 48(4), 607–610. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192623320920209>
- Fadel, C., Milanova, A., Suran, J., Sitovs, A., Biagiante, G., & Pellerin, D. (2024). A narrative review of the phenomenon of predatory journals to create awareness among researchers in veterinary medicine. *Journal of Veterinary Pharmacology and Therapeutics*, 47(4), 239–251. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jvp.13448>
- Grudniewicz, A., Moher, D., Cobey, K. D., Coates, H., Drummond, R., Kaluba, L., Kelly, P., Mbamalu, D., Mwambene, A., & Shamseer, L. (2019). Predatory journals: No definition, no defence. *Nature*, 576(7786), 210–212. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-019-03759-y>
- Hamed, A. A., & Wu, X. (2024). Detection of ChatGPT fake science with the xFakeSci learning algorithm. *Scientific Reports*, 14, 1623. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-66784-6>
- Lorenzo, V. de, Rainey, P. B., Williams, P., Mendes-Soares, H., Óskar Andrésón, Á., Balázs, G., Börger, P., Cabral, F., Cairns, J., Calvey, T., Danchin, A., Distel, M., Fernández, S. Á., Fernández-Calero, T., Firbas, P., Foster, R. A., Fučík, J., García-Linares, C., Garrabou, X., & Zaburlín, J. (2025). Storm over science: Predatory practices and the fight for research reliability. *microLife*, 6, uqaf029. <https://doi.org/10.1093/femsml/uqaf029>
- Maisonneuve, H. (2025). Revues prédatrices et paper mills mettent en péril la gestion des savoirs [Predatory journals and paper mills jeopardise knowledge management]. *Bulletin du Cancer*, 112(1), 100–110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bulcan.2024.12.002>
- Martinino, A., Chatterjee, S., Smeenk, F. W., & Pouwels, S. (2023). Rebranding of predatory journals and conferences: Understanding its implication and prevention strategy. *Cureus*, 15(6), e40126. <https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.40126>
- Teixeira da Silva, Jaime A. and Tsigaris, Panagiotis and Mousa, Salim, **Can AI Detect Predatory Journals?** The Case of FT50 Journals (March 16, 2023). <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4391108>
- Zhuang, H., Zhang, W., Li, J., & Chen, Y. (2025). Estimating the predictability of questionable open-access journals. *Science Advances*, 11, eadt2792. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.adt2792>

Thank you for your attention

Contact

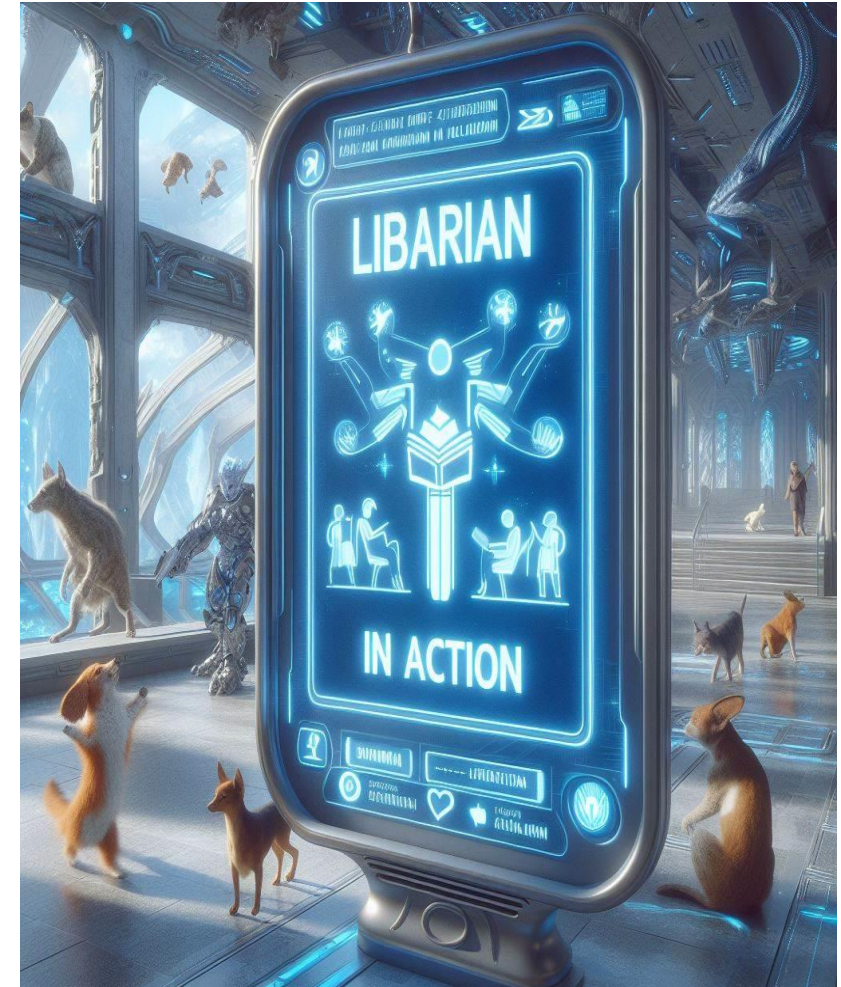
Barbara Schneider

Universitätsbibliothek
Veterinärmedizin
TFA 01 51

Vetsuisse-Fakultät / Universitäres Tierspital Zürich

044 635 81 32

veterinaermedizin@ub.uzh.ch



(generated using Creating Night Café SDXL 1.0)