

Peer Review Can Make Metrics Accountable

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Demands for accountability in science funding are largely articulated in terms of ensuring that taxpayer money used to fund research projects is being allocated wisely. While such demands are commendable, accountability is not an unqualified good. One notable consequence of it is that peer review and quantitative metrics, both tools of accountability, have been increasingly dichotomized. In comparison to the supposed objectivity, transparency, replicability, and (perhaps most importantly) relative low cost of metrics and indicators, peer review is viewed as subjective and biased, non-transparent, contingent, and costly. Metrics are therefore seen as the more desirable means of evaluation. But beneath the fetishized jargon surrounding the normative justifications for metrics lurk tacit philosophical commitments. This talk reveals these philosophical commitments, opening the black box of metrics.