

The delicious, religious debate over junk DNA

A century ago, as biologists came to grips with the vast number of different proteins needed to build and maintain the body, they decided that genes must be packed very tightly together on chromosomes, since tight packing would be more efficient. They couldn't have been more wrong. In humans, a typical species in this regard, less than 2 percent of our 3 billion letters of DNA actually builds proteins.

So what does that extra 98 percent do? Here's where things get contentious.

In an unsettled area of science, it's easy to whip between two extremes. *Junk DNA is completely necessary!* No, no, wait. *It's completely unnecessary!* Take a breath: The answer almost certainly lies somewhere in between. But no one knows which end of the spectrum is closer to the truth.

Read the full, original story here: [Is Junk DNA Really Junky?](#)

Additional Resources:

- "What Junk DNA? It's an Operating System," Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology News
- ["Don't touch my junk DNA!' says gene signal sequence"](#), Christian Science Monitor
- ["Listening to the Genome: Music or Noise?"](#) National Geographic