

Launching the research project GO3R to develop a knowledge-based search engine for alternative methods to animal experiments www.GO3R.org

Berlin, Germany - Starting in August 2007 the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment is funding Transinsight GmbH's research project GO3R. This project focuses on the development of a knowledge-based search engine for alternative methods to animal experiments. Transinsight is closely collaborating with scientists from the Centre for Documentation and Evaluation of Alternatives to Animal Experiments (ZEBET).

This project was inspired by the EU-Guideline 86/609/EEC for the protection of animals in experimentation and the German law for animal protection. The protection of these animals starts even before the experiment begins. The prerequisite for the approval of animal experiments is the evaluation of whether the animal trial can be replaced by other methods. Therefore all information available is an essential part of the evaluation process for animal experimentation in Germany. Access to all available information regarding alternative methods to animal experiments is of the highest importance. The Internet enables access to an unlimited quantity of information for alternative methods to animal experimentation. However it is very difficult to select the right information from this vast amount. This is where the semantic web plays a crucial role. The semantic web provides intelligent search machines that understand what the user is looking for and what the significance of the search results is. With semantic technologies the quality of the search will be improved significantly. Transinsight's knowledge-based search engine engages the user in a dialog to sort through the tangle of information and provides results as an "intelligent table of contents".

The basis of an intelligent search machine for alternative methods to animal experimentation is a knowledge network, in other words an ontology for this specific field of research. An ontology is a net of interconnected research terms. To develop such a knowledge net, documents and data from the field of alternative methods are needed. The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment has access to special knowledge about such methods. Special databases were developed at ZEBET, and all relevant materials were collected within databases like "AnimALT-ZEBET". The ZEBET-Database documents methods where:

- the suffering of animals in experiments could be reduced (Refinement)
- the number of animals trials could be reduced (Reduction)
- or the whole experiment could be replaced (Replacement)

These criteria follow the internationally recognized concept of 3R for alternative methods first stated by Russell and Burch (1959). ZEBET has the scientific responsibility for development, recognition and application of alternative methods to animal trials (www.bfr.bund.de).

Transinsight, with the Technical University Dresden, developed the first knowledge-based search machine www.GoPubMed.com for biomedical texts. GoPubMed allows biologists and medical doctors to find search results much faster and with much better accuracy than with traditional search technologies. Dr. Michael R. Alvers, CEO of the young high-tech company located in Dresden is proud to be able to contribute

a concrete practical solution. "We will give the very best that we have to this unique and cutting edge project. We are enormously motivated to be contributing to such an very important field of research", says Alvers.

The application of modern information technologies for the protection of trial animals is of great importance for the scientists at Transinsight and ZEBET. In terms of computer work and search engines, this phrase applies: "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye." (Antoine de Saint-Exupery)

About Transinsight

Founded in 2005, Transinsight is focused on software solutions for the life sciences providing products for knowledge-based technologies. The flagship product, GoPubMed, a well established biomedical search engine, is the first knowledge-based search engine for the Life Sciences on the Internet. Transinsight is headquartered in one of the leading German biotech incubators, the BioInnovationCenter Dresden BIOZ, where science and business work under one roof. Transinsight works in close collaboration with the Technical University Dresden.

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