

Safeguarding Scholarly Communication

Publishers help ensure research is scrutinised, so it can inform decisions, shape policy, and guide technological developments

Publisher Practices to Uphold Research Integrity



Submission Screening

Screening of email addresses, author identifiers, references, text and images, and metadata.



Peer Review Monitoring

Active monitoring of peer review and analysis of submission patterns to detect and tackle fraud.



Pre-acceptance Checks

Final checks carried out after authors make updates following peer review, prior to publication.



Post-publication Monitoring

Cross-stakeholder investigations after publication, including in collaboration with science sleuths.

Publishers invest in infrastructure, specialist teams, and technology

Dedicated integrity specialists work alongside detection systems that flag concerning submissions for expert review, augmenting human judgement rather than replacing it.

Publishers take active steps to prevent, detect, and respond to integrity threats

Screening operates at multiple checkpoints from submission to post-publication, underpinned by COPE-based standards, author verification, and training across the community.

Publishers work across boundaries to ensure trust in published content

Shared initiatives like the STM Integrity Hub, COPE, and United2Act enable cross-publisher detection and faster threat response that no single organisation could achieve alone.

Why does this matter?

6.3 million research articles, reviews, and conference papers were published in 2025, up from 4.4 million in 2020. Findings from these publications shape decisions, government policy, and industry applications.

When integrity is compromised, the consequences extend well beyond academia. Yet, the pressures on researchers to publish large numbers of articles are systematically exploited by actors who have industrialised integrity breaches at scale. What was once

managed through trust and reactive intervention now demands systematic, proactive approaches, as well as coordinated action across the research ecosystem.

Today, many publishers have established dedicated research integrity teams, which have in some cases grown from a handful of staff to over 100 people spanning screening, investigation, technology development, and education.

What was once managed through trust and reactive intervention now demands systematic, proactive approaches and coordinated action across the entire research ecosystem.

Making progress together

Over the past decade, coordinated action across the research publishing community has demonstrated what collective commitment can achieve. Cross-publisher intelligence sharing has revealed patterns and behaviours invisible to individual organisations. Partnerships between publishers, institutions, and funders have enabled investigations that none could have undertaken alone. Shared frameworks and analytical tools have strengthened the sector's capacity to uphold research integrity. Yet the persistence of breaches reflects deeper systemic issues.

2,227

Articles retracted in 2025 according to the Retraction Watch database, rising from 1,715 in 2020.^[1]

8%

Share of scientists who admitted to falsifying data at least once between 2017 and 2020.^[2]

Evaluation practices that reward publication volume over quality — combined with limited means to verify integrity during hiring and promotion — create conditions in which problematic behaviours can flourish. Addressing these root causes requires publishers, institutions, and funders to work together to reform incentive structures, a long-term undertaking that complements the sector's more immediate efforts.

Encouragingly, the building blocks are already in place. Screening tools that were experimental five years ago now operate as production systems processing millions of submissions; the next generation, including cross-publisher pattern recognition, AI-assisted investigation, and identity verification, is in development. The immediate opportunity lies in extending these proven models across a broader share of the publishing landscape: ensuring smaller publishers can access advanced capabilities, formalising collaboration protocols with institutions, and keeping human judgement central to every decision.



The STM Integrity Hub is a collaborative infrastructure investment to support research integrity.



The Committee on Publication Ethics establishes standards used as foundational frameworks.



United2Act is a collaborative effort to coordinate responses to industrial-scale paper mill operations.



Think. Check. Submit. helps identify trusted publishing venues and avoid deceptive publishing practices.

“The systemic pressures that create opportunities for integrity breaches require solutions that extend well beyond publishing infrastructure. This is why partnership sits at the heart of our approach.”



Chris Graf

Chair, STM Research Integrity Committee

Access our full report below:



^[1] crossref / retraction-watch-data · GitLab. (n.d.). GitLab. <https://gitlab.com/crossref/retraction-watch-data>

^[2] Poutoglidou, F., Stavrakas, M., Tsetsos, N., Poutoglidis, A., Tsentemidou, A., Fyrmipas, G., & Karkos, P. D. (2022). Fraud and Deceit in Medical Research. *Voices in Bioethics*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.52214/vib.v8i.8940>