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DNA Privacy Policy

Both Ancestry and 23andMe have continuously updated their privacy policy statements in an attempt to address any underlying issues and protect the safety and privacy of its users. When it comes to how genetic information is protected, Ancestry and 23andMe take very similar approaches. They implement some form of physical, technical, and administrative measures to protect the personal privacy of the user's genetic data and prevent unauthorized access. Both companies state that only trusted third parties are allowed access to this data if they fulfill security policies and commit to the security standards.

Both companies implement similar approaches again when connecting data to personally identifiable information (PII) such as name, address, or other personal details. 23andMe connects genetic data with Personal Information. They state that the term "Personal Information" is used broadly to refer to a variety of data categories, including details about an individual, such as their genotypes, health conditions, or other characteristics. For both 23andMe and Ancestry, the genetic data of the individual is linked to the PII when the account is created. Ancestry processes and uses the genetic data combined with PII for personalized services such as ethnicity estimates, traits, genetic relative matches, and inherited-DNA information. As mentioned above, there are certain third parties that are allowed access to

genetic data of individuals that participate, but both companies stated that they do not sell any information to any other companies. Although data is not sold to other companies, 23andMe does clarify that de-identified genetic information and self-reported information could be used for research purposes. This is research that one must opt-in to in order to participate in. The information that may be shared is that of summaries of research results with other qualified research collaborators and also within scientific publications. Ancestry does also share research de-identified genetic and phenotypic information with other research partners when the participant consents through the Informed Consent to Research. Ancestry will use the information in the research to contribute to studies on development of therapeutics, medical devices, and diagnosis or predicting of health conditions.

Again, both Ancestry and 23andMe have a similar manner when it comes to the sharing of data. Both companies do not share any information or data to health insurers, but they will share with law enforcement if it is done through the valid legal process. Both companies will attempt to provide notice to the participant if law enforcement is involved, unless they are prohibited by the law. When it comes to the holding of samples and data, or the deletion of an account, the companies actually have a slight difference on how they proceed with these processes. Ancestry will hold onto an individual's DNA data until there has been a deletion of the associated account. If this happens, all personal genetic information from the production, development, analytics, and research systems will be deleted within 30 days. Biological samples will also be destroyed. 23andMe will also discard biological samples and delete genetic information upon account deletion, but also retain some data.

Overall, both of these companies seem to be trustworthy to comply with personal and genetic data. Both prioritize customer protection, offering opt-in and opt-out options for most additional content, ensuring that the participants have control over what their information will engage with. Both companies do a good job at protecting the personal information of their participants, while also allowing this information to provide plausible necessary data for health or familial circumstances. Ancestry and 23andMe are similar in many ways and have almost matching privacy policy statements, but if one had to be chosen, Ancestry seems to be the better choice. Unlike 23andMe, Ancestry does not attempt to keep hold of any information after account deletion and also seems to list better usage for genetic and personal information. Ancestry also had a more descriptive privacy policy statement, which can provide confidence into any individual who participates within the study.