

The value creation cycle of peer review

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Peer review evokes disparate attitudes and behaviours. Authors desire prompt and constructive reviews; editors depend on colleagues to deliver high-quality evaluations in a timely manner. Potential reviewers may (and should) recognise their sense of duty to contribute to the system they benefit from, as authors, and in some cases, editors. However, they must balance this with other professional pressures, and for many academics, conducting peer review is a constant source of unrecognised labour. There is inevitable temptation to limit participation in terms of the quality, quantity and timeliness of peer review.

A thriving peer review system is expected to be efficient, rigorous, fair, inclusive of diverse perspectives, responsive to the needs of its stakeholders and as transparent as possible. It functions when colleagues contribute proportionally to what they gain from it as authors (Dolnicar, 2021; Elden, 2008). The vitality of the system depends on reviewers seeing their contributions as cyclical value creation operating at and across multiple scales, from the individual to the wider community of practice (see Fig. 1). This viewpoint piece explores how peer review creates value for colleagues' academic capabilities, their social, professional and intellectual capital, and more widely for the credibility of their field.

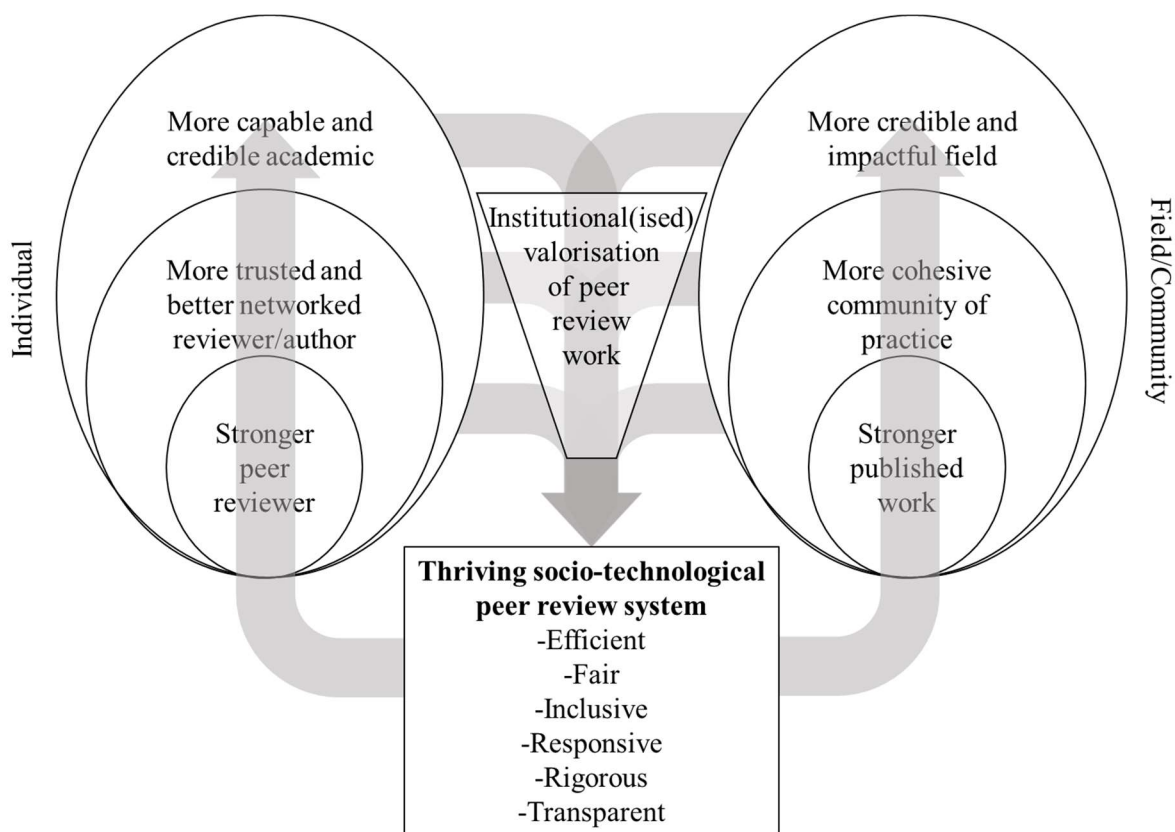


Fig. 1. The value creation cycle of peer review

Reviewers create value for themselves, expanding their professional competencies by learning about peer review practices that can remain hidden from those who do not review. Reviewing provides helpful insights into editorial processes, for example journals' evaluation criteria and reviewer instructions, which are essential to know for those intending to submit to those outlets. Journal systems change, instructions and criteria evolve, so it is worth maintaining long-term relationships with them to understand their workings. Some manuscript management systems are configured to allow reviewers to see others' assessments. These systemic features help make editorial decision-making more transparent. Seeing examples of constructive and poor practice in how other reviewers evaluate work and communicate with authors is instructive for developing our professional skills as reviewers. Moreover, it is important to remember that reading our peers' work responsively but critically helps us become stronger researchers and authors.

Value may be created in developing social and professional capital, as active, reliable and constructive reviewers create goodwill and trust between them and editors. The same editors are likely to handle their manuscripts in the future. Past review-related activities may not change how editors treat these colleagues' submissions; nevertheless, editors are potential future

collaborators. Editors are also esteemed members of a professional community that assesses colleagues' character and contributions in recruitment and promotions. Our behaviours in performing peer review reveal a lot about us. Prompt responses to review invitations, even if declining and offering helpful suggestions for alternatives, the timely delivery of reviews, comprising detailed and precise feedback, constructive criticism and a respectful tone, even if recommending rejection, speak volumes about our intellectual capacities and professionalism.

For authors, the value creation of peer review may emerge as intellectual capital through what we learn about methods and concepts in our own field and, importantly, from those outside our areas of interest. Appreciating how colleagues in other disciplines construct arguments and present evidence is essential, especially because of the opportunities and challenges created by the growth of interdisciplinary research (Lugosi, 2020). Some of the manuscripts we are sent to assess inevitably fall outside our immediate areas of specialism, and it is helpful to make editors aware of the limits of our expertise. Nevertheless, editors and authors can still benefit from an alternative perspective, particularly as papers in applied fields are read by an eclectic range of non-specialist audiences. Reviewing manuscripts from other disciplines can help us find the balance between advocating our worldviews and accommodating those of others in creating novel insights. In the same spirit, participating in peer review reveals weaker and stronger practice in how other academics respond to reviews and it shows how their work evolves, hopefully for the better, through peer assessment and feedback.

The intellectual value created for individual manuscripts, and their authors, through peer review cumulatively benefits the entire field as it engenders a stronger and more credible knowledge base. This certainly seems important for applied fields such as tourism, hospitality, events and leisure, whose members have to act cohesively and maintain rigour to assert their collective significance. The intellectual capital generated and mobilised through the review system is a shared resource for the community of practice.

Embedding and nurturing an active peer review culture creates symbolic forms of value for institutions and their constituents. Recognising peer review work in performance and promotions evaluations transforms reviewing into a valued signifier of esteem and productivity. Systematic valuation of reviewing may rely on the formal recording of activities through external organisations such as 'Publons', which captures colleagues' peer review work. Critics may see this as further expansion of pervasive self-surveillance, gamification and accounting in our profession. However, participating in these types of systems makes visible an important and substantial dimension of academics' labour and contributions that would otherwise remain hidden.

The maintenance of a healthy peer review system involves the normalisation and arguably valorisation of reviewing in the socialisation of our colleagues and students. Being an active and collegiate reviewer is inherently part of good academic citizenship. Early career researchers and doctoral students are regularly advised on how to publish, but our academic field(s) and their careers may be enhanced further if they were encouraged to participate in a thriving culture of peer review that created mutual value.

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