

Latest internet technology for the replacement of animal experiments

Germany - Berlin / Dresden, April 2008 - Developed in close cooperation between Transinsight, Dresden, and the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, Berlin, the knowledge-based semantic search engine www.Go3R.org is now available online. It enables information transparency for the prevention of animal testing.

In only four months development time, Transinsight from Dresden, Germany, succeeded in making available online Go3R, the worldwide first knowledge-based search engine for alternative methods to animal experiments. Via www.GO3R.org, scientists from all over the world can take advantage of the benefits of semantic searches for the area of alternative methods in accordance with the 3Rs principle. The Search engine can from now on used as Beta version.

The so-called 3Rs principle developed by Russell and Burch in 1959 stands for Replacement, Reduction and Refinement. It describes scientific methods that can either replace animal experiments, or reduce animal numbers or refine the suffering of the animals during the procedures. In the European Union, compliance with the 3Rs principle is legally required. In accordance with the EU Laboratory Animal Directive, just as with the German Animal Welfare Act, animal experiments may only be performed if the scientific goal pursued cannot be achieved by any other means, i.e. in totally non-animal procedures, or in methods using fewer animals or entailing less animal suffering.

In practice, however, this legal requirement oftentimes is not met, because the scientists and the responsible authorities are unaware of 3Rs alternatives that would exist to the respective foreseen animal experiment. Queries for alternative methods are time consuming and cumbersome, and this situation has possibly even become worse in the era of the internet. Additionally, at the end of a search, it remains unclear whether all relevant information sought for was indeed retrieved. This is where the search engine Go3R sets in.

“With Go3R, search retrievals for alternatives to animal experiments become transparent and they are available without delay. Time savings of 90 percent and more are already possible with the first prototype of the search engine“, explains Dr. Michael R. Alvers, CEO and Co-Founder of Transinsight. “With our information technology Go3R, we are pleased to be able to present scientists with a tool that enables them to determine the indispensability of animal experiments more reliably. Go3R promotes the 3Rs principle. In the medium term, this will lead to a significant reduction of animal experiments. Achieving a world with less and less animal experiments is the worthwhile goal that Transinsight is happy to make a contribution to with all its might“, says Alvers.

Go3R was developed in cooperation with scientists from the Technical University Dresden and the National German Centre for Documentation and Evaluation of Alternatives to Animal Experiments (ZEBET) at the German Federal Institute for Risk

Assessment in Berlin. With its expertise in the area of alternative methods, ZEBET has provided the specialist know how for the search machine.

“Already today, Germany is leading in the area of development of alternative methods. The new search engine will make a contribution further to promote Germany’s international reputation. The combination of ZEBET’s expertise – acquired over decades – with latest semantic search technologies will lead to a new generation of science as regards avoidance of animal experiments”, declares Professor Dr. Horst Spielmann, international scientist of excellence in the area of alternative methods and for many years, Head of ZEBET.

In a next step, the search engine www.GO3R.org is now being extended to become a community platform enabling global cooperation without language barriers. It is the goal of the investment to achieve maximum availability of information with simultaneous transparency for scientists and researchers all over the world. The service is available free of charge.

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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