

United2Act

A group of international stakeholders working collaboratively to address the collective challenge of paper mills in scholarly publishing

- A joint project from STM and COPE for a duration of two years (to June 2025)
- United2Act (U2A) is a group of international stakeholders working collaboratively to address the collective challenge of paper mills in scholarly publishing. Collective effort is needed because no individual stakeholder can solve this problem alone
- A virtual summit in May 2023 engaged research bodies, publishers, researchers/sleuths, universities, and publishing infrastructure from 15 countries and resulted in a [Consensus Statement](#) outlining five key areas of action
- Five multi-stakeholder Working Groups have been established and are working to deliver on the actions of the Consensus Statement.
- While the Working Groups are limited in size, new Consensus Statement signatories are welcome to join us to show their support of U2A and the actions it has committed to. Signatories will be the first to hear about the action plans, tools and resources currently in development. <https://united2act.org/contact>

43 Organisations have signed the Consensus Statement



ACS Publications

AIMS Press

AIP Publishing

American Physical Society

AOSIS

Asian Council of Science Editors

Bentham Science Publishers

Cactus Communications

Canadian Science Publishing

Center for Open Science

Charlesworth

China Instrument Control Society

Clarivate

Edanz

Elsevier

Emerald Publishing

European Research Council

FEBS Press

Frontiers

Global Young Academy

IOP Publishing

Karger Publishers

Maximum Academic Press

MDPI

MIT Press

Morressier

National Research and Innovation Agency

ORCID

Oxford University Press

Pakistan Academy of Sciences

PLOS

Queensland University of Technology

ReviewerCredits

Royal Society of Chemistry

Sage

Signals

Springer Nature

Taylor & Francis

The Company of Biologists

The Institution of Engineering and Technology

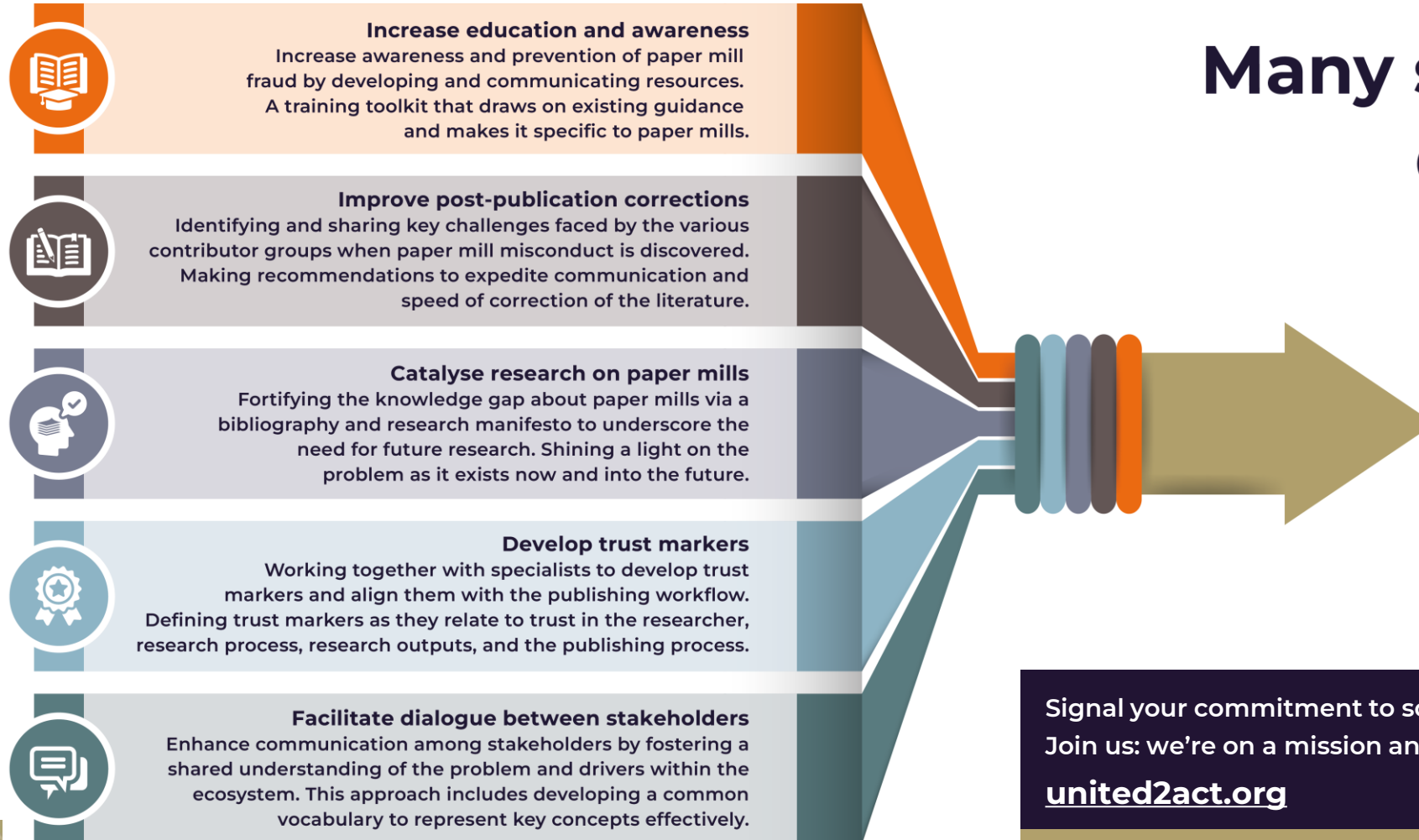
Thieme

Turnitin

Wiley

Road map

We're focusing on five key multi-stakeholder actions to address the problem of paper mills



**Many stakeholders
One purpose**

Signal your commitment to solving the challenge of paper mills.
Join us: we're on a mission and we're gaining momentum.

united2act.org

Steering Group

Caroline Sutton, CEO, STM

Natalie Ridgeway, Executive Officer, COPE

Deborah Kahn, COPE (Co-chair)

Dr Sabina Alam, Taylor & Francis (Co-chair)

Dr Stefania Mondello, University of Messina (Vice Chair)

Jason Hu, Taylor & Francis / COPE (Chair WG 1 Education and Awareness)

Dr Elizabeth Moylan, Wiley (Chair WG 2 Improve Post-publication Corrections)

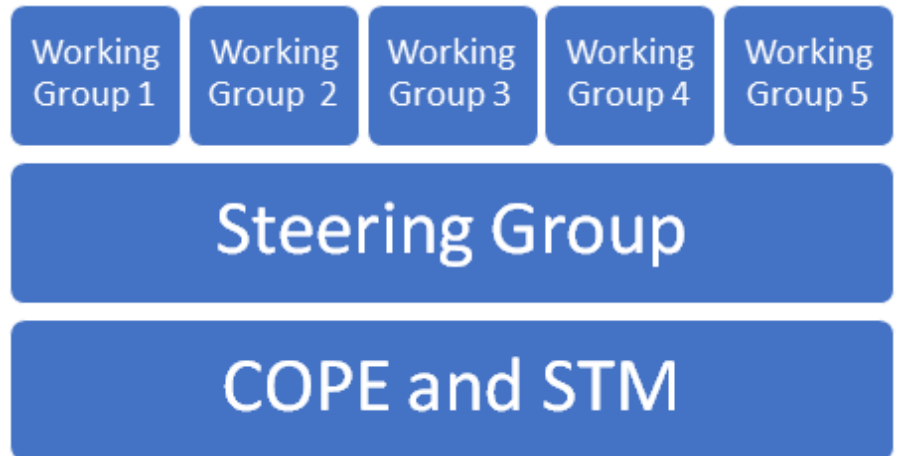
Professor Jennifer Byrne, University of Sydney (Chair WG 3 Research Paper Mills)

Blaine Butler, Center for Open Science (Chair WG 4 Develop Trust Markers)

Dr Nandita Quaderi, Clarivate (Chair WG 5 Facilitate dialogue between stakeholders)

Joris van Rossum (STM)

Ruth King (Project Manager)



Increase awareness and prevention of paper mill fraud by developing and communicating resources.

Starting with a training toolkit that draws on existing guidance and makes it specific to paper mills.

Content will be tailored to relevant audiences from within the scholarly community and released in 2025.

Toolkit modules

1. What are paper mills
2. How to cooperate with publishers during investigations of paper mills
3. Consequences of using paper mills
4. Authorship in the context of paper mills

Working Group 2 Improve post-publication corrections

Chair: Elizabeth Moylan



Identifying and sharing key challenges faced by the various contributor groups when paper mill misconduct is discovered.

Making recommendations to expedite communication and speed of the correction of the literature.

We welcome feedback on working draft

- Recommendations for improving the process of making post-publication corrections

<https://united2act.org/> - Resources tab

Working Group 3 Research on paper mills

Chair: Jennifer Byrne



Fortifying the knowledge gap about paper mills via a bibliography and a research manifesto (in preparation).

Encourage research to further reveal the extent of the problem of paper mills, how their practices are maturing, and possible actions to disrupt their activities and impact.

The research manifesto will describe barriers to and enablers of research on paper mills, key research questions, and how they can be addressed.

We welcome suggested additions to the bibliography, which will be regularly updated

- Bibliography on paper mills

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Working Group 4 Enable development of Trust Markers

Chair: Blaine Butler



The Trust Markers working group has determined that the objective of drafting definitions of Trust Markers in the context of paper mills would be most beneficial, to enable cross-sector communications and strategy development.

Trust Markers will be defined as they relate to trust in people, organisations, processes and products.

The group will work to coordinate external initiatives and other tools for either identifying paper mills or signalling trust to the submission, editorial, and peer review process.

Working Group 5 Facilitate dialogue between stakeholders

Chair: Nandita Quaderi



Enhance communication among stakeholders by fostering a shared understanding of the problem and drivers within the system. This approach includes developing a common vocabulary to represent key concepts effectively.

We welcome feedback on working drafts

- Terminologies
- Statement on rewards / incentive system

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- Paper Mills are a significant and growing problem for the whole of scholarly research
- Collaborative and sustained effort is needed to research the problem, to educate researchers involved in publication and peer review, to verify researcher identity and to correct the literature when paper mill products are found. Everyone has a part to play in this.
- If your organisation will commit to support the actions that U2A has committed to and would like to be the first to hear about the action plans, tools and resources currently in development, they may wish to sign the Consensus statement
- Please also comment on the resources which are now available and keep an eye out for further resources
- Contact <https://united2act.org/contact>

United2Act Working Groups have prepared draft resources as a first step to delivering on the actions in the Consensus Statement.

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We welcome feedback on the working drafts, which we will take into consideration for final revised versions.

contact@united2act.org

Working Groups are preparing additional resources which will be released to follow.