PhilPapers: Philosophical Research Online, by the Centre for Digital Philosophy, University of Western Ontario. http://philpapers.org/

[CC] [Revisited Jan’16] PhilPapers (CH, Jul'09, 46-6123) aims to be both a comprehensive index and an open-access repository of philosophical research. Edited by David Bourget (Western Ontario Univ.) and David Chalmers (New York Univ. and Australia National Univ.) and assisted by a community of professional philosophers, it has arguably become—in less than a decade—the central online resource for English-language philosophy. Its recent merger with Philosophy Research Index (PRI) (CH, Sep’11, 49-0009) significantly expands its scope chronologically and linguistically. Although officially a freely accessible resource, PhilPapers actively solicits subscriptions from institutions offering philosophy degrees in high-GDP countries. On-campus users from non-subscribing institutions encounter a pop-up notification and a brief delay when initially accessing the site. The continuously updated database now contains over 1.8 million citations to books, journal articles, reviews, dissertations, personal websites, open-access archives, and other philosophical literature in over 30 languages. Inclusion of notices of forthcoming publications makes it an excellent current-awareness tool.

Browsing and discovery are facilitated by a hierarchical subject taxonomy with more than 5,000 categories, in addition to those records provided with keywords or abstracts. Bibliographic information is derived (in addition to the incorporation of PRI records) from various sources, including automatic harvesting of publishers' and authors' websites or online repositories, the work of volunteer editorial staff, and submissions from registered users. The quality of the indexing likewise varies; information for some records is minimal, and the occasional errors and omissions seem to be artifacts of the automated procedures. Though such flaws will not trouble some users, they do present obstacles to comprehensive and precise bibliographic research, especially if one is looking for non-English or older publications. The site's sophisticated functionality may make navigation difficult for novices.

External links are provided to full-text sources via Google Scholar, Google Books, Amazon.com, and other open-source portals; the addition of links to WorldCat.org would be desirable. The site works with open-URL resolvers at subscribing institutions, so users can locate resources and export citations in multiple formats. Users registered for a free account can create customized bibliographies, set up email and RSS alerts, participate in discussions, and make contributions or corrections. PhilPapers continues to improve and expand, making it a crucial tool for philosophical scholarship. Summing Up: Highly recommended. All academic levels.

--C. McCaffrey, Yale University Library

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Philosopher's Index, produced by the Philosopher’s Information Center. EBSCO. http://www.ebscohost.com
Philosopher's Index (CH, Apr'00, 37-4217) has served as the primary bibliography for English-speaking philosophers since its creation in 1966 by Richard H. Lineback (founder of Philosopher's Information Center). First produced as a print quarterly, it is now exclusively an online subscription database available through multiple vendors, including EBSCO, ProQuest, and Ovid. Lineback (emer., Bowling Green State Univ.) remains the editor and is assisted by an editorial board of distinguished philosophers. This review evaluates the resource on the EBSCOhost platform. Through its nearly five decades of existence, the index's approach has remained consistent. Articles (drawn from over 1,700 journals), monographs, contributions to anthologies, and book reviews are covered, beginning in 1940 (with some content dating to 1902); dissertations are excluded. Multidisciplinary publications are also surveyed, but only the philosophical content is indexed. With the exception of book reviews, entries are assigned multiple subject headings by a professional editorial staff, and most feature an author-supplied abstract. While coverage of foreign-language publications has increased in recent years, the vast majority of citations are in English, which limits the utility for researchers focusing on specialties with extensive scholarship—notably Continental philosophy and the history of philosophy—in other languages. The quarterly update schedule also restricts currency as the pace of dissemination of research work, including that of philosophy, has quickened.

Philosopher's Index works well on the EBSCOhost interface. Simple and advanced searches are supported, allowing users to formulate complicated and precise queries limited to specific fields, by language or document type. Individual indexes can be browsed directly as well, although the subject index is not organized hierarchically and provides no cross-referencing—a drawback given the great variety and interconnectedness of philosophical taxonomy; the potential of this 15,000-term thesaurus as a search tool is demonstrated as a dynamic graph on the producer's website at http://philindex.org/. EBSCO's search results can be sorted in diverse ways; the refine-results menu in the left pane helps users narrow their results, while the page-options link allows customization of the display. Results can be saved, viewed in a range of citation formats, and exported to bibliographic managers. Saving results between sessions and setting up alerts for new content is possible once the user establishes a MyEBSCO account. Extensive search help for the interface is readily available, as is a pop-up information page specific to Philosopher's Index. This description has not been updated recently and does not reflect either the interface's present features or the database's current coverage.

During the past decade, PhilPapers (CH, Apr'16, 53-3338) has emerged as a serious competitor to Philosopher's Index. While the free website is now the more current and comprehensive tool, the subscriber database continues to provide more consistent, higher-quality indexing, making Philosopher's Index the sine qua non for advanced philosophical research.

Summing Up: Highly recommended. All academic levels.

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