



## **The Searcher Special Edition #1 30 November 2017**

The past month I've been sending out numerous emails discussing the Black Friday DNA sales. Also a message regarding the reported possible misuse of the DNA results was sent early November. There has been quite a bit of chatter regarding this issue. Dick Eastman, one of my favorite genealogical sources, has posted the following articles from three major DNA testing companies. This information is provided for you to form your own opinion. Please do more research in order to be able to take your stand.

### **Law Enforcement Won't Use Your Ancestry.com or 23andme DNA Kits for Investigations**

A lot of negative, and often misleading, publicity concerning home DNA testing has been floating around the news services this week. Many of the news reports are completely wrong. The WCPO web site has a news story and video that clearly refutes the misleading stories. You can read the truth and watch the video at: <http://bit.ly/2kb6JLv>.

*Dick Eastman · November 28, 2017*

A quick update to this post (by Ancestry.com). As I mentioned, we were working to clarify our Terms and Conditions language around the data rights – or license – you grant us when you take an AncestryDNA test. I'm happy to say that we have just posted the updates.]

Ancestry has released updated Terms and Conditions. These changes apply to all AncestryDNA customers, past and future. The changes that are most relevant to the discussion below can primarily be found in Section 3 The AncestryDNA Service. These changes provide additional clarity around the policies that we already follow in terms of data ownership and sharing. A few highlights of the specific changes are below, but I encourage you to take a look at the whole document yourself.

First, we very clearly state that AncestryDNA does not “claim ownership rights in the DNA that is submitted for testing.” You own your DNA; this sentence helps make it clear that nothing we do takes, or has ever taken, that ownership from you.

Second, we’re clear that because you are owner of your DNA, we need you to grant us a license to your data so that we can provide our products and services to you and our other users, as well as develop new products and services. You can revoke this right at any time by requesting we delete your data or your account.

Third, we explicitly state that we will not share your genetic data with employers, insurance providers or third party marketers without first getting your consent. We already follow this procedure, but this language makes our commitment to you explicit.

Like I said yesterday, there are a lot of questions to ask and discussions to be had about genetic testing. We hope these updates help address some of your most pressing concerns.

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For more than 20 years, Ancestry has been working every day to earn and keep our customers’ trust. We strongly value the role Ancestry plays in the personal discoveries you achieve through our services, and in the role we play in your efforts to document your family histories across generations. We also understand that when it comes to your DNA, the expectations you have of us to be careful and respectful stewards of your data are heightened. We try to be transparent about what happens with your data when you take an AncestryDNA test – in our Terms and Conditions, Privacy Policy, and our Support Center – and we’re always open to having a discussion if you have any questions.

We’ve recently received a number of questions that stem from an article describing what Ancestry can do with your genetic information that has significant inaccuracies and fundamental errors in it. When I read the article, it became immediately obvious why consumers would have concerns: The article is inflammatory and inaccurate, and contains wild scenarios of the “did you know [insert scary hypothetical]” variety. If you don’t read our terms, and don’t spend a lot of time with our products and services, you might find this article alarming. So, let me try set the record straight by sharing some of the basic principles that guide everything we do at Ancestry.

We believe your DNA data belongs to you and we strive to be true stewards of your data.

If you provide us a sample of your saliva, we’ll analyze it to tell you more about where you come from. The sample, and the resulting data, are yours. You have the ability to download it at any time. You can request that we delete your data and destroy your physical sample at any time and we will do so.

Because genetic information is potentially useful to help cure disease, extend life, and improve science, we ask if you want to take part in research that may be conducted by third parties. If you consent to this through our Informed Consent (approved by an Institutional Review Board), your data is cleansed of any personal identifiers before being aggregated with other’s data, and only then would it be made available to potential research partners. Our research partners are typically from academic settings, but they might include for-profit research companies that are doing things like trying to understand if there are genetic markers related to longevity. Again, if you don’t consent to participate, your genetic information is not included in the research.

We have not sold or provided your genetic data to insurers, employers, or third-party marketers. We protect our users within the law, and require valid legal process such as a warrant before providing any data to law enforcement.

We understand how sensitive your genetic information is, and we have committed to protecting your data, and that’s why we’ve never provided genetic data to insurers or employers.

Additionally, with regard to requests from law enforcement, our policy has only been that we will only provide data if compelled to by a valid legal process. We also issue an annual transparency report detailing the volume of law enforcement requests we receive.

The article contains a claim suggesting that we've buried, deep in our "Terms of Service," the ability to reveal highly sensitive health information about you or a relative, which could be used by insurance carriers, law enforcement, or employers. As noted above, this is completely false.

The language referred to is part of the Informed Consent to participate in third-party research and describes some of the unlikely risks of participating. Before you agree to participate, we believe it's important that you are aware of even unlikely scenarios where aggregated, non-personalized data might somehow be re-identified, which is why we've tried to be transparent about such risks and our commitment to avoiding them.

We take a license to your genetic information to allow us to provide you with our products and services, as well as to develop and improve them.

We require you to grant us a license to your data when you take our test. The reason for this is simple: We need that license in order to move your data through our systems, render it around the globe, and to provide you with the results of our analysis work. Personally, I don't like the legal language on this issue because it can be confusing and seem overly broad, but it's what's necessary for us to do the work we do for you. That's why we also have language throughout the process of activating a test that clarifies and limits what we can and can't do with your data. We are, of course, actively looking to improve this language to enhance transparency and reduce confusion, and I hope to have some improvements to the transparency of the terms available online soon.

In conclusion

There are a lot of legitimate questions to be asked and discussions to be had about consumer genomics. It's still a new industry after all. But wildly inaccurate articles don't do you, the consumer, any favors. Their misleading and fear-inducing content confuses and confounds users, and generally does not help raise the level of dialog about consumer genetics privacy. I don't expect that this one blog post will clear up every concern, and we're happy to answer your questions, and hope that everything we have done over the last several decades has helped us earn your trust.

## **Family Tree DNA Will Never Sell Your Genetic Data**

A lot of negative, and often misleading, publicity concerning home DNA testing has been floating around the news services this week. In an effort to clear the air, Family Tree DNA has issued the following statement:

*HOUSTON, Nov. 28, 2017 /PRNewswire/ — Family Tree DNA (FTDNA), a division of Gene-by-Gene Ltd, the first to market with a consumer oriented genealogical DNA testing kit and the only genealogical DNA testing company with its own state-of-the-art genetics laboratory, is telling consumers they will never sell their genetic data in a consumer awareness campaign entitled "Can the Other Guys Say That?"*

*"We feel the only person that should have your DNA is you," says Bennett Greenspan, President and Founder of Family Tree DNA. "We don't believe it should be sold, traded, or bartered."*

*According to Greenspan, “the value of DNA testing is that the DNA test can tell you things about yourself that you cannot determine by looking in the mirror. It allows you to interrogate the history book written in your cells.”*

*The media campaign comes at the start of what is traditionally the biggest selling season of the year for genealogically focused DNA testing companies, reminding consumers who flock to genealogical sites to purchase their holiday gifts that, “Finding your roots is fun, but not all DNA test companies are created equal.”*

*Other DNA testing companies are, in fact, selling consumers’ genetic data to pharmaceutical companies for a profit. While these companies claim to remove personally identifying information prior to selling the data, the question, says Greenspan, is whether consumers feel the sale of their genetic data is “part of the deal [they] really thought [they] were signing up for when [they] ordered a simple DNA test for genealogical purposes.”*

*The “Can the Other Guys Say That?” campaign launched on Thanksgiving Day and encourages consumers to “Make the Smart Choice this Holiday Season.”*

*Dick Eastman · November 28, 2017*

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My take on this issue is our DNA may be similar to our fingerprints. Most of us have been fingerprinted for various reasons. My opinion is that my DNA tests are better protected than my fingerprints. Having said that perhaps we should speak out to government, at all levels, to codify how individual DNA results are protected and who and how the results can be accessed by others. What about iris scans, bio measures for security systems, photo IDs. Perhaps the biggest source for identity theft is the computer and social media. Daily people give clues to their identity on social media and think nothing of it.

As for the use of aggregated results being sold to drug companies, I feel as long as any personal data is removed this can only help in serving our medical needs by providing researchers with better DNA databases to help identify possible links, thus medications, that can better control or eliminate diseases.

Enough, you all can think of other examples of public information about our identity.

John Richter 30 Nov 2017

## **Just for Fun**

### **Six Things to Serve Your Neanderthal Guest for Thanksgiving**

Let’s imagine that, in lieu of your Aunt Betsy from Seattle, an ancient Neanderthal woman is coming to your house for Thanksgiving this year. Hide the china and practice your grunting, right? Well, maybe not.

Though their table manners might be lacking, the popular “caveman” stereotype is more myth than fact. Neanderthals were actually quite similar to modern humans and exhibited complex social behaviors.

“As a culture, we tend to think of Neanderthals as these brutish, bent-over, hairy individuals—a bit more ape-like than us. But there’s no evidence that supports that idea,” said Professor Tim Weaver, an anthropologist at UC Davis whose research focuses on human evolution. “I think the stereotype that’s permeated our popular culture stems from old reconstructions of the Neanderthals dating back to the early 20th century. As far as we can tell from their anatomy, genetics, and behavioral and cultural remains, Neanderthals were very similar to modern humans.”

More about your Neanderthal guest

She probably lives in a cave—so try to be sensitive if she’s not up on the latest in politics and pop culture.

Neanderthals were thought to be quite social. Your guest likely has a nuclear family and a close-knit community of hunter-gatherers, so be sure to ask about her kids, parents, and friends.

Her physical traits may include a heavier brow, an oval-shaped skull, and a larger-than-average nose (try not to stare).

She’s probably on the stockier and more muscular side, so make sure her seat comfortably accommodates her stature.

Based on evidence that Neanderthals possessed sophisticated toolmaking skills, your guest may be able to handily carve up the turkey or roast using a stone or bone instrument.

She may or may not be able to communicate with you verbally, so be prepared to use another means of conversing.

Be sure to ask about her neighborhood. Neanderthals were intimately in touch with their surroundings, harvesting from the land to survive. She’ll be an expert on the best hikes and outdoor activities in her homeland.

Here’s what we know of our human cousins.

The Neanderthals were our closest extinct relatives who lived throughout Eurasia 200,000 to 40,000 years ago, during the Pleistocene Epoch. Over this time glaciers retreated and advanced, and once-abundant food sources became scarce.

Before anatomically modern humans (that’s us) left Africa, the ancestors of the Neanderthals ventured into Eurasia. Ultimately, the Neanderthals would inhabit a vast expanse of land stretching from Portugal to western Siberia and from northern Europe to Israel and Iraq. The Neanderthals intermixed with modern humans emerged from Africa about 60,000 years ago, giving us both evolutionary advantages (like the functioning of our immune systems and some less-favorable variants, such as susceptibility to certain allergies, depression, and blood clots.

For millennia Neanderthals thrived, but eventually they went extinct, and scientists aren’t entirely sure why. Some theorize that migration and random species drift (a mechanism of evolution that produces random, rather than selection-driven, genetic changes in a population)

caused the disappearance of the Neanderthals, while others blame dietary insufficiencies caused by changing ecological and climatic conditions. Perhaps the most popular explanation for the disappearance was competition with modern humans for resources.

But one thing is for certain: the Neanderthals did intermix with modern humans before their demise, so segments of their DNA live on in many of us today. Unless you're from Sub-Saharan Africa, your DNA reflects somewhere between one percent and four percent Neanderthal ancestry.

Now, we'll get to the main course of this post: what to serve your guest for Thanksgiving dinner. Contrary to popular belief, Neanderthals were not all die-hard carnivores, so it's best to avoid offending your guest with a plethora of meat dishes. Rather, our ancient relatives adapted their diets to match the resources that were readily available and most abundant in nutrients, so be sure to ask where exactly she is from. Your Neanderthal guest may also be particular about what she will and won't eat. "From what we know from the archaeological record and the bones found at Neanderthal sites, they seemed to focus more on large mammals rather than small game like rabbits. The breadth of their diets seems to have been narrower than those of modern humans," said Professor Weaver.

Two Neanderthal individuals found in a cave in El Sidrón, Spain appeared to have consumed little to no meat. Traces of pine nuts, moss, tree barks, and mushrooms were found in this pair's dental plaques, suggesting a mostly vegetarian diet (err, except for the evidence of cannibalism found in their cave...but we digress). After studying the dental plaques of another Neanderthal found in Spy, Belgium, scientists concluded that the individual ate mostly meat, as well as some mushrooms. Woolly rhino or wild sheep ragout, anyone? The bones of mammoths, reindeer, and horses were also found in the Spy cave. Other research reports that Neanderthals living on the Gibraltar coast may have eaten various mollusks, seals, and even dolphins. In summary, Neanderthals ate what was most readily available and nutrient-dense in their immediate surroundings; they adapted their diets to meet the resources provided by their environments.

Enjoy connecting with your Neanderthal guest and learning about some of the traits you might have in common. By the end of the meal, we predict you and your other relatives will be competing to see who had the good fortune of acquiring the most Neanderthal DNA.

#### Curated Menu

Sauteéd Greens with Pine Nuts and Raisins. Opt for wild edible greens like dandelion and chicories. High in fatty acids and calorically rich, pine nuts also contain lutein, a carotenoid that may help prevent eye disease.

Wild Mushroom and Leek Stuffing. If your guest is from Spain, she's likely fond of a variety of mushrooms. High in dietary fiber, B vitamins, and minerals, they're fundamental to her diet. Bonus points if you forage for them yourself.

A Crown Roast of Lamb. Rather than turkey, opt for this earthy, gamey alternative. Your guest will appreciate the simple preparation and ample protein. If lamb isn't available, your guest may also enjoy venison or reindeer.

Baked Clams with Bacon and Garlic. Your guest may hail from a coastal region. She'd appreciate these flavorful bivalves, oven-roasted with savory bacon and spices.

Miner's Lettuce Salad. Since it's still unclear whether all Neanderthals were as adept at controlling fire as their human relatives, we're also including a raw option. This version has fresh Miner's lettuce, a wild edible that tastes like a cross between watercress and spinach.

Wild Mushroom Stew. End your meal with a cup of wild mushroom stew to keep your guest warm for her journey home.

*November 21, 2017 By 23andMe under Ancestry, recommended reading  
By Erica Bellman, Ancestry Content Writer*

## **REMINDER**

**Tuesday, December 12** is our annual show and tell. Share with us something you found or did this year that added significantly to your genealogy or bring a visual that is part of your family history.

Bring something for the pot luck for sharing.

Let's have a big turnout for this event.