

PRODUCT REVIEW / ÉVALUATION DE PRODUIT

Product: TRIP Database

URL: <https://www.tripdatabase.com>

Cost: Free

Purpose & Product Description

Based in the United Kingdom, TRIP (Turning Research Into Practice) is a clinical research database that allows users to search across multiple sources of information and publication types using a single interface. TRIP includes a simple search box, a PICO form for search term entry, and a latest and greatest list based on topic. TRIP Pro also includes advanced search and recent search windows. TRIP has also begun to offer auto-synthesis, though as of July 2018 they are still working to perfect this feature [1].

Cost

TRIP's basic search platform is free to use. For an additional fee, users can upgrade to TRIP Pro, which adds features such as advanced searching, recent search history, hundreds of thousands of systematic reviews, a large database of medical images, a million full text articles, clinical videos, and more. TRIP Pro is also available as a special institutional version, which provides all the features of TRIP Pro along with institutional usage statistics, the option to link out to your library's holdings, and the ability to bypass the login page [2].

TRIP Pro is available to individual users for \$55 USD/year [2], while the institutional version is priced according to TRIP's criteria for size and type of institution [3].

Special Features

One of TRIP's selling points is its comprehensive collection of guidelines, and although at the time of writing (July 2018), TRIP's major source of U.S. guidelines, the National Guideline Clearinghouse, had

just closed, TRIP dealt with this by gathering American guidelines themselves and including guidelines from additional publishers. TRIP is also planning to release a separate guideline site [4].

As previously noted, TRIP recently released their auto-synthesis feature. This tool allows you to search for a condition and view a synthesis of the interventions for that condition (within TRIP's collection of evidence). Data are presented as a table as well as a user-friendly graph that you can adjust using different filters (such as displaying the interventions with the highest or lowest risk of bias). TRIP notes on their website that this feature is in the proof of concept stage and results should be treated with skepticism [5], so it will be interesting to see how it continues to develop and if it lives up to the hype.

Compatibility

Multiple reference managers are compatible with TRIP, as it allows .csv and RIS file exports, as well as direct email export options. TRIP is compatible with the standard internet browsers such as Internet Explorer, Firefox and Google Chrome, and is also optimized for viewing on iOS and Android devices. TRIP allows you log in with your email address, Facebook, Twitter or Google Plus accounts.

Platform

Search options are clearly displayed from TRIP's homepage, and users can easily access supplementary information such as the site tour and TRIP's blog. However, in this reviewer's opinion the platform is distracting, and its appearance could lead new users to question TRIP's legitimacy.

Usability

TRIP's platform is designed to give quick access to results, so there is no controlled vocabulary. Boolean operators are not required if you are combining terms with AND, but must be used if you are combining

terms with OR. TRIP also allows the use of parentheses to add more complex syntax. Other functions include asterisk, phrase, and proximity searching, and title and publication year limits [6].

Within TRIP's platform you cannot see your search history unless you are logged into your personal account. The search history page lacks the content that users normally expect to see in a database's search history (such as search builder fields), and this makes it confusing to use. Past searches are not numbered, and the user must count the number of lines and manually enter the line numbers to combine them (e.g., #1 AND #2). According to TRIP's blog, if you are looking for the ability to combine strings into more complex searches with ease, you will want to subscribe to TRIP Pro [6].

Strengths and Weaknesses

TRIP's main strengths are found in its organization of search results and its impressive collection of guidelines. The "evidence type" filter provides the user with quick access to the documents they want (with subcategories to refine even further), and the search results page allows you to sort by quality, date, relevance and popularity. The TRIP team also appears to be working to stay ahead in their industry and the auto-synthesis feature is evidence of this.

TRIP's major weaknesses include its confusing search history, along with the company's choice to charge users for helpful features like the advanced search function. While it is understandable that features like the video and image collections would be restricted to subscribers, an advanced option gives the user greater control over their search and likely improves their experience with TRIP.

Comparison and Currency

In comparison to other free products such as PubMed, TRIP excels in its display of filters whereas PubMed keeps many of these aspects hidden. PubMed is superior in its search functionality, and allows expert searchers to manipulate their searches, while TRIP is simplistic and better for quick searches. The results produced by the 2 databases seem to be equally current, and as previously noted TRIP continues to offer features that will be interesting to watch as they develop.

Conclusion

The TRIP Database is a strong competitor in the information market; it offers a lot of free content that is useful to a wide demographic. TRIP will be one to watch as the company continues to evolve and introduce new features, but for now it can serve as a useful tool in your searching and teaching.

References

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Statement of Competing Interests

No competing interests declared.

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