

Openness and the Ethics of Peer Engagement

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GW Ethics in Publishing Conference

Session: Rethinking Peer Review

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Working Definition of Openness

- accessibility of knowledge, technology, and other resources;
- transparency of action;
- permeability of organizational structures; and
- inclusiveness of participation

Schlagwein D, Conboy K, Feller J, Leimeister JM, Morgan L. (2017). "Openness with and without information technology: A framework and a brief history," *Journal of Information Technology* 32(4): 297–305. doi:10.1057/s41265-017-0049-3.

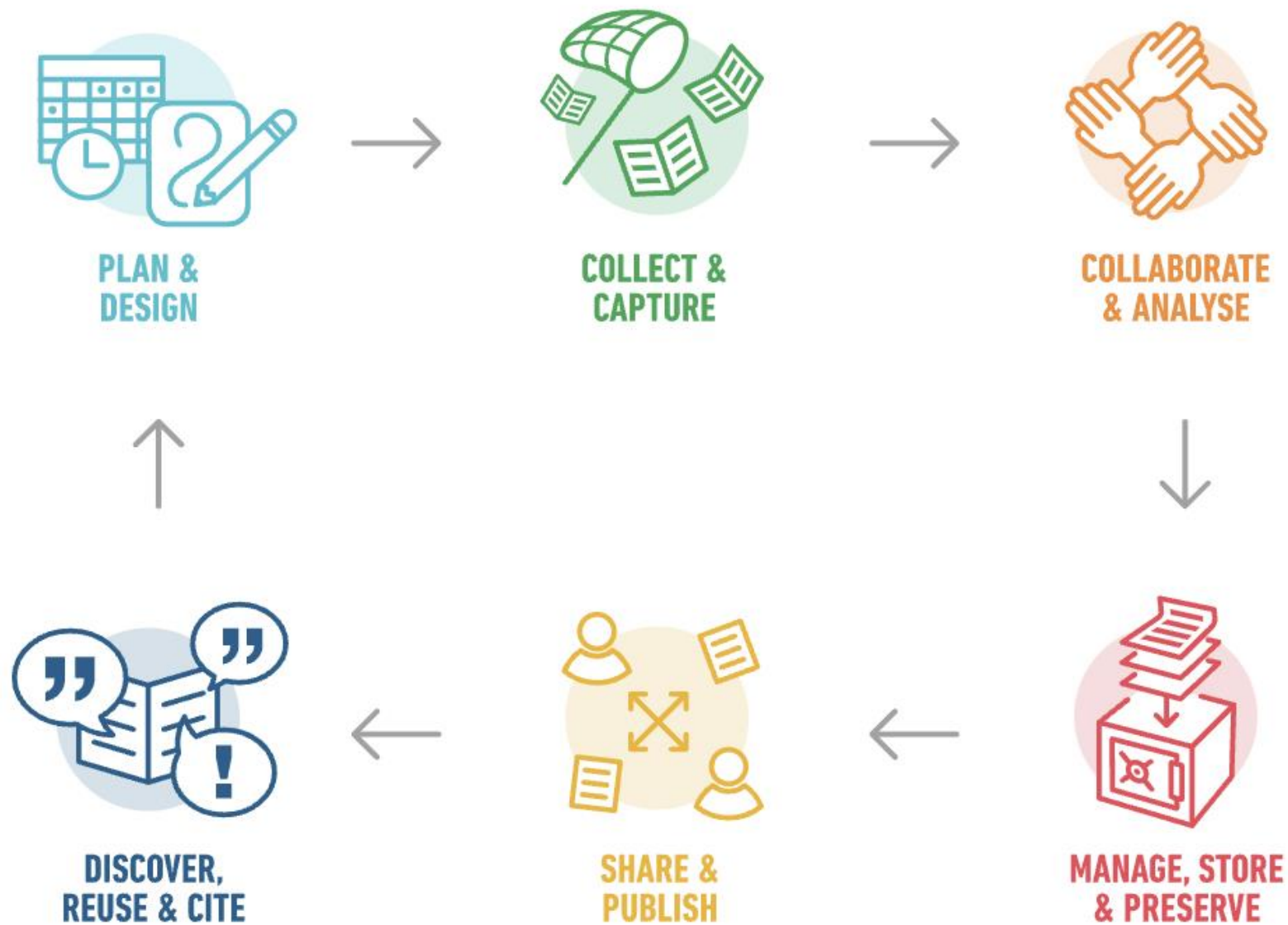


Image: Pinnock G. (2018). The research data management (RDM) lifecycle at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Retrieved from: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:UCT_RDM_lifecycle_\(all_icons\).svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:UCT_RDM_lifecycle_(all_icons).svg)

Importance of Openness in Scholarly Communication



- **Openness at every stage (but one!)**
 - Lab discussions
 - Writing and editing
 - Preprints
 - Conference presentations
 - Post-publication comments
- **Value of open exchange:** Open exchange of ideas accelerates knowledge and improves research quality

The one exception?

Peer Review Process

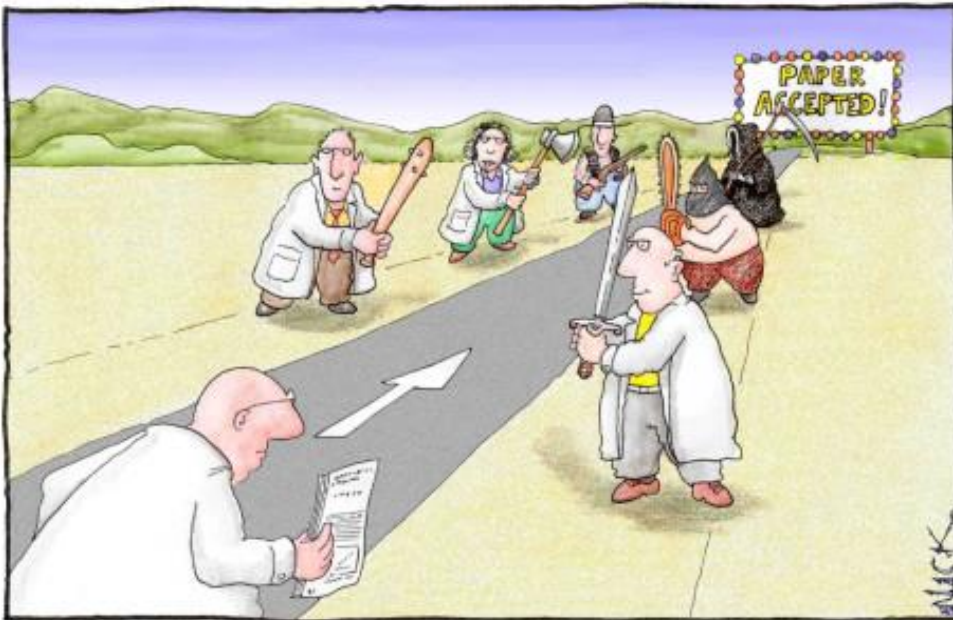


WILEY

Retrieved from: <https://authorservices.wiley.com/Reviewers/journal-reviewers/what-is-peer-review/the-peer-review-process.html>

Most suggestions for improvement?

From this ...

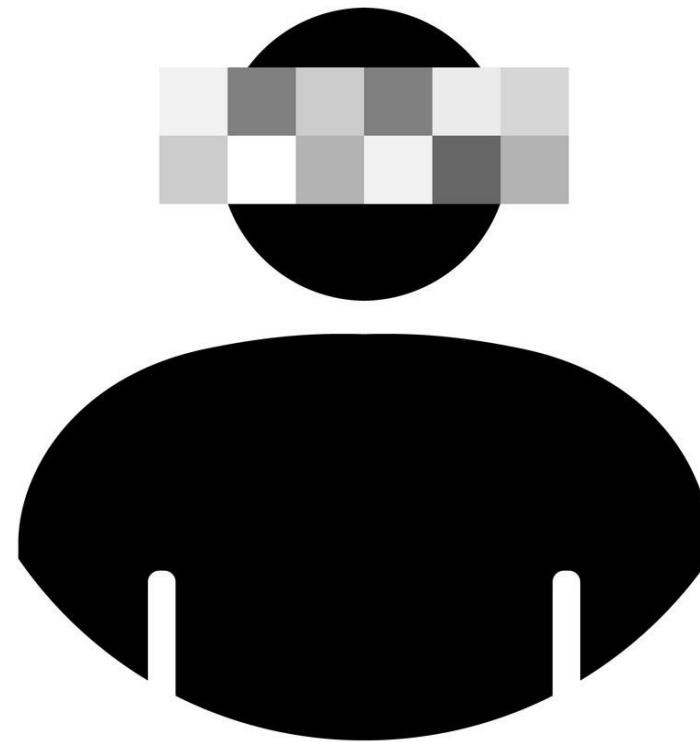
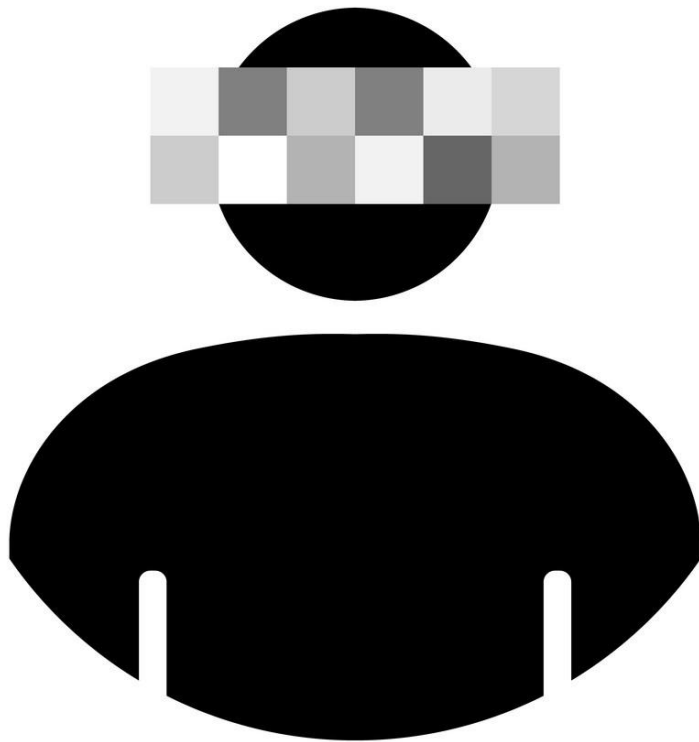


Most scientists regarded the new streamlined peer-review process as 'quite an improvement.'

... to this



The real problem? Anonymity!





“[O]ne cannot help but wonder about the logic of correcting for the abuses of anonymity on one side of a conversation by establishing anonymity on the other, creating further barriers between peers rather than encouraging open, effective, productive discussion of intellectual issues.”

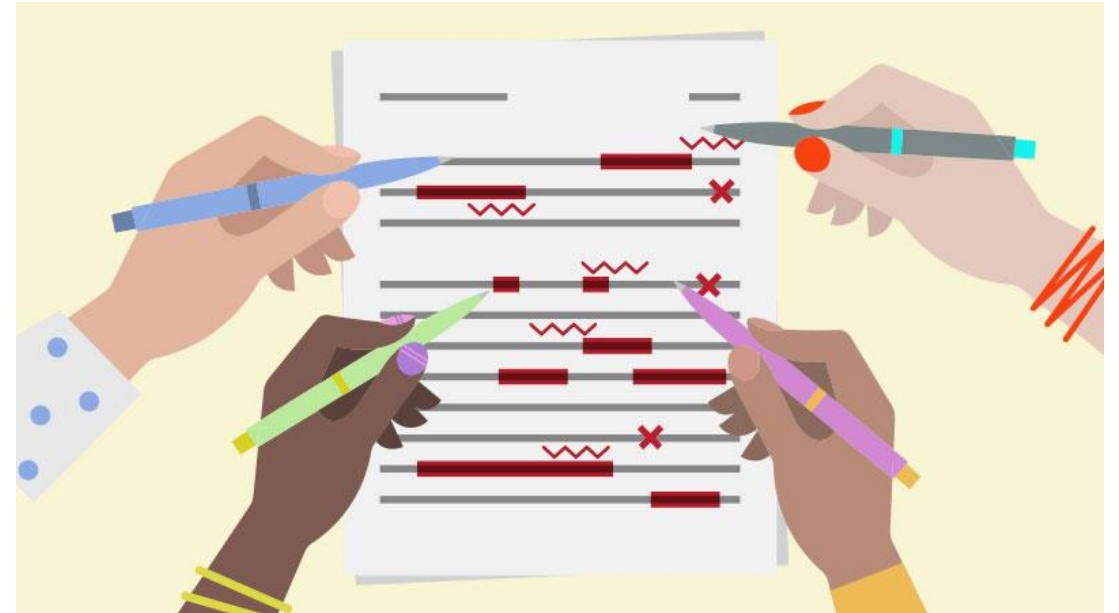
— Kathleen Fitzpatrick on double-anonymous review

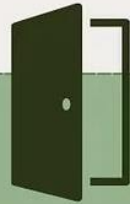
Fitzpatrick K. (2011). *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy*. New York University Press. p. 29.



Collaboration, not gatekeeping

Peer review should be collaborative process that helps refine research, rather than simply a means of limiting what gets published





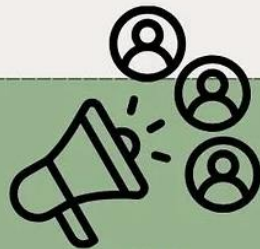
OPEN

- **Key Features:**
 - Transparency
 - Reduced Bias
 - Reviewer and Author Identities Disclosed
- **Benefits:**
 - Accountability
 - Constructive Feedback



COLLABORATIVE

- **Key Features:**
 - Multiple Reviewers
 - Expert Collaboration
- **Benefits:**
 - Comprehensive Assessment
 - Collective Decision-Making



POST-PUBLICATION

- **Key Features:**
 - Review After Publication
 - Ongoing Discussion
- **Benefits:**
 - Flexibility
 - Continuous Evaluation



TRANSFERABLE

- **Key Features:**
 - Reuse of Review Reports
 - Efficiency
- **Benefits:**
 - Reduced Duplication of Effort
 - Faster Publishing

Image: Millward J. (2024). Types of peer review: A guide to different forms of publishing your research. Retrieved from: <https://medium.com/@jkmillward/navigating-the-academic-publishing-landscape-peer-review-open-access-and-the-battle-against-b983b3f558eb>.

Ethical Imperatives for Open and Transparent Review

Open Dialog Among Authors, Reviewers, Editors, and Scholarly Community



- Transparent interactions in which authors, reviewers, and editors engage constructively and feedback process is visible to broader community
- Collaborative improvement of research quality
- Development of culture of continuous scholarly communication

Peer Engagement as Scholarship

- Peer interaction starts not only long before publication, but continues long after it — through ongoing feedback from colleagues, whether in person or online
- Thoughtful, substantive reviews and critiques are themselves intellectual and scholarly contributions and should be valued as such, not simply be invisible service



Call to Action

Long past time to adopt more open, collaborative, and rewarding system for peer engagement by opening that last black box!

Let's discuss what that would take!

