

New Approaches to Peer Review

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Post Url

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Most research journals employ the conventional approach to [peer review](#). This involves evaluation of an article by one or more among a panel of recognized experts in the field. The editorial board of the journal nominates these recognized experts. While this method has worked quite well over the years, alternative strategies have been or are being explored. The basic goal is to determine whether and how improvements can be made to the [traditional methods of peer review](#). Some of the new approaches are the following:


Pre-submission Peer Review

This has been an integral part of the publication process in the form of feedback obtained by the principal author from co-authors or known experts in the field. This process has also been formalized in certain subject areas by setting up customized pre-print repositories like [arXiv](#). Recently, professional pre-submission peer review services are carried out. These offer researchers the opportunity to improve their papers prior to submission.

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Commentary Following Publication

Readers can post their comments or thoughts about the article online along with the paper. This process obviously has to be moderated to weed out unsuitable comments. Publishers like [BioMed Central](#) and the [British Medical Journal](#) invite post-publication comments.

Online Peer Review

Among others, the journal [Nature](#) has experimented with this system. The procedure worked in parallel with external peer review. The manuscripts are placed on an open website, where individuals who identified themselves could comment on the paper. The editorial board takes into account all of the comments, in reaching a decision regarding publication.

Interactive review and discussions

In this method (adopted by the journal [Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics](#)), manuscripts are pre-screened by the editorial board before being posted online, where anonymous reviewers, other individuals, and also authors can post their comments and responses during a specified period. Following this, revision of the manuscript based on the comments follows.

Mix of pre- and post-publication review

A [combination of pre- and post-publication review](#) has been adopted by [PLoS One](#). The first stage involves evaluation of the article by members of the editorial board. Following publication, readers can post their comments in different forms: annotations, ratings, or debates.

A more detailed discussion about the various approaches described above can be found in the in-depth analysis of peer [review by Irene Hames](#). These methodologies have met with different degrees of success and have been implemented to varying extents. However, by far, conventional post-submission (or pre-publication) peer review remains

the predominant mode of review employed by most journals.

What are your views regarding the new approaches to peer review? Do you think they are better than the traditional peer review method? Please share your thoughts with us in the comments section below.

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