

Philosophy

Scholarly research abounds

by Kelly M. Broughton

Locating scholarly materials on philosophical topics can be extremely difficult using a large search engine, such as AltaVista, or even a smaller one, such as Yahoo. As with any search, results are dependent on the quality of the search statement, the capabilities of the search engine, and the content of the database.

You might as well forget locating information on teaching the discipline of philosophy in one of the big engines. For example, if you were to search "philosophy and teaching," you would retrieve plenty of materials about the philosophy of teaching. How many entries are you willing to look through to find ones about teaching courses in the discipline?

The academic world of philosophy seems to have overcome this problem with numerous quality metasites and a limited-area search engine. Moreover, the development and sophistication of these sites continue to evolve. In fact, there are so many directories and metasites that only a few can be mentioned here. This bibliography focuses on the most comprehensive and easiest-to-use directories and metasites for Western philosophy, gives a taste of some of the best sites for scholarly research, and highlights a few unique and interesting sites.

Begin by searching or browsing

• **Hippias: Limited Area Search of Philosophy on the Internet.** This site searches

across eight metasites, called "associate sites," which are all peer-reviewed (see the "About Hippias" section of the site for further information on this process). These sites include many of those listed below and are all edited and maintained by professional philosophers, some of whom also serve on the site's editorial board. Hippias' searching lacks sophistication. It does allow for truncation and substring searching. However, you cannot search for phrases or use Boolean operators. Imprecise results here are not as problematic as they would be using a large search engine, such as AltaVista. You can be sure

HIPPIAS

LIMITED AREA SEARCH OF PHILOSOPHY
ON THE INTERNET

the vast majority of the 133 links retrieved by searching "question begging" in Hippias will relate closely to the topic of circular argumentation. In contrast, the search in AltaVista "+question +begging" retrieved more than 5,000 hits, and only 5 of the top 10 related to the philosophical argument. Browsing is not available here, but if you want to perform a search, this is the place to start. *Access:* <http://hippias.evansville.edu/>.

• **Noesis: Philosophical Research Online.** This site includes scholarly research (essays, primary texts, course resources, reviews, etc.), the indexing of about 20 online philosophy journals, 2 encyclopedias, and 1 dic-

About the author

Kelly M. Broughton is reference coordinator at Bowling Green State University, e-mail: kmoore@bgnet.bgsu.edu



tionary. It is browsable by topic, author, and journal title. It is also searchable. One may specify any of eight format types, or search filters, included in the database. In most instances, librarians will want to use this feature to deselect the type "published books," which offers partial bibliographic information and a link to Amazon.com for each book title. Currently, there is no search help available. It does appear, at least from this author's trials, to allow simple Boolean queries and phrase designation with quotation marks. Philosophy Ph.D.s and A.B.D.s who register with the site may endorse Internet resources to be added to Noesis and may also contribute content. *Access:* <http://noesis.evansville.edu/>.

• **Guide to Philosophy on the Internet.**

This site, by Peter Suber (Earlham College, general editor of Hippias and associate editor of Noesis), is a comprehensive, browsable guide to philosophy materials on the Internet. The site's scope and relationship to Hippias and Noesis are readily available in the "About this Guide" section. The table of contents contains 16 categories, such as mailing lists, guides, or philosophers, which lead to lists of links on virtually every philosophical topic imaginable. Everything included in this site is also in Hippias by virtue of the Guide being an associate site of Hippias. Browse through this site to give yourself an idea of the extent of materials available to philosophy researchers on the Internet. *Access:* <http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/philinks.htm>.

To make things even easier for the researcher in the future, these sites are in the process of merging. According to Suber, the technology behind Noesis is better suited than Hippias to continue gathering sites for indexing as the Internet expands. Even more important and interesting is that once the merger is completed, Noesis will have more search filters available, including one based on philosophers' endorsements.

Another enhancement for the future will include the capability for philosophers to "carve out a subset of the content, give it a unique name and URL, and conduct full-text

searches on just its contents. [The database] will soon support more than one such subset per user. Then faculty can make one for each course they teach, one for each research project, one for their own online writings, and so on."¹

Encyclopedias

• **Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.** All librarians should investigate this interesting "dynamic encyclopedia," whether or not they have any interest in philosophy. The article "Why Philosophy Needs A 'Dynamic' Encyclopedia of Philosophy," by John Perry and Edward N. Zalta, available at the encyclopedia's "editorial information" site, explains the need and purpose behind a dynamic encyclopedia. The rationale (including the lag time and costs of other formats) is not unique to this discipline and many others would be well served by such a publication, as would our library's budgets. Experts author all the essays in the encyclopedia. Editions are archived and available on the Web site. Although the project began in 1995, it is still incomplete; about one-sixth of the approximately 600 or so planned entries appear to be complete. It is searchable and indexed, although the index can be somewhat confusing, since there is still no encyclopedia entry available for many of the terms in the index. This project is worth keeping an eye on. If they can successfully complete it, keep it up-to-date, and keep it free, then it may prove precedent setting. *Access:* <http://plato.stanford.edu/>.

• **The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy.** Unlike the Stanford site, this encyclopedia's entries come not only from professional philosophers, but also from the public domain and the editor, James Fieser (University of Tennessee at Martin). He indicates that he hopes to have all entries authored by professionals.

This encyclopedia makes no mention of updates or archives, but does include many topics not yet covered by the Stanford site. Most entries are much more elementary than the Stanford site and are suitable for undergraduates or laypeople. For example, the Stanford site has authors working not only on an overview entry on René Descartes, but also four subtopics. Only one of these assigned entries is completed, "Descartes' Epis-

temology." This subtopic alone contains nearly 127,000 characters. The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy has one entry on Descartes and it totals just less than 59,000 characters. It also includes specific entries on the categorical imperative, hedonism, solipsism, and many others that can be helpful for lower-level students. Access: <http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/>.

Other interesting research-oriented sites

- **Noema: The Collaborative Bibliography of Women in Philosophy.** This bibliographic database contains over 16,000 works by more than 5,000 women authors. The print equivalent of this title was last published in 1997 as *The Collaborative Bibliography of Women in Philosophy*, and included 11,000 records.² It is searchable by author, title, words, year, and subject and includes entries for all types of publications, including books, articles, chapters, and dissertations. Search help is readily available, although appeared to be incomplete. Some entries also link to the author's personal or professional Web page, if available, as well as an occasional online abstract. Access: <http://billyboy.ius.indiana.edu/womeninphilosophy/womeninphilo.html>.

- **The International Directory of On-Line Philosophy Papers.** This is a searchable directory of bibliographical information on nearly 500 philosophy research papers available all over the Internet. The site also offers browsing by topic. All the papers are authored by academics and are written in English. Access: <http://www.hku.hk/philodep/directory/>.

- **The Paideia Project On-Line.** This is the official site of the Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy, held in Boston in August 1998. You can order the proceedings and keep abreast of what's new, but probably the most useful feature of the site is the full text of nearly 700 of the papers presented at the Congress. Searching and browsing 45 topics are available. Access: <http://www.bu.edu/wcp/PaidArch.html>.

- **Poiesis: Philosophy Online Serials.** This fee-based database, produced by Intele

and the Philosophy Documentation Center (PDC), indexes the full texts of approximately 30 philosophy journal titles, has 30 more under contract, and will eventually contain 100 titles, as well as dissertation abstracts. In addition to being able to search words in the entire articles using Boolean operators and view key words in context, subscribers can also display the full text of many of the titles for which they already subscribe in print. Of the 18 titles currently available to view full



text, only 3 of them are available from other full-text vendors such as JSTOR, Project MUSE, or the Proquest products. Issue currency is a slight problem, with many of the titles being more than two issues behind the paper. This is not surprising considering the majority of these publishers are not supplying Intele and the PDC with electronic texts in the first place, unlike the information that is regularly supplied to Lexis-Nexis or other searchable, full-text databases. Pricing is based on the number of professional philosophers employed at your institution and ranges from \$300 to \$1,500 a year. Access: <http://www.nlx.com/posp/index.htm>.

- **Books in Philosophy.** This database offers philosophy books and other media from more than 130 publishers for sale via the Philosophy Documentation Center (PDC). The advanced searching capabilities of this database are much more robust than what you'll find in other Internet bookstores and allows for searching by author, title, format, publisher, publication date, ISBN, keywords and subject category, and even offers sorting capabilities. Brief descriptions are available for many titles. Access: <http://booksinphilosophy.bgsu.edu/default.asp>.

For fun and learning

- **Philosophy News Service.** This is an extremely interesting site that offers a variety of current information for philosophers. You can locate awards, new books, calls for papers, jobs, discussion lists, join a chat group, and even sign up for free e-mail so that your address is @philosophers.net. Perhaps the most interesting feature is the actual news

PHILOSOPHY NEWS SERVICE

service. News items relating to philosophers or philosophy in any manner from all over the Internet are gathered together here. Sources of stories range from originals written specifically for the "WHiP Archive" (What's Happening in Philosophy) to stories from the *Los Angeles Times* and Africa News Online. Three to six stories are added each day, with about two months' worth of news available at the homepage. The "WHiP Archive" features regular updates about the most recent and important developments in philosophy. The "PhilosophEye" section includes reprints of articles from mainstream periodicals that offer "philosophical perspectives on matters of public interest." Access: <http://www.philosophynews.com/>.

• **Zeno's Coffeehouse.** This site, by Ron Barnette (Valdosta State University), offers new "challenges" on an ongoing basis. These challenges are problems of logic, rational choice, and critical thinking, e.g., "Using standard hourglass-type measuring devices, what is the quickest way to measure nine minutes with a four-minute glass and a seven-minute

glass?" New challenges are posted every so often and you can view all the previous challenges and the solutions submitted. Access: <http://www.valdosta.edu/~rbarnett/phi/zeno.html>.

The rankings

• **The Philosophical Gourmet.** Brian Leiter (University of Texas at Austin) ranks the graduate philosophy departments across the country, and around the world, primarily based on the quality of the tenured faculty. Perhaps even more helpful to the aspiring graduate student is the report's "breakdown of programs by area of strength," where a prospective student can get an indication of the strength of a particular school in terms of the student's individual interests. Access: <http://www.blackwellpublishers.co.uk/gourmet/>.

Note

1. E-mail correspondence from Peter Suber to author on January 27, 2000.

2. Noel Hutchings and William D. Rumsey, eds., *The Collaborative Bibliography of Women in Philosophy* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Philosophy Documentation Center, 1997). ■



When most of us were in college,
this was the only Web that
caused immediate concern.

Help students and faculty find a
way through the Web—order more
copies of the CHOICE Web
Review Issue!

Special supplement, August 1999.

Reviews some 600 research-related Internet sites,
and has some really nifty features and articles.

You'll want to order extra copies for the library,
and don't forget to get one for yourself, too!

\$24.00 a copy, 1 to 4 copies

\$21.50 each, 5 to 9 copies

\$19.00 each, 10 to 19 copies

\$17.50 each, 20+ copies

CHOICE: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries

Subscriptions Dept. 100 Riverview Center Middletown, CT 06457

Fax: 860-704-0465. Phone: 860-347-6933 x33, subscriptions@ala-choice.org

visit us at www.ala.org/acrl/choice for more information

Stay on the cutting edge with these ACRL Conferences:

Beyond Words: Visual Information in Special Collections

A Rare Books and Manuscripts Section preconference

CHICAGO, JULY 5-7, 2000

www.ala.org/acrl/confhp.html

An ACRL/TLT Flashlight Institute: Shining a Flashlight on the Library, Technology and the Curriculum

CHICAGO, JULY 7, 2000

www.ala.org/acrl/flashlight.html

Library Instruction on the Web

An Instruction Section preconference

CHICAGO, JULY 7, 2000

www.ala.org/acrl/instruction2000.html

Legislative Advocacy: Key Roles for Today's Academic Librarians

CHICAGO, JULY 7, 2000

www.ala.org/acrl/advocacy2000.html

Understanding the Licensing Landscape

CHICAGO, JULY 7, 2000

www.ala.org/acrl/licensing.html

ACRL/Harvard Leadership Institute

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, JULY 30 - AUGUST 5, 2000

<http://gseweb.harvard.edu/~ppe/index.html>

ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE & RESEARCH LIBRARIES

50 East Huron Street • Chicago, IL 60601

800-545-2433, ext. 2522 • e-mail: acrl@ala.org