Transparent peer review

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Transparent peer review – what is it?

Transparent peer review = publishing peer review materials

Peer review materials:

- Peer review reports, anonymized or with
   report author names
- Author responses/rebuttals
- Editor decision letters

Can also include:

- Appeal and resubmission information

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What's the value proposition?

Increase transparency and reproducibility of research

- First step towards **peer review reports being recognized as scholarly outputs**: posting peer reviews with a DOI allows them to be cited in the contributor's CV or referenced as part of further discussion of the work

- Published peer review materials enabling deeper insight into peer review will **strengthen understanding of the scientific record**

- **Facilitate** students and early career researchers **learning** about the assessment process

Developments in 2018

- February 2018 meeting organized by **HHMI, The Wellcome Trust** and **ASAPbio**

    (More information available on the ASAPbio website: asapbio.org/peer-review/summary)

- **ASAPbio open letter** committing to transparency in peer review; PLOS is a signatory

    (asapbio.org/letter)

- **Commentary in *Nature*** advocating for open reports as the default and for open identities to be optional, not mandatory

    (Jessica K. Polka, Ronald D. Vale et al., Nature **560**, 545-547 (2018) doi: 10.1038/d41586-018-06032-w)

Developments in 2018

July 2018 workshop, held at the BMA in London organised by *eLife* and EMBL-EBI considered the **practical challenges involved in publishing peer review materials**. Laying '…*the groundwork for the publication and archiving of peer review materials across publishers and publication models, providing flexible options to meet different journal needs and workflows.*'

Beck J, Funk K, Harrison M *et al*. Publishing peer review materials [version 1; referees: 2 approved]. *F1000Research* 2018, 7:1655 (https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.16460.1)

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Challenges

Process – Lots of customisation, lack of automation, adds to complexity and cost

Discoverability and usability – How to have each item be separately searchable and citable, but with online rendering that is easy to read

Community buy-in – Editors, reviewers and authors

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Transparent peer review at PLOS

With over **23,000** research articles published each year we believe we can affect meaningful change in the way scholarly communities learn about and understand peer review.

Reviewers will decide whether to reveal their identities or remain anonymous.

Authors will choose whether to make the peer review history public at the end of the assessment process for their manuscript.

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Thank you

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