

Frequently Asked Questions

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Questions about The Cancer Imaging Archive (TCIA) Website

1. Do you have a User's Guide?

A detailed TCIA user's guide can be obtained by clicking on [TCIA User's Guide](#).

2. How do I contact TCIA Help Desk?

The TCIA Help Desk can be reached in one of two ways:

1. By email: help@cancerimagingarchive.net
2. By phone or text message: +1 385-275-8242 (+1 385 ASK-TCIA)

3. What are the hours of operation for TCIA Help Desk?

The hours of operation are 7:00 am to 5:00 pm CST, Monday-Friday. Although the Help Desk is closed weekends and holidays, a request can be submitted at any time. Holiday hours and further information may be found [here](#).

4. What if I have questions on navigating TCIA website?

The [TCIA User Guide](#) should provide all the direction you need. Please contact TCIA's Help Desk with additional questions by calling or texting +1 385-275-8242 (+1 385 ASK-TCIA) or sending an email to help@cancerimagingarchive.net.

5. What if I am unable to connect to TCIA website?

Please contact TCIA's Help Desk (+1 385-275-8242, voice or text) or send us an email (help@cancerimagingarchive.net).

6. How do I submit feedback to TCIA website?

We welcome and appreciate your comments. Feedback may be submitted via feedback@cancerimagingarchive.net

7. What if I am being prompted to enter a verification code, but there is no verification code available and no place to type it?

A security warning prompt displays and asks "**Do you want to view only the webpage content that was delivered securely**". Answer **NO** to the prompt in order to see the captcha information that is used for verification.

If you answer YES, the captcha information will NOT display.

Questions about User Accounts

1. Do I need a user account to access TCIA?

Not unless you need to access private collections, or use shared lists. Just click on "Search Images" without entering login information

2. When I try to register after entering the captcha phrase, I get a PMW 5033 error or an error message stating, "The PWM configuration is invalid or corrupt. Please correct the error, or remove the configuration file." How do I proceed?

Assuming you are using Internet Explorer, change your browser's language to English by following these steps:

1. From the menu bar, select Tools.
2. Select Internet Options.
3. Click on General > Language and set to English (US).

3. How do I obtain a TCIA user ID and password?

From TCIA's [login page](#), click on the **Register Now** link. Remember that you do NOT need a user ID and password unless you need to access private collections, or use shared lists. Just click on "Search Images" without entering login information

4. What if I have issues pertaining to my TCIA user ID or password?

Assuming that you already have an account, from TCIA's [login page](#), click on the **I cannot access my account** link as below:



You will then see four options, click on the most appropriate:

- a. You have an account but have forgotten your username
- b. You have an account but have forgotten your password
- c. You know your username and password, and would like to change your password
- d. You would like to update your contact information in our system.

If you are still having trouble accessing your account, please contact the TCIA Support Center at help@cancerimagingarchive.net or call or text +1.385.275-8242 (+1.385.ASK-TCIA) during business hours for assistance.

Questions about Accessing Collections

1. How do I find additional information about a specific collection?

You can find a list of all collections on the TCIA home page: <http://www.cancerimagingarchive.net>. The middle window on this page is labeled "TCIA Collections". It contains a list of all collections in TCIA. The orange "Search TCIA" button takes you to the TCIA search page. Typing anything into the "Filter table" input box will restrict the list of collections to those which match the pattern in the box. To access detailed information about a collection, click on the link in the "Collection" column. This will take you to a page in the wiki with detailed information about the collection.

You can reference the corresponding wiki pages for any particular collection when you are logged into TCIA. From the search page, in the collection area, mouse over and click on the question mark symbol for information on each collection. If there is a wiki available for the collection, click on it.

2. How do I request access to a restricted collection?

To access a restricted collection, you can gain approval by calling or texting the Help Desk at +1 385-275-8242 (+1 385 A), or send an email to help@cancerimagingarchive.net. *Please indicate the name of the restricted collection.*

3. How do I determine the status of a collection that has been submitted?

Please contact TCIA Help Desk (+1 385-275-8242, voice or text) or send an email (help@cancerimagingarchive.net) and *indicate the name of the collection.*

4. Is a listing of all of the modality abbreviations available?

Yes, they are listed [here](#).

Questions about Searching for Images

1. How do I search and download images as well as find out information about a specific collection?

Using MRI images of the prostate as an example, follow the steps below to download images from a specific collection:

1. Log into TCIA.
2. Click on the **Search Images** link.
3. To download all the MRI prostate images, select **MR** under **Image Modality(ies)**, select prostate under **Anatomical Site**, and click on **Submit**.
4. Click on the **Check All** button to select all. Selecting the series you wish to download and clicking the **Add To Basket** button puts them all into the basket. To determine the collection that the images go to, the collection ID will show up along with the subject ID when the system does the search.
5. Select "View My Basket".



6. On the next page, you need not check any boxes unless you wish to remove a series from your basket. In that case, you would select the box and then click on the **Remove Selected Items** button at the top.
7. Click on the **Download Manager** link and see [question #1](#) in the previous section.



2. How do I search images?

The National Biomedical Imaging Archive (NBIA) software enables searching for images in TCIA's local *in vivo* image repository. For simple searches, see [Performing a Simple Search](#); for text searches, see [Performing a Text Search](#); for advanced searches see [Performing an Advanced Search](#) (all of these links are in the [TCIA User's Guide](#)) for more detailed instructions.

3. What if my image search comes up empty?

If your query is too restrictive, the search will return no results. Try starting with one criterion and add additional criteria one at a time to refine your search.

4. How do I manage and view images in my data basket?

As you review search results in TCIA, you can add items at any level to your data basket for subsequent download. See [Managing the Data Basket](#) for detailed instructions.

5. What if I have a question about my query history or saving queries?

After you launch a search, the **Search Criteria** page displays the search criteria summary for your review, and allows you to save the query for future use. See [Managing Saved Queries](#) for more information.

6. What if I have a question pertaining to creating, editing, or searching a shared list?

Anyone can create a shared list. Once you do so, record the exact name of the shared list to distribute to others who may want to use it. See [Creating a Shared List](#) for more information.

7. How do I search for images showing a particular disease?

Collection descriptions provide information about what disease was studied. On the **Search Images** page, scroll down to the collections block and click on the question mark to the left of the collection name. Click to see a brief description of the collection; it will usually have pointers to a site where more detailed information about the collection is available.

8. How do I search for images if I know the patient (subject) ID?

The NBIA software enables you to search for images in TCIA's image repository in a variety of ways. Although searching for a particular collection is the most common you can also search for the images belonging to one or more subjects. Simply start on the Search page and enter one or more subject ID strings, [separated by commas](#).

Questions about Downloading Images

1. How do I download images in JPEG, TIFF, or BMP rather than DICOM format?

The **Download Manager** permits downloading of DICOM images only. To capture a large number of images, download them in DICOM and then reference the websites below for assistance with utilities that will convert DICOM images to other formats.

1. <http://www.idoimaging.com>
2. <http://pixelmed.com>

To download only a single image (or a handful of images one at a time):

1. In the NBIA application, choose a study and series, then Show Images;
2. Right-click over the image and **Save Picture As** .(jpeg).

2. How do I download annotated image files?

The .XML files are in the series folder since they are related to the images in that series. You can find the annotated files by viewing the list of files in a given folder.

3. What Java version is required for Download Manager?

Java version 6 or higher of the Java Runtime Environment (JRE) must be installed to be able to open the **Download Manager**. See [Download Manager](#) for more information.

4. What if I receive an error message from Download Manager or Download Manager hangs?

The number of series that can be downloaded using **Download Manager** is dependent on several factors: average image size, RAM on your computer, free disk space on your computer, network speed, and Java limitations. If you experience issues or errors associated with the download, reduce the number of series in your basket and try again.

If you never even see the Download Manager GUI, and Java reports that the Download Manager failed to launch, you may be running an old version of Java, and/or your Java application cache may be stale and needs to be cleared. See [Clearing the Java Application Cache](#) for instructions on how to clear the cache.

In some cases, the first attempt to run Download Manager on a computer might fail. Please simply retry launching the download manager (i.e., click on the "Download Manager" link on the shopping cart page). If the error persists, please contact TCIA's helpdesk at help@cancerimagingarchive.net, letting them know what computer, operating system version of Java that you are using. You can find instructions for determining this information [at this link \(click here\)](#).

5. I am behind a proxy server, will Download Manager work?

Accessing TCIA's **Download Manager** directly through a proxy server is currently not supported. If your only access to the Internet is through a proxy server, our current recommendation is to ask your IT Department to allow your workstation to bypass the proxy server for direct access to <https://public.cancerimagingarchive.net/ncia>.

Java may be configured to utilize proxy settings; however, the developers of NBIA have not tested whether **Download Manager** correctly handles such settings.

6. Does Download Manager work with any browser?

Theoretically, yes. However, we principally test with Firefox, Chrome, and Internet Explorer. We also test with Safari (the default browser on most Macs), and it did work up to version delivered on Mac OS X version 10.8.3 (Mountain Lion). After 10.8.3, Safari will silently download the JNLP file used to launch the Download Manager, but will not automatically start the Download Manager program. Safari does not give the user any warning, so to the casual user it appears that the Download Manager link is broken. One has to go to the Downloads folder, find the JNLP file just downloaded, and then command | control | right click the JNLP file and select "Run" from the pop-up context menu to start the Download Manager.

Some browsers on some operating systems do not have our Certificate Authority in their list of trusted root Certificate Authorities. In these cases, the browser may present a warning about not trusting the connection to the web site. You may still be able to download images by clicking on the "Continue" or similar button.

7. Are there operating system requirements for Download Manager?

In theory, the Download Manager, being Java based, will work on any operating system. However, the Mac OS X operating system has been imposing additional security requirements on Java Web Start programs, such as the Download Manager, which make it difficult to run them without having administrative access to the Mac. In particular, the Gatekeeper function in 10.8.4 (Mountain Lion) and later versions of Mac OS X by default blocks starting third party programs that have not been either obtained from the Apple App store, or that have not been signed with an Apple Developer ID. This includes, naturally, Java Web Start programs such as the Download Manager. To get around this restriction, one can either change the default Gatekeeper setting, found in the Security tab of Apple System Preferences, to allow the running of 3rd party applications, or download the JNLP file used to launch the Download Manager, and then command | control | right click the JNLP file and select "Run" from the pop-up context menu. Note that either method requires either having administrative access to the Mac OS, or knowing the username/password of an administrator account, since the Mac will prompt for this information.

8. What if I am unable to download images through Download Manager and receive an error message in the status bar?

Our support team needs the following information to perform additional troubleshooting:

1. A screen capture of the error message.
2. A screen capture of the Java console (you may need to enable viewing the Java console using the **Control Panel > Java Control Panel > Advanced > Settings: Java Console > Show Console**).
3. Operating system and version.
 - Windows XP: Start > Control Panel > System > General tab.
 - Windows 7: Start > Control Panel > System and Security > System.
4. Browser and version.
 - Internet Explorer: From the menu bar, select Help > About Internet Explorer.

9. How many series can Download Manager download from a single shopping cart?

Theoretically, there is no maximum number of series that Java allows Download Manager to hold in a single shopping cart. However, it is not practical to download more than around 3500 series at one time. The number of series in your basket will display on the left navigator at the top under **My Data Basket > View Contents**.

10. Where does Download Manager save my images?

When downloading images the default destination location for Windows devices is a path that is hidden by default which makes it hard to locate after the download completes. We suggest clicking the "Browse" button and selecting a more convenient destination for your data.

Questions about the TCGA-related imaging data

How do I find additional information about brain tumors?

Please refer to The Cancer Genome Atlas-Glioblastoma Multiforme (TCGA-GBM) collection for well-documented brain-tumor images as described here: <https://wiki.cancerimagingarchive.net/display/Public/TCGA-GBM>. (This wiki page also links to pages describing related research activities and related resources.)

In the **Related Data** section, there is a link to a blank GBM Case Quality Control Form that details the kinds and descriptions of clinical data collected. The data are freely available from the TCGA Data Portal: <https://tcga-data.nci.nih.gov/tcga>.

Once there, click on the link to GBM data. Since TCIA does not host the TCGA Data Portal, we do not offer guidance for browsing the Data Portal.

The TCGA-Lower Grade Glioma (LGG) collection is another set of brain tumor images: [TCGA-LGG](#).

Questions about Tumors

Do the exams in TCIA show both malignant and benign tumors?

All patients who are part of TCIA at this time are cancer-positive by definition. We have no collections of non-malignant tumors or healthy patients. The only exception would be patients with multiple tumors who might have a benign tumor in addition to a malignant tumor, but at least one tumor will be malignant in each patient.

Questions about Limited Access Collections

How do I access National Lung Screening Trial (NLST) data?

Access to NLST images and data requires approval of the National Cancer Institute (NCI). For details, please see: <https://biometry.nci.nih.gov/cdas/studies/nlst>.

Useful References

MRI Basic Science and Abbreviations

Study materials for physicists and other clinical scientists learning the basics of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI): <http://www.revisemri.com>. Abbreviations only: http://www.revisemri.com/questions/misc/mri_abbrev

The site gives me problems, and error windows have popped up while I am trying to search or download images.

Our technical support team may ask you to answer these three questions if you're having difficulty with our website:

1. Which operating system are you using? (Typical examples would be Windows8, Mac OSX, Redhat Linux)
2. Which browser (and version of that browser) are you using? (Typical examples would be Safari, Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome)

3. Is Java installed on your machine, (and which version of that java are you using)? (Typical example would be yes, Java7 (u67))

To find your OS, browser, and java version, you may find the guide at [Discover your OS Browser and Java Version](#) helpful. The next step would be to test the site (but not necessarily click "download my basket") on another machine like a home laptop, to see if perhaps your institution has set, for example, a special layer of security on its network. The next step would be to email help@cancerimagingarchive.net to schedule an appointment for a webex teleconference with our technical support team to work with you interactively to facilitate access.