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Corresponding Author: Professor Richard de Dear, PhD

Corresponding Author's Institution: The University of Sydney

First Author: Veronika Földváry, PhD

Order of Authors: Veronika Földváry, PhD; Toby Cheung, PhD; Hui Zhang, PhD; Richard de Dear, PhD; Thomas Parkinson, PhD; Edward Arens, PhD; Chungyoon Chun, PhD; Stefano Schiavon, PhD; Maohui Luo, PhD; Gail Brager, PhD; Peixian Li; Soazig Kaam; Michael A Adebamowo; Mary M Andamon; Francesco Babich; Chiheb Bouden; Hana Bukovianska; Christhina Candido; Bin Cao; Salvatore Carlucci; David KW Cheong; Joon-Ho Choi; Malcolm Cook ; Paul Cropper; Max Deuble; Shahin Heidari; Madhavi Indraganti; Quan Jin; Hyojin Kim; Jungsoo Kim; Kyle Konis; Manoj K Singh; Alison Kwok; Roberto Lamberts; Dennis Loveday; Jared Langevin; Sanyogita manu; Cornelia Moosmann; Fergus Nicol; Ryoza Ooka; Nigel A Oseland; Lorenzo Pagliano; Dušan Petráš; Rajan Rawal; Ramona Romero; Chandra Sekhar; Marcel Schweiker; Federico Tartarini; Shin-ichi Tanabe; Kwok Wai Tham; Despoina Teli; Jorn Toftum; Linda Toledo; Kazuyo Tsuzuki; Renata De Vecchi; Andreas Wagner; Zhaojun Wang; Holger Wallbaum; Lynda Webb; Liu Yang; Yingxin Zhu; Yongchao Zhai; Yufeng Zhang; Xiang Zhou

Abstract: Recognizing the value of open-source research databases in advancing the art and science of HVAC, in 2014 the ASHRAE Global Thermal Comfort Database II project was launched under the leadership of University of California at Berkeley's Center for the Built Environment and The University of Sydney's Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ) Laboratory. The exercise began with a systematic collection and harmonization of raw data from the last two decades of thermal comfort field studies around the world. The ASHRAE Global Thermal Comfort Database II (Comfort Database), now an online, open-source database, includes approximately 81,846 complete sets of objective indoor climatic observations with accompanying "right-here-right-now" subjective evaluations by the building occupants who were exposed to them. The database is intended to support diverse inquiries about thermal comfort in field settings. A simple web-based interface to the database enables filtering on multiple criteria, including building typology, occupancy type, subjects' demographic variables, subjective thermal comfort states, indoor thermal environmental criteria, calculated comfort indices, environmental control criteria and outdoor meteorological information. Furthermore, a web-based interactive thermal comfort visualization tool has been developed that allows end-users to quickly and interactively explore the data.

Complete author list:

**Veronika Földvary**, Center for the Built Environment, University of California, Berkeley, 390 Wurster Hall, 94720 Berkeley, United States

**Toby Cheung**, Berkeley Education Alliance for Research in Singapore, 1 Create Way, 138602, Singapore

**Hui Zhang**, Center for the Built Environment, University of California, Berkeley, 390 Wurster Hall, 94720 Berkeley, United States

**Richard de Dear**<sup>1</sup>, IEQ Laboratory, School of Architecture Design and Planning, The University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia

**Thomas Parkinson**, IEQ Laboratory, School of Architecture Design and Planning, The University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia

**Edward Arens**, Center for the Built Environment, University of California, Berkeley, 390 Wurster Hall, 94720 Berkeley, United States

**Chungyoon Chun**, Department of Interior Architecture and Built Environment, Yonsei University, Seoul, South Korea

**Stefano Schiavon**, Center for the Built Environment, University of California, Berkeley, 390 Wurster Hall, 94720 Berkeley, United States

**Maohui Luo**, Center for the Built Environment, University of California, Berkeley, 390 Wurster Hall, 94720 Berkeley, United States

**Gail Brager**, Center for the Built Environment, University of California, Berkeley, 390 Wurster Hall, 94720 Berkeley, United States

**Peixian Li**, Department of Civil Engineering, The University of British Columbia, 6250 Applied Science Lane, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6T 1Z4

**Soazig Kaam**, Center for the Built Environment, University of California, Berkeley, 390 Wurster Hall, 94720 Berkeley, United States

**Michael A. Adebamowo**, Department of Architecture, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria

**Mary Myla Andamon**, School of Property, Construction and Project Management, RMIT University, 24 La Trobe Street, Melbourne VIC 3000, Australia

**Francesco Babich**, School of Architecture, Building and Civil Engineering, Loughborough University, Ashby Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3TU, United Kingdom

**Chiheb Bouden**, Ecole Nationale d'Ingenieurs de Tunis (ENIT), Rue Bechir Salem Belkhiria Campus Universitaire, BP 37, 1002 Le Belvedere, Tunis, Tunisia

**Hana Bukovianska**, Department of Building Services, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, Radlinskeho 11, 81005 Bratislava, Slovakia

**Christhina Candido**, IEQ Laboratory, School of Architecture, Design and Planning. The University of Sydney, Sydney NSW 2006, Australia

**Bin Cao**, Department of Building Science, School of Architecture, Tsinghua University, Beijing 100084, China

**Salvatore Carlucci**, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, Hogskoleringen 7a, 7491 Trondheim, Norway

**David K.W. Cheong**, Department of Building, School of Design and Environment National, University of Singapore, 4 Architecture Drive. Singapore 117566

---

<sup>1</sup> Corresponding author: richarddedear@gmail.com

**Joon-Ho Choi**, Building Science, School of Architecture, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, United States

**Malcolm Cook**, School of Architecture, Building and Civil Engineering, Loughborough University, Ashby Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3TU, United Kingdom

**Paul Cropper**, School of Engineering and Sustainable Development, De Montfort University, The Gateway, Leicester, LE1 9BH, United Kingdom

**Max Deuble**, IEQ Laboratory, School of Architecture Design and Planning, The University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia

**Shahin Heidari**, School of Architecture, University of Teheran, 16th Azar St., Enghelab Sq., Tehran, Iran

**Madhavi Indraganti**, Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, Qatar University, Female Campus, Doha, State of Qatar

**Quan Jin**, Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Chalmers University of Technology, SE 41296, Göteborg, Sweden

**Hyojin Kim**, School of Architecture and Planning, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, United States

**Jungsoo Kim**, IEQ Laboratory, School of Architecture Design and Planning, The University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia

**Kyle Konis**, School of Architecture, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, United States

**Manoj K Singh**, Institute of Industrial Science, 4-6-1, Komaba, Meguro-ku, The University of Tokyo, Tokyo 153-8505, Japan

**Alison Kwok**, Department of Architecture, University of Oregon. Eugene, OR 97403, United States

**Roberto Lamberts**, Federal University of Santa Catarina, Florianopolis, Campus Reitor João David Ferreira Lima, s/n - Trindade, Florianópolis - SC, 88040-900, Brazil

**Dennis Loveday**, School of Architecture, Building and Civil Engineering, Loughborough University, Ashby Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3TU, United Kingdom

**Jared Langevin**, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, 1 Cyclotron Road, Berkeley, CA, United States

**Sanyogita Manu**, Centre for Advanced Research in Building Science and Energy CEPT University, K.L.Campus, Navarangpura, Ahmedabad 380 009, India

**Cornelia Moosmann**, Building Science Group, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Englerstrasse 7, D-76131 Karlsruhe, Germany

**Fergus Nicol**, School of Architecture, Faculty of Technology, Design and Environment, Oxford Brookes University, Headington Campus, Gipsy Lane, Oxford OX3 0BP, United Kingdom

**Ryozo Ooka**, Institute of Industrial Science, 4-6-1, Komaba, Meguro-ku, The University of Tokyo, Tokyo 153-8505, Japan

**Nigel A. Oseland**, Environmental Engineering Group, Building Research Establishment, Watford, Herts. WD2 7JR, United Kingdom

**Lorenzo Pagliano**, End-use Efficiency Research Group, Dipartimento Di Energia, Politecnico Di Milano, 20133 Milano, Italy

**Dušan Petráš**, Department of Building Services, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, Radlinského 11, 81005 Bratislava, Slovakia

**Rajan Rawal**, Center for Advanced Research in Building Science and Energy, CEOT University, K. L. Campus, Navarangpura, Ahmedabad 380 009, India

**Ramona Romero**, Posgrado en Arquitectura, Facultad de Arquitectura y Diseño, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Mexicali, Mexico

**Chandra Sekhar**, Department of Building, School of Design and Environment National, University of Singapore, 4 Architecture Drive. Singapore 117566

**Marcel Schweiker**, Building Science Group, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Englerstrasse 7, D-76131 Karlsruhe, Germany

**Federico Tartarini**, Sustainable Buildings Research Centre (SBRC), University of Wollongong, Wollongong, NSW 2500, Australia.

**Shin-ichi Tanabe**, Department of Architecture, Waseda University, 3-4-1 Okubo, Shinjyuku-ku Tokyo 169-8555 Japan

**Kwok Wai Tham**, Department of Building, School of Design and Environment National, University of Singapore, 4 Architecture Drive, Singapore 117566

**Despoina Teli**, Sustainable Energy Research Group, Division of Energy and Climate Change, Faculty of Engineering and the Environment, University of Southampton, Southampton SO17 1BJ, UK

**Jorn Toftum**, International Centre for Indoor Environment and Energy, Department of Civil Engineering, Technical University of Denmark, Nils Koppels Allé 402, Lyngby 2800, Denmark

**Linda Toledo**, School of Engineering and Sustainable Development, De Montfort University, The Gateway, Leicester, LE1 9BH, United Kingdom

**Kazuyo Tsuzuki**, Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Graduate School of Engineering, Toyohashi University of Technology, 1-1 Hibarigaoka, Tempaku-cho, Toyohashi, Aichi, 441-8580, Japan

**Renata De Vecchi**, Federal University of Santa Catarina, Florianopolis, Campus Reitor João David Ferreira Lima, s/n - Trindade, Florianópolis - SC, 88040-900, Brazil

**Andreas Wagner**, Building Science Group, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Englerstrasse 7, D-76131 Karlsruhe, Germany

**Zhaojun Wang**, Department of Building Thermal Engineering, School of Architecture, Harbin Institute of Technology, Harbin 150090, China

**Holger Wallbaum**, Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Chalmers University of Technology, SE 41296 Göteborg, Sweden

**Lynda Webb**, School of Informatics, University of Edinburgh, 10 Crichton St, Edinburgh EH8 9AB, United Kingdom

**Liu Yang**, State Key Laboratory of Green Building in Western China, Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China 710055

**Yingxin Zhu**, Department of Building Science, School of Architecture, Tsinghua University, Beijing, 100084, China

**Yongchao Zhai**, State Key Laboratory of Green Building in Western China, Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China 710055

**Yufeng Zhang**, State Key Laboratory of Subtropical Building Science, Department of Architecture, South China University of Technology, Wushan, Guangzhou, 510640, China

**Xiang Zhou**, Institute of Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning Engineering, College of Mechanical Engineering, Tongji University, 1239 Siping Road, Shanghai, 200092, China

**Highlights:**

- The scope, development, contents, and accessibility of the Comfort Database is documented
- The Comfort Database II includes approximately 76,000 complete sets of thermal comfort data
- The Comfort Database provides access to the collected raw data
- Web-based interactive visualization tool was developed that allows end-users to interactively explore the data

1 Development of the ASHRAE Global Thermal Comfort Database II

2  
3 **AUTHORS**

4 **Veronika Földváry**, Center for the Built Environment, University of California, Berkeley, 390  
5 Wurster Hall, 94720 Berkeley, United States

6 **Toby Cheung**, Berkeley Education Alliance for Research in Singapore, 1 Create Way, 138602,  
7 Singapore

8 **Hui Zhang**, Center for the Built Environment, University of California, Berkeley, 390 Wurster  
9 Hall, 94720 Berkeley, United States

10 **Richard de Dear**<sup>1</sup>, IEQ Laboratory, School of Architecture Design and Planning, The University  
11 of Sydney, Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia

12 **Thomas Parkinson**, IEQ Laboratory, School of Architecture Design and Planning, The  
13 University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia

14 **Edward Arens**, Center for the Built Environment, University of California, Berkeley, 390  
15 Wurster Hall, 94720 Berkeley, United States

16 **Chungyoon Chun**, Department of Interior Architecture and Built Environment, Yonsei  
17 University, Seoul, South Korea

18 **Stefano Schiavon**, Center for the Built Environment, University of California, Berkeley, 390  
19 Wurster Hall, 94720 Berkeley, United States

20 **Maohui Luo**, Center for the Built Environment, University of California, Berkeley, 390 Wurster  
21 Hall, 94720 Berkeley, United States

22 **Gail Brager**, Center for the Built Environment, University of California, Berkeley, 390 Wurster  
23 Hall, 94720 Berkeley, United States

24 **Peixian Li**, Department of Civil Engineering, The University of British Columbia, 6250 Applied  
25 Science Lane, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6T 1Z4

26 **Soazig Kaam**, Center for the Built Environment, University of California, Berkeley, 390  
27 Wurster Hall, 94720 Berkeley, United States

28 **Michael A. Adebamowo**, Department of Architecture, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos,  
29 Nigeria

30 **Mary Myla Andamon**, School of Property, Construction and Project Management, RMIT  
31 University, 24 La Trobe Street, Melbourne VIC 3000, Australia

32 **Francesco Babich**, School of Architecture, Building and Civil Engineering, Loughborough  
33 University, Ashby Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3TU, United Kingdom

34 **Chiheb Bouden**, Ecole Nationale d'Ingenieurs de Tunis (ENIT), Rue Béchir Salem Belkhiria  
35 Campus Universitaire, BP 37, 1002 Le Bélvédère, Tunis, Tunisia

36 **Hana Bukovianska**, Department of Building Services, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Slovak  
37 University of Technology in Bratislava, Radlinského 11, 81005 Bratislava, Slovakia

38 **Christhina Candido**, IEQ Laboratory, School of Architecture, Design and Planning. The  
39 University of Sydney, Sydney NSW 2006, Australia

40 **Bin Cao**, Department of Building Science, School of Architecture, Tsinghua University, Beijing  
41 100084, China

42 **Salvatore Carlucci**, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Faculty of  
43 Engineering, Hogskoleringen 7a, 7491 Trondheim, Norway

---

<sup>1</sup> Corresponding author: richarddedear@gmail.com

1 **David K.W. Cheong**, Department of Building, School of Design and Environment National,  
2 University of Singapore, 4 Architecture Drive. Singapore 117566  
3 **Joon-Ho Choi**, Building Science, School of Architecture, University of Southern California, Los  
4 Angeles, CA, United States  
5 **Malcolm Cook**, School of Architecture, Building and Civil Engineering, Loughborough  
6 University, Ashby Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3TU, United Kingdom  
7 **Paul Cropper**, School of Engineering and Sustainable Development, De Montfort University,  
8 The Gateway, Leicester, LE1 9BH, United Kingdom  
9 **Max Deuble**, IEQ Laboratory, School of Architecture Design and Planning, The University of  
10 Sydney, Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia  
11 **Shahin Heidari**, School of Architecture, University of Teheran, 16th Azar St., Enghelab Sq.,  
12 Tehran, Iran  
13 **Madhavi Indraganti**, Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, Qatar University,  
14 Female Campus, Doha, State of Qatar  
15 **Quan Jin**, Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Chalmers University of  
16 Technology, SE 41296, Göteborg, Sweden  
17 **Hyojin Kim**, School of Architecture and Planning, Catholic University of America, Washington,  
18 DC, United States  
19 **Jungsoo Kim**, IEQ Laboratory, School of Architecture Design and Planning, The University of  
20 Sydney, Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia  
21 **Kyle Konis**, School of Architecture, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, United  
22 States  
23 **Manoj K Singh**, Institute of Industrial Science, 4-6-1, Komaba, Meguro-ku, The University of  
24 Tokyo, Tokyo 153-8505, Japan  
25 **Alison Kwok**, Department of Architecture, University of Oregon. Eugene, OR 97403, United  
26 States  
27 **Roberto Lamberts**, Federal University of Santa Catarina, Florianopolis, Campus Reitor João  
28 David Ferreira Lima, s/n - Trindade, Florianópolis - SC, 88040-900, Brazil  
29 **Dennis Loveday**, School of Architecture, Building and Civil Engineering, Loughborough  
30 University, Ashby Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3TU, United Kingdom  
31 **Jared Langevin**, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, 1 Cyclotron Road, Berkeley, CA,  
32 United States  
33 **Sanyogita Manu**, Centre for Advanced Research in Building Science and Energy CEPT  
34 University, K.L.Campus, Navarangpura, Ahmedabad 380 009, India  
35 **Cornelia Moosmann**, Building Science Group, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Englerstrasse  
36 7, D-76131 Karlsruhe, Germany  
37 **Fergus Nicol**, School of Architecture, Faculty of Technology, Design and Environment, Oxford  
38 Brookes University, Headington Campus, Gypsy Lane, Oxford OX3 0BP, United Kingdom  
39 **Ryozo Ooka**, Institute of Industrial Science, 4-6-1, Komaba, Meguro-ku, The University of  
40 Tokyo, Tokyo 153-8505, Japan  
41 **Nigel A. Oseland**, Environmental Engineering Group, Building Research Establishment,  
42 Watford, Herts. WD2 7JR, United Kingdom  
43 **Lorenzo Pagliano**, End-use Efficiency Research Group, Dipartimento Di Energia, Politecnico  
44 Di Milano, 20133 Milano, Italy  
45 **Dušan Petráš**, Department of Building Services, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Slovak  
46 University of Technology in Bratislava, Radlinského 11, 81005 Bratislava, Slovakia

1 **Rajan Rawal**, Center for Advanced Research in Building Science and Energy, CEOT  
2 University, K. L. Campus, Navarangpura, Ahmedabad 380 009, India  
3 **Ramona Romero**, Posgrado en Arquitectura, Facultad de Arquitectura y Diseño, Universidad  
4 Autónoma de Baja California, Mexicali, Mexico  
5 **Chandra Sekhar**, Department of Building, School of Design and Environment National,  
6 University of Singapore, 4 Architecture Drive. Singapore 117566  
7 **Marcel Schweiker**, Building Science Group, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Englerstrasse 7,  
8 D-76131 Karlsruhe, Germany  
9 **Federico Tartarini**, Sustainable Buildings Research Centre (SBRC), University of Wollongong,  
10 Wollongong, NSW 2500, Australia.  
11 **Shin-ichi Tanabe**, Department of Architecture, Waseda University, 3-4-1 Okubo, Shinjyuku-ku  
12 Tokyo 169-8555 Japan  
13 **Kwok Wai Tham**, Department of Building, School of Design and Environment National,  
14 University of Singapore, 4 Architecture Drive, Singapore 117566  
15 **Despoina Teli**, Sustainable Energy Research Group, Division of Energy and Climate Change,  
16 Faculty of Engineering and the Environment, University of Southampton, Southampton SO17  
17 1BJ, UK  
18 **Jorn Toftum**, International Centre for Indoor Environment and Energy, Department of Civil  
19 Engineering, Technical University of Denmark, Nils Koppels Allé 402, Lyngby 2800, Denmark  
20 **Linda Toledo**, School of Engineering and Sustainable Development, De Montfort University,  
21 The Gateway, Leicester, LE1 9BH, United Kingdom  
22 **Kazuyo Tsuzuki**, Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Graduate School of  
23 Engineering, Toyohashi University of Technology, 1-1 Hibarigaoka, Tempaku-cho, Toyohashi,  
24 Aichi, 441-8580, Japan  
25 **Renata De Vecchi**, Federal University of Santa Catarina, Florianopolis, Campus Reitor João  
26 David Ferreira Lima, s/n - Trindade, Florianópolis - SC, 88040-900, Brazil  
27 **Andreas Wagner**, Building Science Group, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Englerstrasse 7,  
28 D-76131 Karlsruhe, Germany  
29 **Zhaojun Wang**, Department of Building Thermal Engineering, School of Architecture, Harbin  
30 Institute of Technology, Harbin 150090, China  
31 **Holger Wallbaum**, Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Chalmers University of  
32 Technology, SE 41296 Göteborg, Sweden  
33 **Lynda Webb**, , School of Informatics, University of Edinburgh, 10 Crichton St, Edinburgh EH8  
34 9AB, United Kingdom  
35 **Liu Yang**, State Key Laboratory of Green Building in Western China, Xi'an University of  
36 Architecture and Technology, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China 710055  
37 **Yingxin Zhu**, Department of Building Science, School of Architecture, Tsinghua  
38 University, Beijing, 100084, China  
39 **Yongchao Zhai**, State Key Laboratory of Green Building in Western China, Xi'an University of  
40 Architecture and Technology, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China 710055  
41 **Yufeng Zhang**, State Key Laboratory of Subtropical Building Science, Department of  
42 Architecture, South China University of Technology, Wushan, Guangzhou, 510640, China  
43 **Xiang Zhou**, Institute of Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning Engineering, College of  
44 Mechanical Engineering, Tongji University, 1239 Siping Road, Shanghai, 200092, China  
45



1 Abstract

2 Recognizing the value of open-source research databases in advancing the art and science of  
3 HVAC, in 2014 the ASHRAE Global Thermal Comfort Database II project was launched under  
4 the leadership of University of California at Berkeley’s Center for the Built Environment and  
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14 thermal environmental criteria, calculated comfort indices, environmental control criteria and  
15 outdoor meteorological information. Furthermore, a web-based interactive thermal comfort  
16 visualization tool has been developed that allows end-users to quickly and interactively explore  
17 the data.

18

19 Key words: Thermal comfort, Field study, Data repository, Visualization tool

20

# 1. Introduction

The ASHRAE Thermal Comfort Database I (de Dear, 1998) was compiled in the late 1990s with the simple purpose of testing the adaptive thermal comfort hypothesis and developing a model (de Dear and Brager, 1998), and in 2004 the resulting model went on to form the empirical basis of ASHRAE’s adaptive thermal comfort standard for occupant-controlled, naturally conditioned spaces (ASHRAE 2017). That project collated high-quality instrumental measurements of indoor thermal environments and their simultaneous subjective thermal comfort evaluations from 52 field studies conducted in 160 buildings worldwide, mostly commercial offices, between 1982 and 1997. The database assembled almost all of the scientifically rigorous field study datasets available at that time (circa 22,000 questionnaire responses with accompanying instrumental measurements) into a single repository. Upon completion of the original ASHRAE research project, the research team made the database accessible to the global thermal comfort research community via the internet.

An inductive strategy that begins with extant data and works “backwards” towards a research question now complements the more conventional deductive model of science based on hypotheses drawn from theory and testable with experimental data. Even the research niche of thermal comfort has benefited from data mining research methods (Han et al., 2011). In the two decades since its inception, the ASHRAE Thermal Comfort Database I has been mined for diverse research questions well beyond the scope of its original purpose, resulting in many papers in the peer-reviewed literature (e.g. Fanger and Toftum, 2002; Langevin et al. 2015; Zimmerman, 2008; Djamila, 2013, Arens et al. 2010) and higher degree research projects (e.g. Law, 2013). Furthermore, ASHRAE Thermal Comfort Database I has become the first port of call when a question regarding thermal comfort and HVAC practice arises. For example, the current provisions for elevated airspeed in ASHRAE Standard 55 (ASHRAE, 2017) were based exclusively on the analysis of Database I (Arens et al., 2009), as was the dynamic clothing model implemented in the current ASHRAE Standard 55 to estimate indoor clothing insulation levels from 6:00 am outdoor meteorological observations (Schiavon and Lee, 2013). Given the strong connections of thermal comfort with the issues of energy consumption in the built environment (e.g. Nazaroff, 2008), along with building occupant wellbeing and productivity, it is understandable that there has been a resurgence of research activity in the topic over the last two decades (de Dear et al., 2013). New thermal comfort research containing original field data has grown dramatically since the Database I was launched twenty years ago, and so it seems timely that we consolidate those new data into an even larger repository. With a larger body of data to work on, comfort researchers will be able to drill down even deeper while still retaining enough power to deliver statistically significant findings. It should be possible to identify trends of thermal comfort preference over longer time periods as air-conditioning becomes the pervasive building control strategy. The aim of this paper is to document the origins, scope, development, contents, and accessibility of ASHRAE Global Thermal Comfort Database II (short name: Comfort Database).

## 1 2. Methods

2 In order to ensure that the quality of the database would permit end-users to conduct robust  
3 hypothesis testing, the team built the data collection methodology on specific requirements, as  
4 follows:

- 5 • Data needed to come from field experiments rather than climate chamber research, so that  
6 it represented research conducted in “real” buildings occupied by “real” people doing  
7 their normal day-to-day activities, rather than paid college students sitting in a controlled  
8 indoor environment of a climate chamber.
- 9 • Both instrumental (indoor climatic) and subjective (questionnaire) data were required,  
10 such that they were recorded in the same space at the same time.
- 11 • The database needed to be built up from the raw data files generated by the original  
12 researchers, instead of their processed or published findings.
- 13 • The raw data needed to come with a supporting codebook explaining the coding  
14 conventions used by the data contributor, to allow harmonization with the standardized  
15 data formatting within the database.
- 16 • Data must have been published either in a peer-reviewed journal or conference paper.

17 All data submissions were subjected to a rigorous quality assurance process. Field data were  
18 organised into separate folders according to their origins, including contributor’s name, country,  
19 and sample size. A detailed list of contributors and the sample size of each submission are  
20 summarized in section 3. Each folder contained the raw data files, supplementary codebook, and  
21 publication(s) providing details about the field study such as geographic location, building type,  
22 cooling strategy, season and climate information. These references are listed in the Comfort  
23 Database online Query Builder interface and the visualization online tool (more details below).  
24 The research team built a meta-file which allowed easy filtering, such as describing the origin  
25 and characteristics of the data, and included the following information:

- 26 • *Name* of contributor.
- 27 • *Publications* (Authors, Title, Journal/Conference information).
- 28 • *Year* of the measurement.
- 29 • *Country*.
- 30 • *City*.
- 31 • *Season* when the measurement was conducted.
- 32 • *Climate zone*: data were classified into various climate zones using the Köppen climate  
33 classification. A detailed description of the sample sizes grouped in various climate  
34 categories is presented in the Results section.
- 35 • *Building type*: data were classified into five categories, as follows: Multifamily housing,  
36 Office, Classroom, Senior Center and others.
- 37 • *Cooling strategy*: data were assigned characteristics of the building’s cooling strategy,  
38 describing what system type was used while the study was conducted, using the  
39 following categories: air-conditioning, natural ventilation, mechanically controlled  
40 ventilation, and mixed-mode system (i.e., a combination of natural ventilation and  
41 mechanical cooling).
- 42 • *Sample size* of each contribution.
- 43 • *Directory*: The file path where the raw data, codebook, and publication(s) were saved.

- 1 • List of objective and subjective thermal comfort variables that each field study  
2 investigated.

3 The research team created the database file itself using a standardized spreadsheet format. The  
4 main header contained the unique identifier for each column of data (i.e., variable names). The  
5 information was categorized into the following groups:

- 6 • *Basic identifiers*, such as building code, geographical location, year of the measurements,  
7 and heating/cooling strategy.
- 8 • *Personal information* about the subjects participating in the field studies, such as sex,  
9 age, height, and weight.
- 10 • *Subjective* thermal comfort questionnaire, such as sensation, acceptability, and  
11 preference, as well as self-assessed metabolic rate (met) and clothing intrinsic thermal  
12 insulation level (clo).
- 13 • *Instrumental* measurements indoor climate, including various types of temperatures, air  
14 velocity, relative humidity.
- 15 • *Comfort indices*, including Predicted Mean Vote (PMV), Predicted Percentage  
16 Dissatisfied (PPD), and Standard Effective Temperature (SET) calculated uniformly  
17 throughout the entire database using a calculator that was fully compliant with the ISO  
18 Standard 7730 (2005) sourcecode in the case of PMV and PPD calculations, and  
19 ASHRAE/ANSI Standard 55 (2017) sourcecode in the case of the 2-node SET  
20 index. Compliance of the calculator was checked by applying it to the validation datasets  
21 supplied in appendices to the two standards.
- 22 • *Indoor environmental controls* available (blinds, fan, operable window, door, heater).
- 23 • *Outdoor meteorological* information, such as monthly average temperatures. Some  
24 original data submissions contained relevant meteorological data. For cases without those  
25 data, fields meteorological data were updated based on archival weather data sourced  
26 from weather station websites based on the available information about location and the  
27 time of the measurements.

28 All datasets from individual studies were subject to a stringent quality assurance process (Figure  
29 1) before being assimilated into the database. The research team conducted a final validation by  
30 first comparing each raw dataset with its related publication provided by the data contributor to  
31 prevent transmission errors. Systematic quality control of each study was performed to ensure  
32 that records within the database were reasonable. Firstly, distributions of each variable were  
33 visualized to identify aberrant values. Then, cross-plots between two variables (e.g. thermal  
34 sensation and thermal comfort) were used to check for incorrectly coded data. Finally, a few  
35 rows from each study were randomly selected to verify consistency between the original dataset  
36 and the standardized database. Since the data came from multiple independent studies, every  
37 record did not necessarily include all of the thermal comfort variables. Where data were missing,  
38 that particular range of cells was filled with a null value. The thermal comfort visualization tool  
39 (described later) was used to help remove anomalies in the data. The detailed list of project  
40 identifiers and thermal comfort variables is presented in the Results section.

41  
42 The database is structured so that rows (i.e., “records”) represent an individual’s questionnaire  
43 responses, and the columns include the associated instrumental measurements, thermal index  
44 values, and outdoor meteorological observations. Table 1 summarizes the full listing of variables

1 in the database file and their coding conventions. There is a total of 49 possible thermal comfort  
 2 variables for each record. There are 65 columns so that quantities can be expressed in both  
 3 imperial and metric units, and any post-processed variables can be flagged. The “offline”  
 4 spreadsheet version of the database includes the codebook for each parameter. The full citation  
 5 for the original publication associated with each dataset is also stored in the database. Users can  
 6 download the latest database version through the University of California’s DASH repository  
 7 (Foldvary et al. 2018)

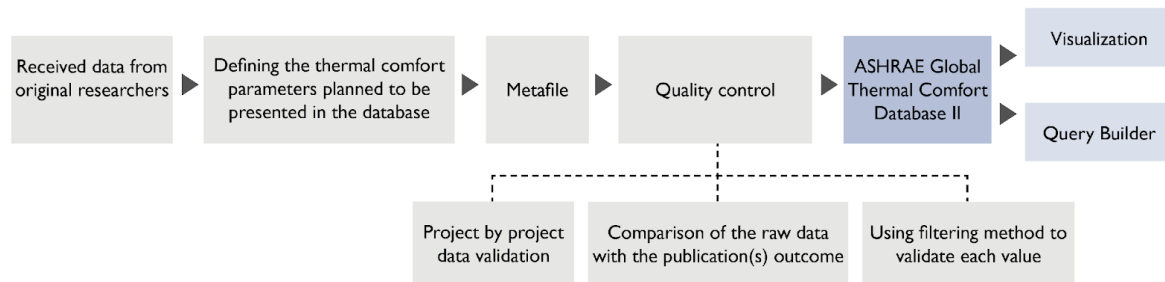
8  
 9

Table 1. Variable coding conventions.

Variable	Description
<b><i>Basic Identifiers</i></b>	
Publication (Citation)	Published paper describing the project from where the data was collected
Data contributor	Principal Investigator of the study
Year	Year when the field study was conducted
Season	Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter
Climate	Köppen climate classification
City	City where the study was done
Country	Country where the study was done
Building type	Classroom, Multifamily housing, Office, Senior Center, others
Cooling strategy	Air Conditioned, Mechanically Ventilated, Mixed Mode, Naturally Ventilated
<b><i>Subjects’ Personal Information</i></b>	
Age	Age of the participants
Sex	Male, Female, Undefined
Subject’s Weight	Participating subject’s weight (kg)
Subject’s Height	Participating subject’s height (cm)
<b><i>Subjective Thermal Comfort Information</i></b>	
Thermal sensation	ASHRAE thermal sensation vote, from -3 (cold) to +3 (hot)
Thermal acceptability	0-unacceptable, 1-acceptable
Thermal preference	cooler, no changes, warmer
Air movement acceptability	0-unacceptable, 1-acceptable
Air movement preference	less, no change, more
Thermal comfort	From 1-very uncomfortable to 6-very comfortable
Clo	Intrinsic clothing ensemble insulation of the subject (clo)
Met	Average metabolic rate of the subject (Met)
activity_10	Metabolic activity in the last 10 minutes (Met)
activity_20	Metabolic activity between 20 and 10 minutes ago (Met)
activity_30	Metabolic activity between 30 and 20 minutes ago (Met)
activity_60	Metabolic activity between 60 and 30 minutes ago (Met)
Humidity sensation	3-very dry, 2-dry, 1-slightly dry, 0-just right, -1slightly humid, -2-humid, -3-very humid
<b><i>Instrumental Thermal Comfort Measurements</i></b>	
Air temperature	Air temperature measured in the occupied zone (°C, °F)
Ta_h	Air temperature at 1.1 m above the floor (°C, °F)
Ta_m	Air temperature at 0.6 m above the floor (°C, °F)
Ta_l	Air temperature at 0.1 m above the floor (°C, °F)
Operative temperature	Calculated operative temperature in the occupied zone (°C, °F)
Radiant temperature	Radiant temperature measured in the occupied zone (°C, °F)
Globe temperature	Globe temperature measured in the occupied zone (°C, °F)
Tg_h	Globe temperature at 1.1 m above the floor (°C, °F)
Tg_m	Globe temperature at 0.6 m above the floor (°C, °F)

Tg_1	Globe temperature at 0.1 m above the floor (°C, °F)
Relative humidity	Relative humidity (%)
Air velocity	Air speed (m/s, fpm)
Velocity_h	Air speed at 1.1 m above the floor (m/s, fpm)
Velocity_m	Air speed at 0.6 m above the floor (m/s, fpm)
Velocity_l	Air speed at 0.1 m above the floor (m/s, fpm)
<b>Calculated Indices</b>	
PMV	Predicted Mean Vote
PPD	Predicted Percentage of Dissatisfied
SET	Standard Effective Temperature (°C, °F)
<b>Environmental Control</b>	
Blind (curtain)	State of blinds or curtains if known (0-open, 1-closed); otherwise NA-non applicable
Fan	Fan mode if known (0-off, 1-on); otherwise NA-non applicable
Window	State of window if known (0-open, 1-closed); otherwise NA-non applicable
Door	State of doors if known (0-open, 1-closed); otherwise NA-non applicable
Heater	Heater mode if known (0-off, 1-on); otherwise NA-non applicable
Outdoor monthly air temperature	Outdoor monthly average temperature when the field study was done (°C, °F)

1



2  
3

Figure 1. Flowchart of the data collection and quality assurance processes.

### 4 3. ASHRAE Global Thermal Comfort Database II

#### 5 3.1 Database description

6 The final Comfort Database is comprised of field studies conducted between 1995 and 2016  
7 from around the world, with contributors releasing their raw data to the project for wider  
8 dissemination to the thermal comfort research community. After the quality-assurance process,  
9 there was a total of 81,846 rows of raw data of paired subjective comfort votes and objective  
10 instrumental measurements of thermal environmental parameters<sup>2</sup>. Standardized data files from  
11 the ASHRAE RP-884 Adaptive model project (de Dear, 1998) were transformed and assimilated  
12 into the new database structure with appropriate coding conventions. Thermal comfort indices  
13 were recalculated using the same validated code used throughout this project to ensure

<sup>2</sup> this paper is based on data contributions received by February 2018. Researchers can contribute new data to the ASHRAE Global Thermal Comfort Database II by contacting the corresponding author.

1 consistency. A total of 25,617 records from the RP-884 database were added to Database II,  
 2 bringing the total to 107,463. The following sections will describe the new datasets only; more  
 3 information on the field studies from the RP-884 database can be found in the final report (de  
 4 Dear et al, 1997).

5  
 6 *3.1.2 Data distribution by geographical location*

7 The field studies from which this database draws were conducted in five continents, with a broad  
 8 spectrum of geographical locations (countries) represented. Figure 2 shows the distribution of  
 9 records within the database by continent. The largest portion is from European (n = 31,392) and  
 10 Asian field studies (n = 29,064). South America (n = 7,390) and North America (n = 9,969) have  
 11 a similar number of records. Africa is represented by 2,163 rows of data, and Australian studies  
 12 accounted for 1,868 rows. Overall, the Comfort Database includes field study data from 23  
 13 countries, including Australia, Belgium, Brazil, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece,  
 14 India, Iran, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Portugal, Slovakia, South  
 15 Korea, Sweden, Tunisia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America (Figure 3).

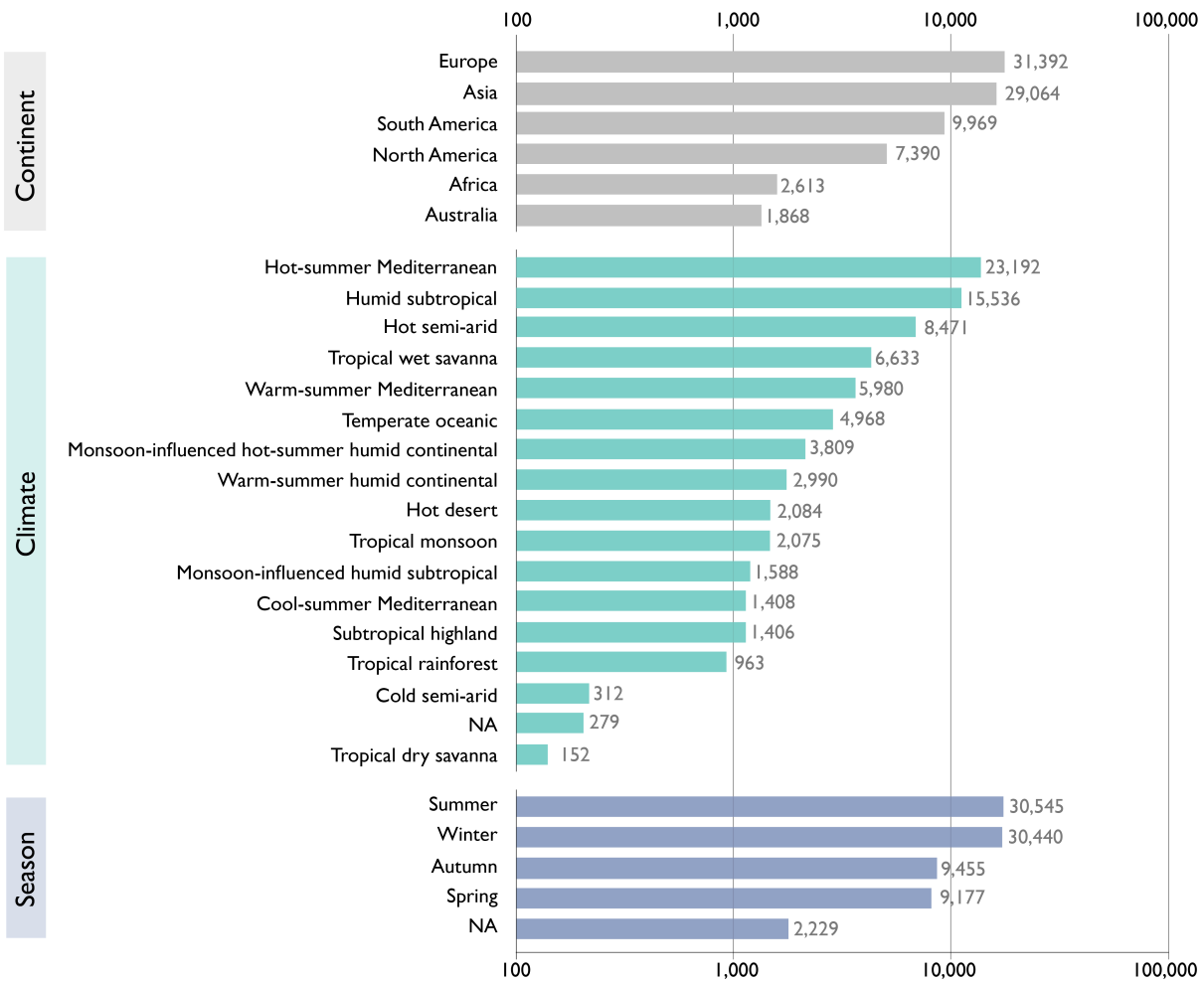


Figure 2. Distribution of thermal comfort data by continent.

1 Table 2 lists the associated publications and important metadata for each dataset e.g. location,  
 2 season, building type, etc. The largest dataset is from Oseland’s (1998) study based in the United  
 3 Kingdom, which took measurements in all four seasons (spring, summer, autumn and winter),  
 4 characterizing thermal environments in naturally ventilated multifamily houses (Loveday et al,  
 5 2016) as well as office buildings using various cooling strategies such as natural ventilation,  
 6 mixed-mode, mechanical ventilation (Oseland, 1998; Stoops, 2001; McCartney and Nicol, 2002)  
 7 and air-conditioning (Oseland, 1998). The second highest number of observations comes from  
 8 the Indian thermal comfort research community (Honnekeri et al, 2014 a; Honnekeri et al, 2014  
 9 b; Indraganti et al, 2014; Manu et al, 2016; Singh et al, 2010), which is similar to the British  
 10 contributions, originated from all four seasons representing thermal environments in air-  
 11 conditioned classrooms, naturally ventilated multifamily houses, offices and other building types  
 12 using various type of cooling strategies.



13  
 14 Figure 3. Location of the field studies contained in the ASHRAE Global Thermal Comfort Database II.

15 Table 2. Basic metadata for contributions to the ASHRAE Global Thermal Comfort Database II.

Publications	Experiment location	Building type	Cooling strategy	Sample size
Andamon, 2006	Philippines	Office	AC	277
Bae et al., 2016	South Korea	Senior center	MM	312
Kwon et al., 2011	South Korea	Office	MV, MM	262
Bouden et al, 2005	Tunisia	Multifamily housing, Office	NV, MV	1 651
Brager et al, 2004	USA	Office	NV	2 075
Cândido et al., 2010	Brazil	Classroom	NV	2 075
Cao et al, 2011 and 2016	China	Classroom, Office	AC, NV	1 735
De Vecchi et al, 2012	Brazil	Classroom, Office	AC, MM	5 036



De Vecchi et al, 2017				
Deuble et al, 2012	Australia	Office	MM	1 359
Djamila et al, 2013	Malaysia	Multifamily housing, Office	AC, Undefined	989
Földvary et al, 2017, Pustayova, 2013	Slovakia	Multifamily housing	NV	648
Hawighorst et al. 2016	Germany	Office	MM, NV	628
Heidari et al, 2002	Iran	Multifamily housing, Office	NV	1 971
Honnekeri et al, 2014 a	India	Classroom, Multifamily housing, Office, Others	AC, NV	2 859
Honnekeri et al, 2014 b	USA	Office	NV	1 408
Indraganti et al, 2014	India	Office	AC, NV, MM	6 048
Jin et al, 2013	China	Others	NV	376
Kim, 2012	USA	Office	AC	84
Konis, 2013	USA	Office	MM	2 482
Kwok and Chun, 2003	Japan	Classroom	AC	74
Langevin et al, 2015	USA	Office	AC	2 497
Liu et al, 2013	China	Multifamily housing, Others	AC, NV	610
Loveday et al, 2016	United Kingdom	Multifamily housing	NV	509
Luo et al, 2016	China	Classroom	NV	1 810
Nakamura et al, 2008	Japan	Multifamily housing	MM	715
Oluwafemi and Adebamowo, 2010	Nigeria	Multifamily housing	NV	512
Oseland,1998	United Kingdom	Office	AC, NV	20 997
Pedersen, 2012	Denmark	Classroom	MV	170
Romero et al, 2013	Mexico	Multifamily housing	NV	1 423
Manu et al, 2014	India	Office	AC, NV	6 330
Loveday et al, 2016 (based on India data from Rawal et al, CEPT University, India)	India	Multifamily housing	NV	573
Sekhar et al, 2003	Singapore	Office	AC	217
Singh et al, 2010	India	Multifamily housing	NV	300
Singh et al, 2014	Belgium	Multifamily housing	NV	85
Stoops, 2001 McCartney and Nicol, 2002	France	Office	NV, MM, MV	516
	Greece	Office	NV, MM, MV	325
	Portugal	Office	NV, MM	1 559
	Sweden	Office	MM, MV	970
	United Kingdom	Office	NV, MM, MV	1 285
Tanabe et al, 2013	Japan	Office	AC	118
Tartarini, 2018	Australia	Others	AC, NV	509
Teli et al, 2012	UK	Classroom	NV	2 990
Wagner et al, 2007	Germany	Office	NV	427
Wang, 2006 Wang et al, 2011 Wang et al, 2014	China	Office, Classroom, Multifamily housing	NV, MV	1 380
Xavier, 2000	Brazil	Undefined	Undefined	279
Zangheri et al, 2010 and 2011	Italy	Classroom, Office	AC, NV	283
Zhang et al, 2010 and 2013	China	Classroom. Other	AC, NV	2 324
<b>Total</b>				<b>81,846</b>

1 Note: AC-Air Conditioned, NV-Naturally Ventilated, MM-Mixed Mode, MV-Mechanically Ventilated

1  
2 *3.1.3 Data distribution by climate zones and seasons*

3 Seasonal variations as well as prevailing weather can impact physiological acclimatization,  
4 behavioural adjustment and indoor comfort expectations (Brager and de Dear 1998). This section  
5 presents the distribution of thermal comfort data according to the Köppen climate classification.  
6

7 The Comfort Database contains thermal comfort field measurements from 16 distinct Köppen  
8 climate classes (Figure 2). Climate zones with the highest numbers of thermal comfort data  
9 include hot-summer Mediterranean (n = 23,192), humid subtropical (n = 15,536), hot semi-arid  
10 (n = 8,471), and tropical wet savanna (n = 6,633). Other samples were classified as warm-  
11 summer Mediterranean (n = 5,980), temperate oceanic (n = 4,968), Monsoon-influenced hot-  
12 summer humid continental (n = 3,809), warm-summer humid continental (n = 2,990), hot desert  
13 (n = 2,084), tropical monsoon (n = 2,075), monsoon-influenced humid subtropical (n = 1,588)  
14 and cool-summer Mediterranean (n = 1,408) regions. Relatively small volumes of data came  
15 from the subtropical highland (n = 1,406), tropical rainforest (n = 963), cold semi-arid (n = 312),  
16 and tropical dry savanna (n = 152) climate zones. Due to missing information, some samples (n  
17 = 279) could not be classified into any climate group and were assigned a null value.  
18

19 Figure 2 summarises the seasonal distribution of data points. The highest number of observations  
20 were collected in summer (n = 30,545). There was a slightly lower sample size for winter (n =  
21 30,440), and fair representation of the shoulder seasons of spring (n = 9,455) and autumn (n =  
22 9,177). Some datasets did not contain the requisite information to classify season (n = 2,229),  
23 and these entries were left undefined.  
24

25 *3.1.4 Data distribution by building type and cooling strategy*

26 The research team classified the thermal comfort data into five main building categories,  
27 including offices (n = 55,238), classrooms (n = 12,755), multifamily houses (n = 10,120), senior  
28 centers (n = 312) and a building category defined by the contributor as “others” (any other  
29 building type than the defined ones) (n = 3,421).  
30

31 The team also collected information on cooling strategy used in each building, with the largest  
32 proportion of measurements being from buildings using natural ventilation (n = 38,584),  
33 followed by air-conditioned buildings (n = 28,544). A significant number of thermal comfort  
34 data came from environments using mixed-mode cooling (n = 11,745), while a smaller sample  
35 was collected from mechanically ventilated spaces (n = 1,804). As with other descriptors, data  
36 that could not be confidently classified into any of the defined cooling strategies were grouped as  
37 undefined (n = 1,169).  
38

39 Table 3 shows the distribution of records by continent, building type, and cooling strategy. Most  
40 of the field measurements from European studies were collected from offices (n = 26,929) that  
41 were either naturally ventilated or air-conditioned. Similarly, most of the data sourced from  
42 Asian countries were from office buildings (n = 14,839), with the majority using mixed mode  
43 ventilation. Data from South America, however, are mostly measurements made in classrooms (n  
44 = 4,366) that were naturally ventilated or with mixed-mode cooling. The residential context is

1 well-represented in the African dataset. Both the North American and Australian datasets were  
 2 wholly comprised of offices.

3  
 4 Table 3. Sample size distribution according to the data’s experimental location.

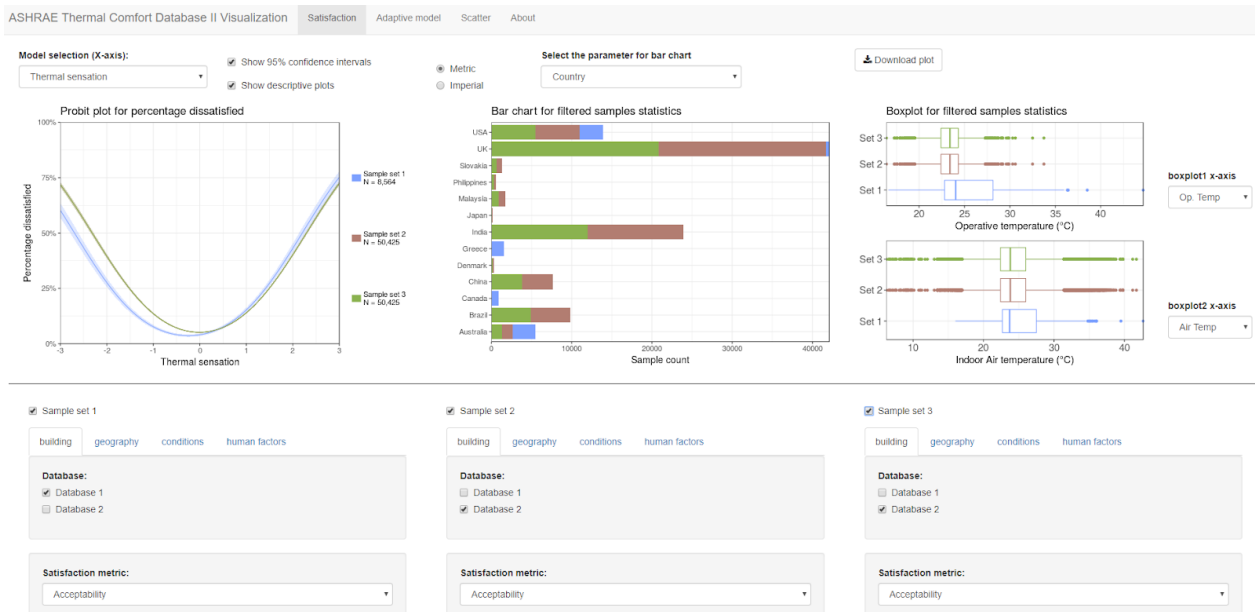
		Cooling Strategy				
		Air-conditioning	Mixed Mode	Mechanically Ventilated	Natural Ventilation	Undefined
Europe (n = 31,392)	Classroom	8	0	170	3,034	0
	Multifamily housing	0	0	0	1,242	0
	Office	11,408	2,191	1,386	11,944	0
Asia (n = 29,064)	Classroom	2,190	0	0	2,978	0
	Multifamily housing	618	715	0	3,889	890
	Office	7,925	2,283	191	4,440	0
	Others	1,404	0	0	1,229	0
	Senior Centre	0	312	0	0	0
South America (n = 7,390)	Classroom	0	2,291	0	2,075	0
	Office	1,274	1,471	0	0	0
	Others	0	0	0	0	279
North America (n = 9,969)	Multifamily housing	0	0	0	1423	0
	Office	2,581	2,482	0	3,483	0
Africa (n = 2,163)	Multifamily housing	0	0	26	1,317	0
	Office	0	0	31	789	0
Australia (n = 1,868)	Office	1065	0	0	294	0
	Others	71	0	0	438	0

5  
 6 **3.2 Interactive thermal comfort data visualization tool**

7 The aim of developing an interactive visualization tool (see Figure 4) was to provide a user-  
 8 friendly interface for researchers and practitioners to explore and navigate their way around the  
 9 large volume of data in ASHRAE Global Thermal Comfort Database II.<sup>4</sup> The tool is built with R  
 10 version 3.2.3, using “ggplot2”, “ordinal” and “shiny” packages for graphic visualization,  
 11 percentage of dissatisfied probit curve analysis and web-based interaction respectively. One key  
 12 feature of the visualization tool is the ability for users to customize their selected dataset over the  
 13 entire database for specific data comparisons. Some major filters are cooling strategy, building  
 14 type, meteorological context, indoor climatic physical parameter ranges, along with various  
 15 human factors. This tool was originally developed by Pigman (2014), and modified by research  
 16 team members from the Center for the Built Environment (CBE) to reflect the newly updated  
 17 database. On top of the original features, the current version includes some new graphic types to  
 18 assist data visualization and analysis, including two boxplots and a bar chart for data statistics, a

<sup>4</sup> <https://cbe-berkeley.shinyapps.io/comfortdatabase/>

1 scatter plot of raw data on the elevated air speed comfort zone in ASHRAE Standard 55  
 2 (ASHRAE, 2017), and two local relationship plots available for user-customized parameters in  
 3 the x and y axis.  
 4



5  
 6  
 7 Figure 4. A screen shot showing an example of the thermal comfort visualization tool’s “Satisfaction” page. The tool  
 8 is freely available at <https://cbe-berkeley.shinyapps.io/comfortdatabase/>  
 9

10 **3.2.1 Data filters**

11 The graphic interface is divided into three pages to examine satisfaction scores, adaptive  
 12 comfort, and scatter plots of selected variables. Below the graphs are four categories, or tabs, to  
 13 filter the data and create different subsets:

- 14 (1) The “building” tab allows the selection of a satisfaction metric to use (acceptability or  
 15 comfort), conditioning type, and building type.
- 16 (2) The “geography” tab allows filtering of selected data by seasons, climate classifications,  
 17 countries, and cities.
- 18 (3) The “conditions” tab allows for the creation of a subset of data where bounded ranges of  
 19 selected physical parameters are specified, such as prevailing mean outdoor, indoor,  
 20 radiant and operative temperature, indoor relative humidity, and indoor air speed.
- 21 (4) The “human factors” tab allows filtering by characteristics of subjects, including sex, age,  
 22 clothing insulation and metabolic rate; or by the availability of indoor environmental  
 23 controls (if provided), such as operable windows, doors, thermostats, blinds, heaters, and  
 24 fans.

25 **3.2.2 Graphic output**

26 Above the graphs are three different pages for exploring the data and generating different types  
 27 of graphs:

28  
 29 “Satisfaction” page

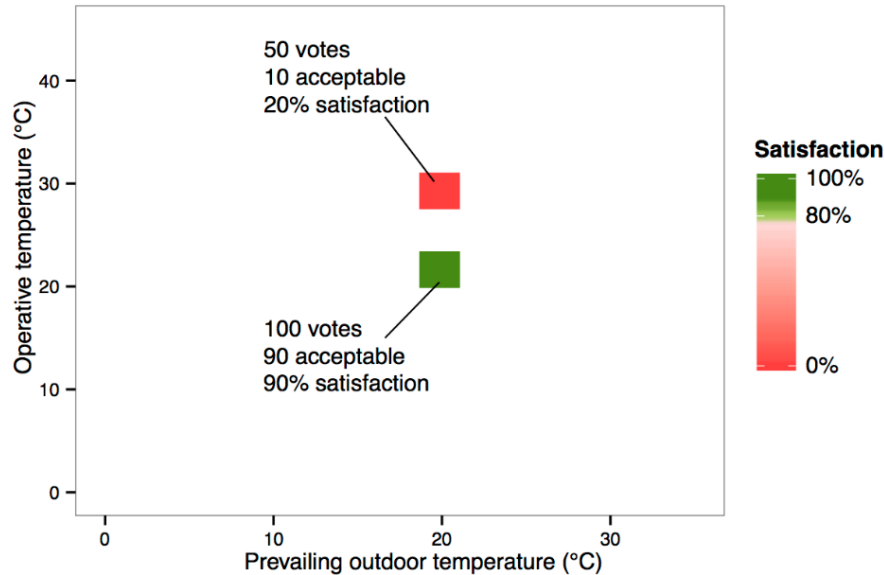
1 ASHRAE Standard 55 defines thermal comfort as the “condition of mind that expresses  
2 satisfaction with the thermal environment and is assessed by subjective evaluation” (ASHRAE,  
3 2017). Since most field studies do not ask directly about satisfaction with the thermal  
4 environment, researchers use questions about thermal sensation, acceptability and comfort to  
5 infer occupant thermal satisfaction. The “Satisfaction” page explores the relationship between  
6 thermal sensation and these other two metrics (thermal acceptability and thermal comfort) using  
7 multinomial probits. The probit plot displays curves of percent dissatisfied (based on thermal  
8 acceptability and comfort votes in field surveys) against either the subjects’ thermal sensation  
9 vote or PMV (i.e., similar to the PPD vs. PMV graph). Furthermore, the graphic output on this  
10 page displays basic statistical distributions from the selected subsets of the filtered database. In  
11 addition to the filters previously mentioned, one can choose from a variety of parameters to  
12 summarize as counts in a bar chart (e.g., basic identifiers), or as boxplot distributions (e.g.,  
13 instrumental, or measured, parameters).

14

#### 15 “Adaptive model” page

16 This graphic output is used for comparing the measured percentage satisfied (using acceptability,  
17 comfort, or sensation votes) with predicted ranges of comfortable indoor temperatures based on  
18 adaptive comfort standards in ASHRAE Standard 55 (ASHRAE, 2017) and EN 15251 (Standard  
19 EN 15251, 2007). These adaptive models establish a range of comfortable indoor temperatures  
20 based on prevailing outdoor temperatures. The “Adaptive model” page analyses the database  
21 within the adaptive framework by binning thermal comfort votes according to the prevailing  
22 outdoor temperature and the indoor temperature the subjects were experiencing at the time  
23 (shown on the x- and y-axis, respectively). The percentage of satisfied votes is calculated within  
24 each two-dimensional bin and visualized with a color scale, with 80% or higher satisfaction  
25 being shown in green. For example, Figure 5 shows that the bin with an outdoor and indoor  
26 temperature each of 20 °C has 100 acceptability votes of which 90 are acceptable. This bin (20  
27 °C, 20 °C) is colored green to indicate it has >80% satisfaction. Conversely, there are 50 votes in  
28 the bin of 20 °C outdoor and 30 °C indoor temperature, and 10 of them are “acceptable,” so that  
29 bin (20 °C, 30 °C) is colored red to mark it as having only 20% satisfaction. An accumulation of  
30 the green bins delineates an observed comfort zone, and one can compare it with the adaptive  
31 comfort zones predicted by the ASHRAE 55 and EN 15251 standards.

32



1  
2 Figure 5. An example of binning thermal comfort votes according to the coincident indoor and outdoor temperature  
3 conditions  
4

5 “Scatter” page:

6 The three graphs on this page are used for evaluating a filtered subset of the database using  
7 scatter plots. The first graph is specifically designed to display the air speed (y-axis) against  
8 different types of temperature (x-axis) and compares that distribution with the elevated velocity  
9 comfort zone in ASHRAE Standard 55 (ASHRAE, 2017). The elevated air speed comfort zone  
10 in ASHRAE Standard 55 (ASHRAE, 2017) is adopted when the average air speed exceeds  
11 0.2m/s, subject’s metabolic rate is 1 to 2 met, and clothing insulation is between 0 and 1.5 clo. It  
12 is permissible to determine the operative temperature range by linear interpolation between the  
13 limits found in corresponding comfort zones. The first graph on this page considers the data in  
14 this aspect and overlays onto the raw data scatter plot two comfort zones criteria (for clothing  
15 insulation = 0.5 and 1 clo) at 1.1 met. One can also generate two additional scatter plots with  
16 selectable x-axis and y-axis for a wide variety of variables, with an overlay identifying local  
17 regressions.

18  
19 **3.3 ASHRAE Global Thermal Comfort Database II Query Builder**

20 The ability to explore the Comfort Database using the interactive thermal comfort visualization  
21 tool provides convenient access for many users. However, most end-users of these comfort  
22 databases have proficiencies in common statistical software packages and very specific queries  
23 in mind when they use such a data repository. It is therefore likely that they will prefer  
24 performing analyses using their own suite of software. To accommodate such end-users, the  
25 Query Builder tool is accompanied by a simple web-based Graphical User Interface (GUI).<sup>5</sup> This  
26 tool allows users to filter the database according to a set of selection criteria, and then download  
27 the results of that query in a generic comma-separated-values (.csv) file format for importing into

<sup>5</sup> ASHRAE Global Thermal Comfort Database II Query Builder can be found at [www.comfortdatabase.com](http://www.comfortdatabase.com)

1 their software package of choice. In this way, the Comfort Database may be accessed by users  
2 with differing analytical skills.

3  
4 The Query Builder tool uses a combination of Javascript for the interface, and PHP and MySQL  
5 for the backend. There are 49 parameters upon which the database can be filtered, with  
6 descriptions of each parameter displayed in the sidebar (Figure 6). Less common parameters  
7 (defined as those contained in less than 30% of all database records) are indicated by an asterisk  
8 character to alert users that queries that include these may not return any meaningful results.  
9 Parameters are organized into 7 groups for easier navigation (which are similar, but slightly  
10 different than the groups defined in Table 1 for organizing the database):

- 11 • *Study*: the origins of the data (e.g., study, year).
- 12 • *Climate*: locational context (e.g., season, climate etc.).
- 13 • *Building*: building typology and use (e.g. building type, HVAC type etc.).
- 14 • *Demographic*: respondent anthropometrics (e.g., age, sex, height weight).
- 15 • *Subjective*: common survey measures (e.g., thermals sensation, thermal acceptability,  
16 thermal preference).
- 17 • *Comfort*: indices relevant to thermal comfort (e.g., PMV/PPD, clothing, activity).
- 18 • *Measurements*: instrumental measurements of the thermal environment (e.g., air  
19 temperature, globe temperature, relative humidity, air velocity). The system of units is  
20 user-selectable but defaults to SI.

21 Filters are based on radio buttons, checkboxes, or sliders, depending on the level of measurement  
22 for the parameter in question. For example, categorical variables like thermal acceptability or  
23 building type use checkbox selection, whilst interval or ratio variables like air temperature or air  
24 velocity use slider selection. Filters are only applied to queries upon user selection. Queries  
25 containing multiple filters are executed using Boolean ‘AND’ statements, meaning all selection  
26 criteria are to be met for results to be returned. Any resulting output from the query contains the  
27 entire record or row from the database. Finally, new data can be easily added to the Comfort  
28 Database without requiring any modification to the Query Builder code; the only requirement is  
29 for new data to be organized in the same structure and parameters coded in the same convention  
30 as the existing database.

31

**Select Parameters**

- Study →
- Subjective →
- Building →
- Demographic →
- Climate →
- Comfort** ↓

**Parameter filter options**

**PMV**

0 3

**PPD**

10 100

**Clothing Insulation**

0.3 2.3

**Activity**

0.8 2

**Activity (10 mins)**

1 3.8

**Activity (20 mins)**

0.8 6.8

**Activity (30 mins)**

0.7 3.8

**Activity (60 mins)**

1 6.8

**Parameter Descriptions**

Indices relevant to thermal comfort

**PMV**  
Predicted Mean Vote, Fanger's Model [-3, +3]

**PPD**  
Predicted Percentage Dissatisfied, Fanger's Model [%]

**Clothing Insulation**  
Ensemble clothing insulation [clo]

**Activity**  
Average metabolic rate of subject [met]

**Activity (10 mins) \***  
Metabolic activity in last 10 minutes [met]

**Activity (20 mins) \***  
Metabolic activity between 20 and 10 minutes ago [met]

**Activity (30 mins) \***  
Metabolic activity between 30 and 20 minutes ago [met]

**Activity (60 mins) \***  
Metabolic activity between 60 and 30 minutes ago [met]

\* denotes an uncommon parameter (included in <30% of records)

Clear Export

[Download full database](#)

Figure 6. A screenshot of the Query Builder tool. The accordion menu to the left organizes variables by their categories, the central section presents the filtering capabilities, and the right sidebar gives descriptions of the selection parameters.

## 4. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to describe the methods behind the development of the ASHRAE Global Thermal Comfort Database II (“Comfort Database”) and its accompanying analysis tools, to provide attribution to all of the contributors of the raw data, and to inspire researchers and practitioners who might want to use this open resource. The Comfort Database is made available under the Open Database License (Open Data Commons, 2017). This means that end-users are free to share (i.e., duplicate, disseminate and use the database), to produce new works from the database, and to transform the Comfort Database, providing they comply with the following rules:



- 1 • *Attribute*: End-users must attribute any publicly visible application of the Comfort  
2 Database, or works derived from it, in the manner specified in the ODbL (Open Data  
3 Commons, 2017). Dissemination of the database or any products or services derived from  
4 it, must make clear the license of the Comfort Database and keep intact any notices on  
5 the original database. Research papers derived from the Comfort Database must cite the  
6 current paper (full citation given on both web tools).
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8 must also offer that modified database version under the same Open Database License.
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10 then they may restrict accessibility to the work as long as they also make publicly  
11 available a version without such access restrictions in place.

12 It is hoped that Comfort Database will support diverse inquiries about thermal comfort in the  
13 built environment and be used as a resource to support numerous subsequent publications by  
14 varied authors.

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