

Frequently Asked Questions

Please see the [Data Usage Policies and Restrictions](#) page for any questions about how our data can be used.



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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 [on our Support page](#).

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

The [TCIA User's 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 [search for 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?

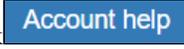
Assuming you are using Internet Explorer, change your browser's language to English by following these steps:

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 home page](#), click  and then click **New account**. Remember that you do NOT need a user ID and password unless you need to access private collections. Just [search for 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 home page](#), click  and then click .

Choose the most appropriate of the following four options:

- You have an account but have forgotten your username.
- You have an account but have forgotten your password.
- You know your username and password, and would like to change your password.
- 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: <https://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 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 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, [modality abbreviations are listed here](#).

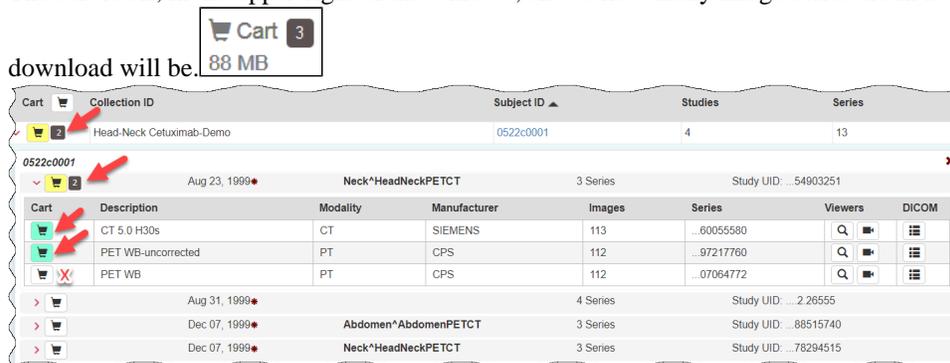
Questions about Searching for Images

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. To download all of the MRI prostate images, from the Simple Search filters, select **MR** under **Image Modality** and select prostate under **Anatomical Site**. The Summary tab shows updated pie charts and the number of image series in the search results.
3. Click the **Search Results** tab.
4. Click a **Subject ID** link to open all series associated with that subject.
5. Click the cart icon for one or more series. If you select only some of the series, the cart turns yellow. If you select all of the series, the cart turns green. The number of image series in your cart also appears next to the cart. The cart itself, in the upper-right of the window, shows how many image series are in it and how large the

download will be Cart 3
88 MB



Cart	Description	Modality	Manufacturer	Images	Series	Viewers	DICOM
	CT 5.0 H30s	CT	SIEMENS	113	..60055580		
	PET WB-uncorrected	PT	CPS	112	..97217760		
	PET WB	PT	CPS	112	..07064772		

6. Click Download.
A message appears reminding you to download the NBIA Data Retriever. If you have already downloaded it, click **Do not show this message again** and click Download. Otherwise, click Get NBIA Data Retriever App to go to a page with links for downloads for each operating system.

NBIA Data Retriever

Before clicking the Download button you must install the NBIA Data Retriever app on your computer.

Do not show this message again.

Get NBIA Data Retriever App
Download
Cancel

7. Open the manifest-xxx.tcia file in the NBIA Data Retriever. For more information on the NBIA Data Retriever, see [NBIA Data Retriever FAQ](#). Also 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](#) (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 cart?

As you review search results in TCIA, you can [add items at any level to your cart](#) for subsequent download. You can then view [subject details](#), [thumbnails](#) of the image series, and [DICOM](#) headers.

5. Can I share the data in my cart?

Once you have added data to your cart, you can [share](#) it as a URL to a static set of data. When you or a colleague opens the URL in a browser window, the new TCIA Graphical User Interface (GUI) opens to the cart page.

6. What if I have a question pertaining to sharing a query?

You can [save your query](#) for later use or share it with a colleague by email.

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 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

Topics in this section

- [Downloading the NBIA Data Retriever](#)
- [Installing the NBIA Data Retriever](#)
- [Downloading Images Using the NBIA Data Retriever](#)
- [Downloading Private Data](#)

Downloading the NBIA Data Retriever

After you search for images of interest and add them to your data basket, you can download them.

The most convenient method of downloading is by using the NBIA Data Retriever. You must install the NBIA Data Retriever before you begin downloading. You only have to install it once to use it in future downloading sessions.

Consult the [NBIA Data Retriever FAQ](#) for more information about NBIA Data Retriever versions and usage.

Get the NBIA Data Retriever

Click one of the following links to download the NBIA Data Retriever for that operating system. See [Downloading Study Data](#) for information on using this application to download data.

- [RPM](#) (tested on CentOS)
To run this file, type the following at the command prompt:

```
sudo yum -v -y remove NBIADataRetriever-3.6-1.x86_64.rpm;sudo yum -y install NBIADataRetriever-4.0-1.x86_64.rpm
```
- [DEB](#) (tested on Ubuntu)
To run this file, type the following at the command prompt:

```
sudo -S dpkg -r nbia-data-retriever-3.6.deb;sudo -S dpkg -i nbia-data-retriever-4.0.deb
```
- [NBIA Data Retriever in the Mac App Store](#)
- [Windows](#)



[New features and one fixed issue](#) are available in NBIA Data Retriever 4.0 (February 2021).

Installing the NBIA Data Retriever

To install the NBIA Data Retriever on Windows

1. Download the installer package for Windows using the [Windows link above](#).
2. Save the installer package file to your computer.

3. Install the app by double-clicking the installer package file.
4. Agree to the terms in the License Agreement and click **Install**.
5. When the Setup Wizard ends, click **Finish**.

To install the NBIA Data Retriever on Mac

 The Mac version of the NBIA Data Retriever is only available through the iOS App Store. It requires a manifest file to work. You can download the app first or create a manifest file first. If you download the app first, right-click the manifest file and select **Open With NBIA Data Retriever**. If you create a manifest file first, right-click it and select **Open With App Store**. This installs the app and then opens the manifest file in the app.

1. On your Mac, find the [NBIA Data Retriever on the Mac App Store](#).

 The NBIA Data Retriever is free but still requires you to log in to download it. Consider changing your iOS Password Settings so that you can download free software without having to log in separately for it.

2. Click **Get**, then click **Install App**. The NBIA Data Retriever is free. The app starts downloading to your Mac. When the download is complete, you can open a manifest file with the NBIA Data Retriever.

To install the NBIA Data Retriever on Linux (centOS or Ubuntu)

You must have the sudo privilege on your computer and a sudo password to install the NBIA Data Retriever on CentOS and Ubuntu.

1. Download the installer package for centOS or Ubuntu using the [links above](#).
2. Save the installer package file to your computer.
3. Open a command window and go to the location where you saved the installer.

Downloading Images Using the NBIA Data Retriever

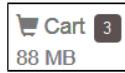
When you download images you have added to your cart, TCIA provides a list of these images in a manifest file (`manifest-xxx.tcia`). You must have already [installed](#) the NBIA Data Retriever to open this manifest file and download the images.

 You can share the manifest file with collaborators, so that they can download the same images that you have added to your cart. Collaborators must also install the NBIA Data Retriever to open the manifest file.

If you want to share a manifest file that includes links to *private* image collections, you must first manually [install the latest NBIA Data Retriever](#). The latest version of the NBIA Data Retriever controls access to private collections. In addition, your collaborators must have the same access to those private collections as you do. Otherwise, your collaborators will not be able to download images from those collections.

To download images using the NBIA Data Retriever

1. [Search](#) for images of interest.
2. [Add](#) those images to your cart.



- Click the cart icon in the top-right of the page

The cart contents appear.

Collection	Subject ID	Study Date	Study Description	Series Description	Images
TCGA-LUSC	TCGA-34-5928	Apr 7, 1993	Lung V/Q Scan	Ventilation	1
TCGA-LUSC	TCGA-34-5928	Apr 7, 1993	Lung V/Q Scan	Perfusion	4
TCGA-LUSC	TCGA-34-8454	Dec 21, 1994	Lung V/Q Scan	Perfusion	4
TCGA-LUSC	TCGA-34-8454	Dec 21, 1994	Lung V/Q Scan	Ventilation	1

- Click



A message appears reminding you to download the NBIA Data Retriever. If you have already downloaded it,

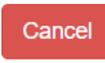
click **Do not show this message again** and click . Otherwise, click  to go to a page with links for downloads for each operating system.

NBIA Data Retriever

Before clicking the Download button you must install the NBIA Data Retriever on your computer.

Do not show this message again.





- Open the manifest-xxx.tcia file.

The NBIA Data Retriever appears, with the items you added to your cart in the Downloads table. See the [note about the file naming system](#) that appears in the manifest file.

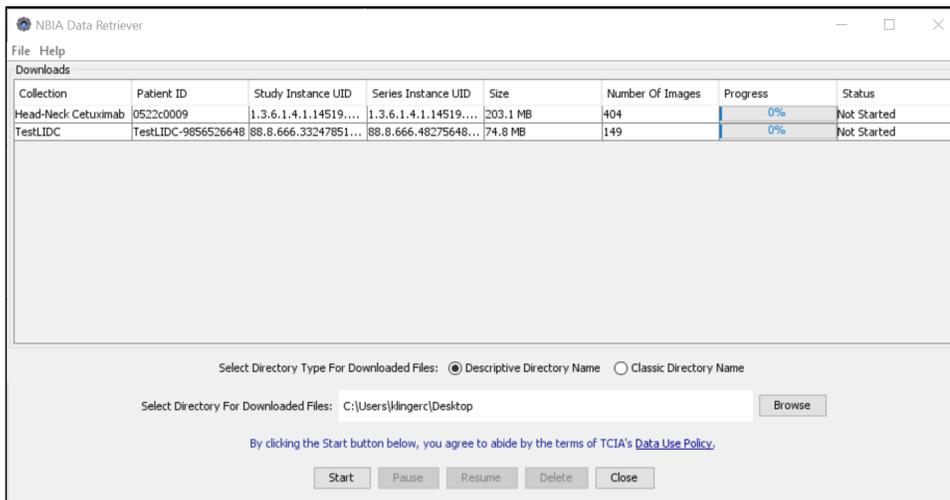
Collection	Patient ID	Study Instance UID	Series Instance UID	Size	Number Of Images	Progress	Status
Head-Neck Cetuximab	0522c0009	1.3.6.1.4.1.14519...	1.3.6.1.4.1.14519...	203.1 MB	404	0%	Not Started
TestLIDC	TestLIDC-9856526648	88.8.666.33247851...	88.8.666.48275648...	74.8 MB	149	0%	Not Started

Select Directory Type For Downloaded Files: Descriptive Directory Name Classic Directory Name

Select Directory For Downloaded Files: C:\Users\hinger\Desktop

By clicking the Start button below, you agree to abide by the terms of TCIA's [Data Use Policy](#).

The NBIA Data Retriever lists all items you selected in the cart. You can hover your mouse over the Patient ID, Study Instance, and Series Instance columns to reveal the complete corresponding IDs. You can also resize a column by selecting and dragging the column border.



If you do not want to download any of those items, select them in the Downloads table and then click **Delete**. When you remove an item from the Downloads table, it stays in your cart in the Radiology Portal.

i NBIA Data Retriever File Naming System

The file naming system used by the NBIA Data Retriever has been revised to provide a more natural ordering of the files within each series. This has been accomplished by first ordering the DICOM files by ordinal position of acquisition number and then by ordinal position of instance number. The files are then assigned numbers with the lowest acquisition being 1 and the lowest instance number within that acquisition being 1, separated by a dash. The numbers are incremented by 1 as the next values are encountered. All values are left-padded with zeros to provide for the ordering within the file system.

As an example, a series with 2 acquisition numbers with each acquisition having 42 instance numbers would start with 1-01.dcm for the lowest acquisition number and the lowest instance number in that acquisition. The last file in that acquisition would be 1-42.dcm. Then the second acquisition would start with 2-01.dcm, ending with 2-42.dcm, in that acquisition. For the purposes of ordering, an empty value in either acquisition number or instance number is lower than a file having a value for those number.

6. Click **Browse** to navigate to the destination where you want the images/annotations to be downloaded.
7. Click **Start** to begin the download. You can monitor the status of the full download in the progress bar on top, and for each collection in the Progress column. The Status column indicates when the download for each item is complete.

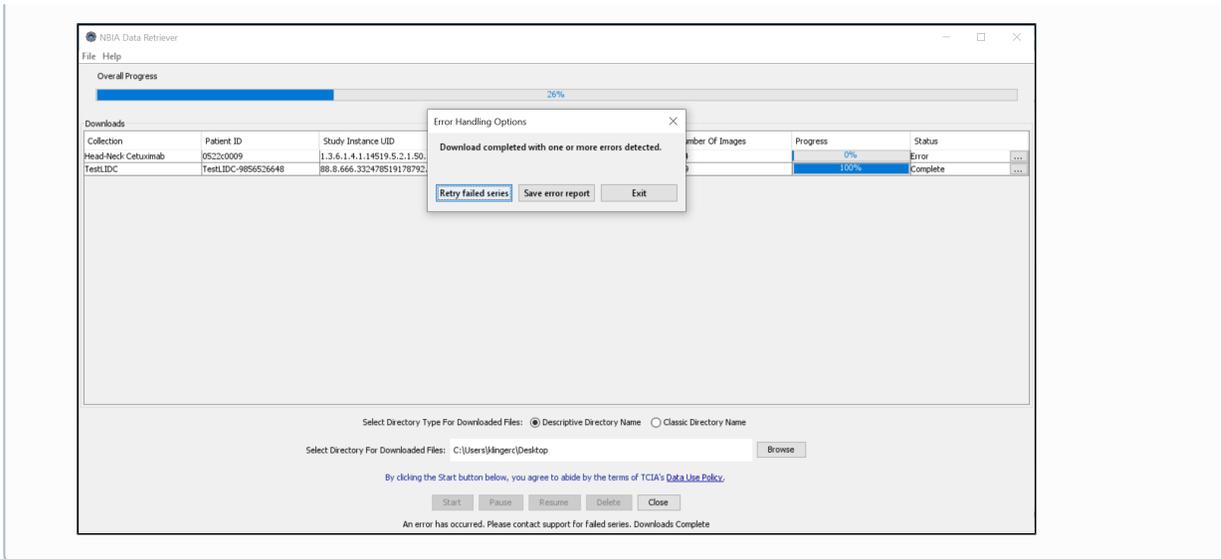
At any point in the process, you can click the **Pause** and **Resume** buttons to temporarily stop and restart the process.

Note that files downloaded this way are not compressed. The downloaded files are stored in a child folder under the destination folder such as Collection Name > Patient ID > part of Study Date + part of Study ID + part of Study Description + last 5 digits of Study Instance UID > part of Series Number + part of Series Description + last 5 digits of Series Instance UID.

i Network Error?

If network errors occur during large downloads, the NBIA Data Retriever retries downloading the series in the manifest file the number of times that your administrator has configured. The default is four times.

After the automatic retries, you have the option of retrying just the failed series, saving an error report, which you can share with the [TCIA help desk](#), and exiting.



Downloading Private Data

Unable to render {include} The included page could not be found.

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.