

Direct-to-consumer genetic testing is here to stay

On a Thursday night in October 2007, I sat with hundreds of geneticists at the *American Society of Human Genetics* annual meeting in San Diego, so stunned that we ignored the free dessert. At a table in front of the crowd were several very nicely-dressed physicians and genetic counselors representing a trio of companies gearing up to offer, in the coming year, direct-to-consumer (DTC) genetic testing.

Yes, ordinary people would be able to send samples of themselves – spit, it would turn out – to companies that would charge fees to return results right to them, circumventing health care professionals. The companies had names much catchier than those of the biotech companies of the past two decades: [23andme](#) , [Navigenics Inc.](#) , (absorbed into Life Technologies Corp last summer), and [deCODE Genetics](#), part of Icelandic biobank fame.

With consumers on board, scientists seeming to have accepted DTC testing, and doctors having to keep up with their patients who come in with test results, I think DTC genetic testing is here to stay – and poised to explode with exome and genome sequencing.