

Using consumer genetics to map the world's genealogy

While millions of people spent last weekend dumping buckets of ice water on their heads and documenting it on Facebook to raise money and awareness for ALS, a few us genetics geeks gathered and talked about haplogroups* A, L and S, among others.

**Never heard of a haplogroup? Don't worry, it's not because you have a brain freeze. A haplogroup is a branch on the human family tree. All people belong to a haplogroup based on genetic markers carried in their cells. People belonging to the same haplogroup trace their descent to a common ancestor and a specific place where that ancestor once may have lived.*

Last Saturday morning at the first International Conference for Genetic Genealogy in Chevy Chase, Maryland, Genographic Project Director and National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence Dr. Spencer Wells delivered the Keynote to an audience of 300 genetic genealogists. He spoke about the popularity of the field and how fast consumer genetics has grown since the launch of The Genographic Project in 2005.

"In 2013 the one-millionth person tested their DNA," explained Wells, "just 12 years since the first human genome was sequenced. But this summer the 2-millionth person has already tested their DNA."

The growth has been exponential, thanks in great part to the interest and promotion by those who gathered at the conference.

Read the full, original story: [Is genetic genealogy, the next Facebook of science?](#)