

Peer Review and Interdisciplinary Research: A Contradiction in Terms?

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Abstract: Peer review is the governing mechanism for the research community. It is also the means for resisting calls for democratizing the evaluation of intellectual research. The claim is that only those with special epistemic standing are competent to judge recondite theoretical efforts. But what happens to the mechanism of peer review when research becomes deeply interdisciplinary in nature? How does the academic community propose to review research that might involve dozens of different fields of expertise? And if every potential reviewer is ignorant of the vast majority of fields discussed in an interdisciplinary project, what happens to the rationale whereby ordinary citizens are excluded from peer review?