Review of: "If knowledge were simpler, we would all be wiser"

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Review of the article "If knowledge were simpler, we would all be wiser" by Michael Wood

Overall assessment

This article is a well-written and thought-provoking exploration of the potential benefits and challenges of simplifying academic knowledge. Wood makes a strong case that there are many historical and contemporary examples of successful simplification, and that there is much to be gained by continuing to pursue this approach. He also identifies some of the potential barriers to simplification, such as the resistance of experts and the difficulty of measuring the benefits of simplification.

Methodology

Wood's methodology is primarily based on a critical review of the literature on simplification, as well as his own personal experience as a teacher and researcher. He provides a number of concrete examples of how knowledge has been simplified in the past, and he proposes some specific ways in which current knowledge could be simplified.

Specific comments

I found the following sections of the article to be particularly interesting and insightful:

- The section on the historical examples of simplification is very informative. Wood shows how the adoption of the decimal system of numerals and the evolution of mathematical notation have had a profound impact on human progress.
- The section on the different ways in which knowledge can be simplified is very useful. Wood identifies a number of different tactics, such as changing jargon and notation, changing core concepts, and reducing pre-requisites.
- The section on the potential barriers to simplification is very realistic. Wood acknowledges that experts and universities may resist new simple versions of knowledge, and that peer reviewers may be unlikely to approve them.

Overall, I highly recommend this article to anyone who is interested in the potential benefits and challenges of simplifying academic knowledge.