

DNA.Land pooling crowdsourced direct-to-consumer genome data for research

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Researchers from Columbia University and the New York Genome Center have launched a new research-focused website called DNA.Land, where participants can submit genomic data generated by several direct-to-consumer companies.

The platform is designed to provide users with ancestry, relationship, and other information beyond that available from any single one of the companies doing the genotyping.

“We think of people not as research subjects, but as research participants — it’s a partnership,” DNA.Land co-leader Yaniv Erlich, a computer science researcher with Columbia and NYGC, told GenomeWeb. “The idea is that we can recruit a large number of people and ... if people are going to spend their time [participating], they want to get something back.”

At the same time, the team behind DNA.Land hopes to harness the crowdsourced SNP data submitted by each individual — together with genome-wide variant patterns imputed from them — to tackle research problems that benefit from very large sample sizes.

They may eventually make it possible for DNA.Land participants to link to information from social media sites they use as a means of getting a glimpse at phenotypes and behavior in a natural, non-survey setting.

Individuals’ data will be kept as secure as possible, though Erlich admitted that privacy breeches are a potential risk when dealing with genetic data. In a study published in *Science* in 2013, for example, he and his colleagues [revealed the risk](#) that men who have had their full genomes sequenced may be re-identifiable based on short tandem repeats found on the male sex chromosome.

Read full, original post: [New York Team Crowdsources Genomic Data Through DNA.Land](#)