

Nature editors start online peer review

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Editors of the prestigious scientific journal Nature have reportedly embarked on an experiment of their own: adding an online peer review process.

Articles currently submitted for publication in the journal are subjected to review by several experts in a specific field, The Wall Street Journal reported. But now editors at the 136-year-old Nature have proposed a new system for authors who agree to participate: posting the paper online and inviting scientists in the field to submit comments approving or criticizing it.

Although lay readers can also view the submitted articles, the site says postings are only for scientists in the discipline, who must list their

names and institutional e-mail addresses.

The journal -- published by the Nature Publishing Group, a division of Macmillan Publishers Ltd., of London -- said it will discard any comments found to be irrelevant, intemperate or otherwise inappropriate.

Nature's editors said they will take both sets of comments -- the traditional peer-review opinions and the online remarks -- into consideration when deciding whether to publish a study, The Journal reported.

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