**Transparency of Hindawi’s retraction process of 8000 paper mill articles**

Trans Eva

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In 2023, Hindawi has retracted over 8,000 articles, raising the total retracted papers of the year to more than 10,000 articles, the highest record ever recorded. As transparent retraction notice will help alleviate the negative impacts of retractions on the academia and general public, I used AI (Google Bard) to check whether important information related to the retractions had been provided. Vuong [1] suggests the retraction notices to include the following information for transparency:

* which parties first requested the retraction, including authors, editors, publishers, university, or even readers;
* which errors were fatal;
* whether post-publication reviews flagged the paper;
* whether there was an agreement between editors/publishers and the authors to retract;
* whether fraudulent practices were involved, etc.

**Prompt**

Did you know Hindawi retracted more than 8000 articles in 2023?

**Answer**

Yes, I am aware of the large number of retractions at Hindawi in 2023. In fact, it was a major topic in the scientific publishing community:

* Over 8,000 articles: The number you mentioned is accurate. Hindawi journals alone retracted more than 8,000 articles, representing a significant portion of the total research paper retractions for the year.
* Reasons for retraction: The retractions were primarily due to concerns about compromised peer-review processes and potential manipulation by "paper mills" – organizations that churn out low-quality or fabricated research for a fee.
* Impact on Hindawi: This issue led to major consequences for Hindawi, including the closure of several journals and ultimately the discontinuation of the Hindawi brand name by its parent company Wiley.

Would you like to know more about the specifics of the retractions, or the wider implications for academic publishing? I can provide you with additional information if you'd like.

**Prompt**

Did Hindawi transparently provide any retraction notice?

**Answer**

Hindawi's transparency regarding their retractions in 2023 has been a subject of debate and criticism. While they implemented some measures, there were also aspects where their approach fell short:

Positive steps:

* Retraction notices: Hindawi did publish retraction notices for each of the affected articles on their website. These notices typically included the reason for the retraction and the authors' affiliation.
* Journal closures: The closure of several journals involved in a high number of retractions could be seen as an attempt to address the issue head-on, although it also meant some legitimate research was lost.
* Improved peer-review: Hindawi reportedly implemented stricter peer-review procedures in an effort to prevent similar issues in the future.

Criticisms:

* Lack of clear explanations: The reasons provided in the retraction notices were often vague or generic, failing to give a clear understanding of the specific issues behind each retraction.
* Delayed notices: Some retractions were published months or even years after the concerns were first raised, raising questions about the timeliness and transparency of the process.
* Limited communication: Hindawi faced criticism for not adequately communicating with the wider scientific community about the extent of the problem and the steps they were taking to address it.

Overall, while Hindawi took some steps towards transparency, there were significant shortcomings in their approach. The lack of detailed explanations, delays in retraction notices, and limited communication contributed to concerns about the publisher's commitment to scientific integrity and accountability.

It's important to note that the retraction process in academic publishing is complex and there are ongoing discussions about how to improve transparency and prevent similar situations in the future. Hindawi's case serves as a cautionary example and highlights the need for continued vigilance and efforts to maintain the integrity of the scientific record.

Do you have any other questions about the Hindawi retractions or the broader issue of research integrity? I'm happy to provide more information or share different perspectives on this topic.

**Prompt**

Did their retraction notice have the following information: which parties first requested the retraction, including authors, editors, publishers, university, or even readers; which errors were fatal; whether post-publication reviews flagged the paper; whether there was an agreement between editors/publishers and the authors to retract; whether fraudulent practices were involved, etc.

**Answer**

The information included in Hindawi's retraction notices for the 8,000 articles in 2023 varied, and unfortunately, many lacked the level of detail you're asking about. Here's a breakdown of what was typically included and what was often missing:

* Present in most notices:
* Title of the retracted article
* Authors and their affiliations
* Journal in which it was published
* Date of publication
* Statement that the article is being retracted

Often missing:

* Party who requested the retraction: While some notices might mention if it was initiated by editors, authors, or external reviewers, many lacked specific details.
* Nature of the errors: The notices often used generic terms like "concerns about scientific validity" or "methodological issues," without explicitly pointing out the specific flaws.
* Role of post-publication reviews: Whether the retraction stemmed from concerns raised after publication was rarely mentioned.
* Agreement on retraction: Whether both editors and authors agreed to the retraction was usually not disclosed.
* Mention of fraud: Although many suspected paper mill involvement, explicit mention of fraudulent practices was rarely seen in the notices.

This lack of detailed information led to criticisms of Hindawi's transparency. Researchers and the public felt they were left in the dark about the specific reasons behind the retractions and the extent of the problem.

However, it's important to note that the retraction process is complex and involves legal considerations. Providing specific details, especially about accusations of fraud or misconduct, could potentially harm individuals involved. Additionally, investigations might be ongoing, making it difficult to provide definitive information.

While Hindawi's approach fell short in terms of transparency, it's part of a wider conversation about best practices in retraction notification. Ideally, future retractions should strive for greater clarity and inclusivity, providing the necessary information to understand the underlying issues and safeguard the integrity of the scientific record.

I hope this explanation helps! If you have any further questions about specific retractions or the challenges of transparent communication in academic publishing, feel free to ask.

**References**

[1] Vuong, Q. H. (2019). The limitations of retraction notices and the heroic acts of authors who correct the scholarly record: An analysis of retractions of papers published from 1975 to 2019. *Learned Publishing*, 33(2), 119-130. <https://doi.org/10.1002/leap.1282>