Google's Cloud searching for genetic causes of autism

Google has spent the past decade-and-a-half perfecting the science of recognizing patterns in the chaos of information on the web. Now it's applying that expertise to searching for clues to the genetic causes of autism in the vast sea of data contained in the human genome.

Autism advocacy group Autism Speaks said it was partnering with Google to sequence the genomes of 10,000 people on the autism spectrum along with their family members. Google will host and index the data for qualified researchers to sift as they hunt for variations in DNA that could hint at autism's genetic origins.

"We believe that the clues to understanding autism lie in that genome," Rob Ring, Autism Speaks' chief science officer, told WIRED. "We'd like to leverage the same kind of technology and approach to searching the internet every day to search into the genome for these missing answers."

The project will make use of Google Genomics, a tool launched by the company several months ago with little fanfare on Google's Cloud Platform. As sequencing the human genome becomes ever-faster and cheaper—Ring says it can be done for about $2,500, compared to nearly $3 billion for the Human Genome Project—the volume of genetic data generated by researchers has grown astronomically. By allowing researchers to dump that data onto its servers, Google gets to show off and improve the capabilities of its cloud while providing a potentially important service.

Read full, original article: Google Opens Its Cloud to Crack the Genetic Code of Autism