

# Commens: Digital Companion to C. S. Peirce

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The *Commens Digital Companion* provides resources and tools for students and scholars of Charles S. Peirce. Commens contains a new type of on-line publication platform, consisting of a unique quotation dictionary, an encyclopedia of original research articles, and a bibliographical database. Commens also publishes news pertaining to Peirce research and related fields of inquiry.

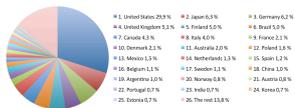
## Background

The *Commens Digital Companion* was born in 2012-13, when the Helsinki-based *Commens site*, designed by Mats Bergman and Sami Paavola, merged with the Brazilian *Digital Encyclopedia of Charles S. Peirce*, founded by João Queiroz. The new international Companion brought together two established on-line resources of Peirce research and added new tools, such as the news service and the bibliography. The public beta of Commens was published on the 10th of September, 2013; the centennial year of 2014 was targeted for the first full version of the new site.

## The Original Commens

Commens was originally developed as a Finnish Peirce studies website by Mats Bergman and Sami Paavola. It functioned as the virtual home for the *Helsinki Metaphysical Club*, and offered resources for students and researchers in both Finnish and English. The original Commens was opened in February, 2001. In 2003, Bergman and Paavola introduced the *Commens Dictionary of Peirce's Terms*, a dictionary of Peircean terminology built from original Peirce quotes. The Dictionary proved to be the most successful part of Commens (in 2003-2013, it had over 70 000 visits from all over the world – see Figure 1); together with the Digital Encyclopedia, the Dictionary forms the backbone of the new Digital Companion. 132 terms with more than 700 quotes were transferred from the old Dictionary to the new platform.

Figure 1: Visitors of Commens Dictionary during 2003-2013 by country of origin (total: 71 157 visits).



## Why 'Commens'? Why a 'Digital Companion'?

Peirce introduced the concept of the 'commens' or 'commind' in his correspondence with Victoria Lady Welby in 1906. Although a rare and partly obscure neologism, the term has proven to be both suggestive and useful. The original Commens aimed at serving as an enabler of scholarly communication as well as a free resource for researchers and students - and hence 'Commens', a term that suggests community and sharing of knowledge. The new version of Commens moves us several steps closer to the original aim by providing new possibilities for user input and collaboration.

In addition to evoking the original Digital Encyclopedia created by João Queiroz, the term 'Digital Companion' refers to the emphasis on the new forms of publication that Commens provides. Unlike traditional, printed companion volumes, Commens grows and evolves through user input. However, like traditional companions, Commens is edited and its articles are peer reviewed according to scholarly standards.

## Resources for Research and Study

### News

Commens collects news pertaining to Peirce studies and closely related fields. The news are divided into categories, such as 'academic meetings', 'calls for papers', and 'publications'.

### Links

The links section contains categorized links to external sites and resources of interest.

### Bibliography

The Commens Bibliography is an open-ended biographical database that contains both primary and secondary Peirce research sources.

### Bibliography: *Phaneroscopy*

Record	APA	Quotes
Type:	Manuscript	
Author:	Peirce, Charles Sanders	
Title:	Phaneroscopy	
Id:	MS 296	
Year:	1905	
Description:	From the <i>Robin Catalogue</i> : A. MS. G-1905-1n, pp. 1-36, plus 20 pp. of variants. This article, intended for the January 1907 <i>Monist</i> , was to have followed the <i>Monist</i> article of October 1906. Published as follows: 4.534n1 (pp. 2-3); 4.6-11 (from pp. 5-16); 4.553n1 (pp. 18-19); 1.306-311 (pp. 26-36). Unpublished are CSP's thoughts	

Figure 2: Sample record from the Commens Bibliography.

## Dictionary

The Commens Dictionary (Figure 3) consists of original quotations, in which Peirce defines or characterises his technical terms. This collection of quotes does not lay claim to completeness; the dictionary aims to offer representative samples of Peirce's terminological definitions. It is intended to serve as an aid for researchers and students. All quotes are associated with sources (such as manuscripts or journal articles) added to the bibliography. The Dictionary is a collaborative project. Editors and contributors may add and edit the contents, and all registered users may add comments (such as suggestions for new quotes and corrections).



Figure 3: The Commens Dictionary contains original quotations by Peirce, categorised by term.

## Encyclopedia

The Commens Encyclopedia (Figure 4) contains original research articles related to different aspects of the philosophy and life of Peirce. The articles are peer reviewed according to academic standards.

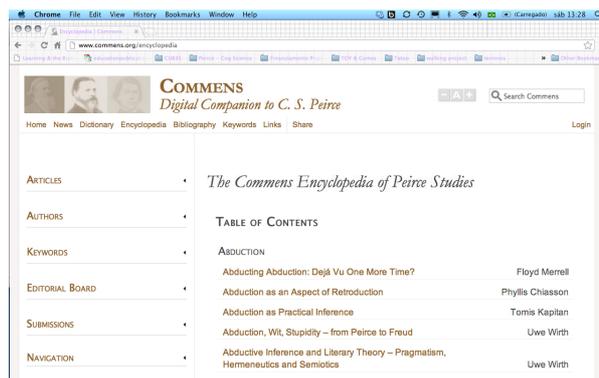


Figure 4: The Commens Encyclopedia contains original research articles.

## A Dynamic and Evolving Platform

Commens has been developed with Drupal, an open-source content management system. The new platform is based on the latest web technologies, and offers new possibilities for user input and interaction. The community of inquirers is served by a dynamic front page, RSS feeds and email digests of updates, pre-formatted bibliographic entries, advanced search functions, internal bookmarking, social sharing, and much more. Commens will continue to grow, adding both new content and new features in the future.

**COMMENS**  
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<http://www.commens.org/>