

Building a Better BRIK

Building Research Information Knowledgebase Vastly Expands Its Research Offerings

By Stephanie Stubbs, Assoc. AIA, PMP

The Building Research Information Knowledgebase (BRIK), a joint venture of the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS) and The American Institute of Architects (AIA), is an interactive portal that offers online access to professionally reviewed research projects and case studies in all facets of the built environment. Provided information spans from predesign, design and construction through occupancy and re-use. In March 2015, the BRIK searchable database was widely expanded through the addition of the EBSCO Discovery Service, which adds thousands of titles in three databases—all searchable through BRIK.

Now two years old, BRIK has been developed under the auspices of the AIA/NIBS BRIK Council, a multidisciplinary group directed by NIBS. Currently, an 18-person Building Research Council (BRC) Steering Committee guides the development of BRIK. “[We hope BRIK will] be the impetus for equipping a generation of practitioner-researchers,” says Ray Pentecost, DrPH, FAIA, FACHA, LEED AP, chair of the BRC Steering Committee. “The success of BRIK as a repository of research and a portal for the interaction of those interested in research will, at least in part, be shaped by the ability of visitors to effectively tap the content available on the site.”

Expanded Research Portal

AIA and NIBS members now have the option to subscribe to BRIK in order to access tens of thousands of abstracts, as well

as full text information on thousands of pieces of research. In addition to the now-familiar “BRIK boutique” of hand-selected and abstracted, professionally reviewed research highlighted by NIBS, AIA and BRIK partners, the BRIK website now serves as a portal to three EBSCO Discovery databases:

- **The Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals** covers more than 2,500 U.S. and international journals, scholarly articles and popular periodical literature. This includes publications of professional associations, as well as state and regional periodicals. Additionally, major serial publications on the architecture and design of Europe, Asia, Latin America and Australia are featured.
- **The Art & Architecture Complete** includes full-text coverage of more than 370 periodicals and more than 220 books with full-text coverage dating back to 1937. It also includes cover-to-cover indexing and abstracts for more than 770 academic journals, magazines and trade publications, as well as for nearly 230 books. Art & Architecture Complete contains selective coverage for more than 60 additional publications and an image collection of more than 63,000 images provided by Picture Desk and others.
- **The Sustainability Reference Center**, designed for information professionals and sustainability experts, provides the greatest concentration of sustainability-related content available today. Nearly 850 full-text titles, with complete indexing of more than 940 publications—

journals, monographs, magazines and trade publications—are featured. Additionally, it includes tens of thousands of sustainability-focused articles, benchmarks and best practices.

With a goal to heighten comprehension and knowledge-sharing among professions, BRIK offers access to research projects that span the depth and breadth of the people who work to create, build and sustain the built environment. Research offered on the BRIK site is professionally reviewed to assure that the information that reaches these busy professionals is quality-controlled.

BRIK was developed to be user-friendly and to appeal to its potential visitors. Research projects are searchable by text, title, keyword, taxonomy and contributor. Searches are easily bookmarked. To increase connectivity, all users may publicly comment on and rate research projects on the BRIK website. They also may use BRIK's RSS feeds, Twitter links and events calendar.

During a March-September 2015 trial period of this subscription content, an AIA or NIBS membership is your passport to the entire BRIK database without charge, but you must sign up on the BRIK website at www.brikbase.org. (For more specifics, refer to the "Using BRIK" sidebar, page 38.) After the free trial period concludes, individuals will receive a notice asking if they would like to sign up for an annual BRIK subscription (at a \$40 annual fee per user). Only individuals confirming their subscriptions will be billed.

Currently, EBSCO is working with AIA and NIBS to incorporate the BRIK research database into the EBSCO search function. Once that effort is complete, all research will be accessible from the BRIK search box, including research supplied by BRIK partners and contributors. All three EBSCO databases are contained in one search. A user can employ the Content Partner refinement on the search results page to narrow to a specific database. To access only peer-reviewed research among the EBSCO databases, do a basic search by keyword, title, author or subject. Then "Refine Results" by checking "Limit to Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Articles."

The search feature in the expanded database is remarkably intuitive. BRIK allows Boolean searches or searches for phrases. Users also can limit searches by date, source type (magazines, books, particular trade journals) and a number of other factors in the "Refine Results" section. To expand the search, check the box to "search within the full text of articles."

The Flip Side: Contributions to the Knowledgebase

There is no fee to post research on BRIK. A select group of pioneers provides research for the BRIK research base in three distinct groups: Partners, Contributors and Individuals.

- **Partners** are non-profit associations, educational institutions, national labs and government agencies that

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Using BRIK

To set up a free new account during the trial period:

1. Go to the BRIK website, www.brikbase.org.
2. Click the red "sign in" button at the top right of the page.
3. Click "Create new account"
4. Supply a user name, password and contact information (this information will never be shared or made public).
5. Enter whether you are a member of AIA or NIBS, along with your member number. (This is required: it will enable you to perform an EBSCO-powered advance search.)
6. Check the "Code of Conduct" box.
7. Type in the verification characters.
8. Click the "Create new account" button.

Click the BRIK logo to return to the home page. You will see two search boxes in the right-hand column: one for "Search EBSCO Research Databases" (the extensive, advanced search) and one for "Search BRIK database" (the "boutique" research assembled by BRIK partners).

If you already have a BRIK account:

1. Go to the BRIK website, www.brikbase.org.
2. Click the red "sign in" button at the top right of the page.
3. Enter your user name and password.
4. Click the red "edit" button.
5. Near the bottom of the screen, select "AIA" or "NIBS" as your membership organization from the dropdown menu.
6. Enter your membership number.
7. Click the "Save" button at the bottom of the screen.

Click the BRIK logo to return to the home page. You will see two search boxes in the right-hand column: one for "Search EBSCO Research Databases" (the extensive, advanced search) and one for "Search BRIK database" (the "boutique" research assembled by BRIK partners).



vet their own research projects and presentations before entering them onto the BRIK website. All research submitted by Partners is identified as such on the site and can be tagged and searched under the Partners' identities. Partners professionally review their own research and identify their processes on the BRIK site.

- **Contributors** are professional firms and for-profit companies whose research is vetted under a Memorandum of Agreement with NIBS and AIA. All research submitted by Contributors is identified as such on the site and can be tagged and searched for under the Contributors' identities. As with Partners, Contributors professionally review

their own research and identify their processes on the BRIK site.

- **Individuals** are researchers who want to submit their own research. Their submissions are professionally reviewed by members of the BRC and approved before posting rights are granted.

The BRIK Council hopes the expanded website fosters use of research as a foundation for evidence-based design by professionals and their clients.

"One vision of those involved in the project is for BRIK to eventually help define a series of classes or tutorials whose purpose it will be to train design professionals of all types, at all stages of their careers, who never had the opportunity to study the conduct, critical analysis and proper use of research," says Pentecost. **NIBS**

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Use this handy cross-reference for further information relating to articles in this issue of the *Journal of the National Institute of Building Sciences*.

Related WBDG Page	Type*	Link
The Parametric Museum/Pages 12-16		
BIM Libraries	BM	www.wbdg.org/bim/bim_libraries.php
Evolving Energy Codes to Address Contemporary Challenges/Pages 32-34		
Outcome-Based Pathways for Achieving Energy Performance Goals	RP	www.wbdg.org/resources/outcomebasedpathways.php
The Future of Facility Management: Lessons from a Virtual Base on Mars/Pages 40-42		
Facilities Operations and Maintenance	OM	www.wbdg.org/om/om.php
Importance of Involving Key Support Staff in Facility Design through Commissioning and Turnover	RP	www.wbdg.org/resources/keystaff.php?r=om
Optimize Operational and Maintenance Practices	DO	www.wbdg.org/design/optimize_om.php
Optimizing Operations and Maintenance (O&M)	CE	www.wbdg.org/education/opt_om.php
Re-Thinking Operations & Maintenance for High-Performance Buildings	CE	www.wbdg.org/education/fempfts062013.php

*Type: Building Information Modeling (BM); Continuing Education (CE); Design Objective (DO); Facility Operations & Maintenance (OM); Resource Page (RP)



References:

Visit the BRIK website: www.brikbase.org

For more information about signing up for BRIK or becoming a BRIK research Contributor or Partner, contact any of the following AIA and NIBS staff:

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