Sustaining the quality of publication

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The success of *AI EDAM* over the past 10 years has been built and sustained very largely on the continued and concerted push for quality in the work that was published, which Dave Brown led from the start of his term as Editor in Chief.

Sustaining this quality must surely form the basis for the continued success of *AI EDAM* over the next 10 years. Will this be enough? The last 10 years has seen important developments and changes in how research results can be and are published: changes and developments that question the need for subscription research journals.

This is not meant to be a rhetorical question, but I do believe that the quality of the published work must be the basis for defending the need for subscription research journals and for showing why good journals are still very much needed.

All good research builds upon existing research results. Thus, the quality of the new work is directly dependent upon the quality of the work it builds upon. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the quality of the previous research that is being used can be known and is known to be high by the researchers who seek to build upon it. This is what paid-for journals can do and what other so-called open publication systems find harder to do, at least consistently and uniformly.

In addition, it is not just researchers who need to be able to assume that published results are of good quality and thus not have to do further work to evaluate it or otherwise establish its quality. Professional engineers and managers in companies and organizations who read journals like *AI EDAM* to keep abreast of the state of the art and latest research results also need to be able to assume that what they read is good quality.

This is all obvious and hardly a disputable argument, I know. However, what I think we need to do is to sell this quality assurance service to *AI EDAM* readers more and better. I think we would help *AI EDAM* continue to be the leading journal of its field by making it more continuously visible that we carefully seek to publish only high quality work and how we try to do this. Doing so would help to make clearer what a good paid-for journal provides that other research publication systems find harder to do.

As part of trying to make more explicit *AI EDAM*'s concern for publishing only high quality research work, we might regularly make advice and help to authors more visible as to how to do this, how quality is judged by the Journal's reviewing process and Editor, and publish peer comments on the quality of particularly good papers.

Making it clear that other researchers think a particular paper is an especially good example is useful for other researchers and readers of *AI EDAM*. In addition, it would help show that *AI EDAM* gives a high importance to this aspect of its service to the research community.

Finally, with so much pressure to publish there does seem to be a growth in fraudulent attempts to publish. I do not think that *AI EDAM* is likely to see much of this kind of thing and perhaps none, but I do think we need to develop stronger mechanisms to guard against it. As a recent example shows (*The Economist*, 2011), standard reviewing may not catch deliberate attempts to do this. Raising this question and debating it in an open editorial or even a special issue might help to identify and develop stronger methods and would help to make it clear that we are actively concerned about the problem.

REFERENCE

The Economist. (2011, September 10). An array of errors. Accessed at http://www.economist.com/node/21528593

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