

How to fix the academic peer review system

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SACEMA researchers Alex Welte and Eduard Grebe have written a [provocative general-audience reflection](#) on the system of 'peer review' in academic publishing.

They argue that in the present era, subject-niche journals add little of value, in exchange for the constraints they apply to publication, and that it appears desirable, and ultimately inevitable, to have self-publication, on suitable archives readily catalogued by search engines, be the default route for the dissemination of research findings. This enables more immediate and meaningful 'post publication' feedback (peer review), and does not preclude the (dramatically reduced in number) surviving collection of journals providing genuine cross-niche curatorship worthy of subscriptions or general routine perusal.

Interestingly, meaningless (pre-publication) peer review is once again in the headlines: China is taking action against numerous scientists who appear to have found ways to propose bogus reviewers for journal editors to use, and someone seems to have successfully passed peer review with a nonsensical article nominally penned by two characters from 'The Simpsons' TV show.

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