A Scalable Solution for Transparent Peer Review

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There has been increased demand for more openness in the peer review process in recent years, as researchers and publishers strive to bring greater transparency to the research and publication process.

Many believe that publishing the accompanying peer review history of a paper adds real value to the peer review process and illustrates how the process of publishing research works. Increased transparency in the peer review process can restore trust and revitalize the process, bringing more accountability and recognition for the people involved.

However, academic journals have faced many practical difficulties to adopt more transparent peer review models, hindered by complex and established workflows. At present, the practice of making available the reviewer reports, authors' responses and editorial correspondence is only offered by a small proportion of journals

In September 2018, Wiley announced an initiative to pilot an automated, scalable transparent peer review workflow, in collaboration with Publons and ScholarOne (both part of Clarivate Analytics). The first journal to join the pilot was *Clinical Genetics*. The pilot offers authors the choice of transparent peer review when they submit to the journal. If their article is published and authors have elected for transparent peer review, the peer reviewers' reports, authors' responses, and editors' decisions will then accompany their published article. Reviewers also have the option to disclose their names alongside their reports, if they so choose. The peer review history is openly available on a page hosted by Publons via a link from the published article. Each component has a DOI, ensuring each element is fully citable. For those reviewers who choose to sign their reviews, the DOIs can also be added to their ORCID records. The comprehensive workflow provides alignment to best-practice data privacy regulation, ensuring the individual preferences of authors, peer reviewers and journals are met.

Since launching the pilot and until the end of January 2019, the feedback from the *Clinical Genetics* community has been extremely positive. This is reflected in 77% of authors opting for transparent peer review (417 of 528 submissions). The percentage of peer reviewers signing their reports is low at 23% (of 126 reports posted, 29 had identities).

To access the capability to scale and be compatible with different peer review models, across diverse subject disciplines and publisher workflows a further ten journals were added to the pilot in January 2019. A couple of the journals already mandated transparent peer review. However, by joining the pilot, these journals are now benefitting from more efficient workflows, ease of navigation of the pre-publication history, and assigned DOIs for each element of peer review.

Our approach enables recognition and reward for the peer review and editorial work that is part of a published study but otherwise remains hidden from view. It helps to make peer review more accountable, addresses bias, and demonstrates the value of peer review.