

letters

addresses issues raised by the reviewer but, in so doing, also lays down an added justification for publication of the manuscript, thereby adding a new dimension to the original contribution. If however, authors were to issue a rebuttal to defend an already untenable scientific position, as indicated by a "thorough and objective" referee report, publication of the rebuttal (in addition to the manuscript) would seriously undermine their professional standing.

In conclusion, the system proposed by Gordon certainly deserves a chance, but only if the identities of the reviewers are disclosed and only if the authors are given the opportunity to defend their work publicly in writing.

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THE AUTHOR REPLIES: The system of optional published refereeing I originally proposed has the advantage that it could be readily implemented by most journals using existing refereeing procedures. Journals would, of course, be free to adopt any of a number of different variations of optional published refereeing that might better suit their specific needs and those of their readers. Thus, journals desiring a more open an evenly balanced dialogue between referees and authors could adopt the proposal described in detail in the above letter by Kaplesh Kumar. Other journals might wish to encourage a more flexible exchange between authors and referees by letting referees themselves decide whether or not their reports should be published. (Should referees exercise this option, the manuscript could then simply be published without the referee's report).¹ Still other journals might prefer to place additional emphasis on the seriousness of the published refereeing option by requiring a mandatory rethinking period of six months for both referees and authors before the author would be allowed to publish a criticized manuscript.²

In practice, the variation of optional published refereeing best suited to a given journal will, of course, depend not only on the special advantages of each variation but also on such practical considerations as the availability of referees and the amount of additional editorial or administrative work that might be required. The essential point, however, which all of the variations of optional published refereeing share in common, is that the author will always have the option and responsibility for publishing the manuscript in question (preferably with the referee's or editor's comments) whenever it became clear that the dialogue between the authors and referees was not likely to resolve an important point of disagreement. It is precisely in such cases, where the ultimate validity of a given manuscript can be

determined only by the long-term attention and participation of the interested physics public, that optional published refereeing is most advantageous, since it enables the discussion to be brought into the open in a form that specifically encourages an objective evaluation of the essential points in question. It would also, as noted before, lead to improved refereeing and manuscripts in general. The desirability of such a result for authors, referees, journals and the interested physics public is sufficiently great that it can only be repeated that a system of optional published refereeing, adapted to the specific needs of individual journals, deserves at least a trial period by a number of physics journals.

References

- 1. B. K. Forscher, Science 150, 319 (1965).
- 2. C. McCutchen, New Scientist 70, (no. 998), 225 (1976).

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Call for papers

A special issue of the IEEE Transactions on Electron Devices scheduled for January 1980 will be devoted to *Infrared: Materials, Devices, and Applications*. The purpose of this special issue is to cover the broad state-of-art in the infrared field, which has dramatically changed under the impact of the development of new concepts for large-scale, integrated arrays. Papers are solicited that cover infrared materials, detectors and related devices, and various systems and applications.

The paper deadline is 1 May 1979. All manuscripts or requests for more information should be directed to the guest editor:

Professor Andrew J. Steckl
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
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Tokamak instabilities

Your news story on the successful containment of high-temperature ions in the Princeton Large Torus (November, page 17) rang a bell when I read the statement that, at the high temperature achieved in the Princeton tokamak, the collisionless trapped-particle instabilities did not show up. I recall Kadomtsev and Pogutse¹ having predicted that instabilities driven by trapped particles in a tokamak cannot be completely eliminated. But I also recall that Richard Briggs and I, in a cursory analysis^{2,3} had concluded that the high dielectric background formed by the untrapped particles could reduce the danger

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