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BIOL 300
09 October 2024
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Ancestry's genetic data is not protected under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), meaning genetic information processed by this company doesn't fall under healthcare privacy laws. In comparison, 23andMe takes a different approach by de-identifying information used in research, disconnecting it from personal details like your name or address.

Both Ancestry and 23andMe collect a broad range of personal information. Ancestry gathers what they call "Personal Information," including your name, address, email, and genetic data. They also collect information like IP addresses, mobile device identifiers, geolocation from uploaded photos, and browsing history, which are used to infer relationships and create profiles for marketing or research. Similarly, 23andMe collects information such as your name, billing address, payment details, and web behavior, along with genetic and biometric data. Ancestry allows for the sale of certain information, including commercial data and browsing history, but does not sell genetic information to marketers or insurance companies. Users can also opt out of targeted advertising. 23andMe, on the other hand, allows users to share their personal information with third parties, including healthcare professionals or social networks. In cases of mergers or acquisitions, user data can be transferred to new entities, but it remains subject to the original privacy policies. When it comes to law enforcement, Ancestry only releases information with a valid warrant, while 23andMe only complies when required by law, like in response to a court order or subpoena.

In terms of how long genetic data and samples are stored. Ancestry allows users to request the destruction of their biological samples, especially if they delete their account. 23andMe, however, retains samples indefinitely unless users withdraw their consent or close their account, but users can request their samples to be removed at any time. If users opt into additional research, their data is used for scientific purposes. Ancestry's usage is less explicit, but 23andMe clarifies that de-identified data from users is analyzed to study genetic links to diseases and traits.

Despite the fact that both Ancestry and 23andme do not sell genetic information to third parties, insurance companies, etc., I would not entrust my genetic information to either company because I am a very private individual; however, I do believe that when comparing both companies, 23andme is the better contender. I think 23andMe offers slightly better protections in terms of research data handling because of its de-identification process. On the other hand, while it doesn't share genetic data without permission, it allows personal information to be transferred to third parties in cases of mergers or acquisitions, which could pose risks to your privacy down the line. Ancestry poses much greater imminent privacy concerns by collecting a wide range of data, including geolocation and browsing history, which can be used for profiling and targeted advertising, and selling certain personal information, such as internet usage or purchasing history.