Book Index with Reviews - Frequently Asked Questions

Whether you need a bibliographic database for collection development or are looking for an easy-to-use tool for identifying available titles, Book Index with Reviews (BIR) is the right choice. Perfect for developing booklists and subject guides, BIR includes over five million book titles, with more being added constantly. BIR is indispensable for addressing daily challenges such as finding replacement copies and full-text reviews. The My BIR alert service puts users ahead of the game on new editions, forthcoming titles from popular authors or new releases on hot topics.

Q. How can I browse forthcoming releases in Book Index with Reviews on EBSCOhost?

There are two ways you can view Forthcoming releases in the Book Index with Reviews database.

To search for Forthcoming releases in Book Index with Reviews:

1. From any search screen, select Forthcoming from the Publication Status limiter.
2. If desired, enter any desired keywords in the Find field.
3. Click Search. A result list of Forthcoming releases will be displayed.

To browse Forthcoming releases from the Indexes authority:

1. On the top toolbar, click Indexes.
2. From the Browse an Index drop-down menu, select Subjects BISAC Forthcoming and click Browse.
3. Enter a subject in the Browse For field and click browse or select a subject by placing a check in the box next to the desired term.
4. Click Add to add the subject to the Find field.
5. Click Search.
6. The result list is displayed with all relevant Forthcoming releases.

Q. How does Book Index with Reviews (BIR) define new releases and forthcoming titles?

New releases are titles that have been released in the past 90 days. Forthcoming titles those that have a scheduled publication date in the future.

The New Releases and Forthcoming indexes are organized by BISAC subject headings to help organize them in topics of interest. BISAC is the Book Industry Standard that is used by many publishers.
Q. How does Book Index with Reviews (BIR) link to my library’s catalog?

BIR customers can use CustomLinks to create outbound links from BIR, to any web-based resource. CustomLinks can be simple links to the “front door” of a service, such as the main page for your library’s OPAC. CustomLinks can also be dynamic links that include metadata, such as linking into your OPAC on the title level. If you want to create a dynamic link, you should first consult the documentation of the resource to which you want to link. It should have information on how to link into that resource from other Web-based resources such as BIR.

We have successfully linked to automation systems from CARL, DRA, Dynix, Endeavor, Follett, Gaylord/GISinfosystems, GEAC, Innovative Interfaces, SIRSI, TLC and others. This is not a standards-based way to connect, and even for a given vendor a link that works at one site may not work at another. If your system is not listed, please contact us at support@ebsco.com and we will work with you and your vendor to see if linking is supported by them.

Q. How does the popularity feature in Book Index with Reviews (BIR) work?

A title’s popularity is shown using a four-star rating system. It is based on ordering information from thousands of libraries and retail outlets across the country, over the past ten years, making sure that your readers can quickly find the titles that everyone is talking about, or reading. If a title has met the popularity criteria, a series of one to four stars will be displayed to indicate the popularity factor for the title. If it does not meet the popularity criteria, there will be no stars.

Q. What review sources are included in Book Index with Reviews (BIR)?

The following reviewing sources are included in Book Index with Reviews:

- Booklist (1992-present)
- Kirkus Reviews (1987-present)
- Library Journal (1987-present)
- Publishers Weekly (1987-present)
- School Library Journal (1987-present)

Q. In Book Index with Reviews (BIR), what is the advantage of searchable full-text reviews? How do I find books on topics that are not subject headings?

The ability to search reviews opens the door to a vast array of creative searching strategies not available if you are only searching subject headings.

You can use the Advanced Search feature in BIR and enter descriptive words such as scholarly, or fast paced, in combination with other descriptors, then select RV Review & Annotation from the drop-down to fine-tune your searches.
For example, you can search for biographies that are scholarly or definitive. You can search for physics titles that are readable. Gardening enthusiasts can search for books that discuss perennials or landscaping with step-by-step instructions. Step-by-step will not be a subject heading but is frequently covered in a review. Other terms that could be used to search reviews include natural, well-organized, photographs, close-up, or beginner.

Searchable reviews open up the world of fine-tuned searching in BIR.