Nature focuses on peer review

Two new initiatives launched by Nature this week are set to explore a bedrock of scientific publishing. A web debate on peer review and a limited trial of open peer review launched on Monday 5 June 2006.

The peer review process requires constant scrutiny by those who administer it. Even publishers with new business models have been reluctant to change the traditional model, which functions well. Nature however, believes the shift to online publishing makes new approaches possible and the online debate and trial reflect this thinking.

The web debate will bring together overviews and opinions on peer review: its quality, value, ethics and alternatives. The debate is published at www.nature.com/nature/peerreview.

The trial will allow open comments on those submitted manuscripts selected for peer review. This trial, voluntary for authors, will run alongside the usual, confidential peer review process, and will close as this is completed for each submission. From 5 June, authors may opt for their submitted manuscript to be posted publicly for comment. Anyone in the field may post comments, provided they are prepared to identify themselves. The trial will allow Nature's editors to assess the value of including these open comments in their decision-making.

For more information please see: www.nature.com/nature/peerreview

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