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Peer review is at heart an extremely simple concept. The assessment of a person's work by his peers. However, the 20<sup>th</sup> century has seen the corruption of this ideal of a meritocratic assessment of colleagues work into a formalised system to restrict the free exchange of knowledge. A system presided over by a self-appointed oligarchy of editors and referees.

This situation was necessary, even desirable, when the means of scientific communication – the hard copy journal distributed by post – was a limited resource. This limitation meant that editors and referees select on the basis of what they think might be important, creating the cult of the impact factor and the glorification of rejection rates.

The internet however has changed this by reducing the cost of distribution to a point where it is a very minor part of any publishers budget. A journal need no longer have page budgets; it can distribute as much or as little as it likes. Rejection cannot be justified by 'lack of space',

What then is the use of a system that selects for a limited resource when the resource becomes limitless?

There is certainly still a role for traditional peer review in the age of web distributed journals; a minimum standard of objective quality must be maintained. But it should not be used to block dissemination of scientific research. We must move towards a system which places as few barriers in the way of publication as possible allowing a purer form of peer review, review by all interested parties, to take place.

That is not to say that the more people involved in judging a paper the more accurate their assessment is likely to be. Science is not democratic, one unpopular but true result trumps any number of popular misinterpretations. Thus any form of selection based on individuals opinions be it anonymous or open, traditional peer review or Web 2.0 collectivism, will exclude those unpopular truths.

The scholarly journal has thrived by being a gatekeeper to scientific discovery it must now use that expertise to become a guide.