Last year I wrote a blog post about the inevitable discussion co-authors have about what journal to submit manuscripts for possible publication (link: http://wp.me/p6ma5O-I). Shortly thereafter I submitted a manuscript to the relatively new Open Access (OA) journal Collabra. I was asked at some point to provide some feedback regarding my choice to send my manuscript for consideration at Collabra rather than other possible outlets. Here was my response:

“Overall, I feel that the traditional publication model where societies have contracts with private publishers for one or more journals, with the number of contracted print pages determining how many papers can be published per year, and access to published manuscripts being restricted to those with subscriptions, is no longer the best model for advancing scientific discovery. I therefore support alternative publication outlets that are open access, focus on the quality of the research methods to test hypotheses and less on the pattern of results obtained, and are not limited in terms of how many articles can be published each year by arbitrary page limitations. Collabra is one such outlet, and I like to see that scholars such as Simine Vazirie and Rolf Zwaan, as well as many other associate editors, are part of the editorial team. For those reasons I chose to submit my original research to Collabra and will likely do so again.”

The traditional academic journals referred to above undoubtedly publish excellent research, but my reading of the state of science tells me we are moving inexorably toward open access for publicly funded research. Current technology allows for research to be shared with minimal or no cost, with or without pre-publication peer review (and all with post-publication peer review in one way or another). For example, the journal Judgement and Decision Making is open access, encourages open science practices, and has no author fees. To stick around, traditional journals will need to figure out a new business model for making their product freely available, and current OA journals with fairly high user fees will need to figure out ways to reduce or eliminate those fees.

It’s the end of traditional journals as we know it, and I feel fine.