

Should we be more careful with our genetic data? ‘People don’t understand what can actually be done with this information’

People in the United States view certain personal information, such as their social security number and the content of their phone calls, as more sensitive than data about their physical or mental well-being, a new survey suggests.

Of the 1,415 participants, 89 percent reported that information about their social security number is “very sensitive,” and 66 percent said so about their phone conversations.

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The survey participants were even less concerned about their biological data. Just 45 to 49 percent of respondents viewed information about their genes, brain-wave activity or brain health as very sensitive.

The results suggest that the general public remains largely unaware of what this kind of information can reveal and how it could be misused, [researcher William] Krenzer says.

People may view this kind of biological information as not sensitive because it’s difficult for most others to decipher. “One’s genetic information isn’t as easily understandable as one’s text messages,” Krenzer says. “If that goes out there, no one’s going to know what that means per se.”

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“People don’t understand what can actually be done with this information,” Krenzer says, adding that it’s important to ensure that everyone understands the risks.

**Read full, original post:** [Most people underestimate risk of others’ access to their biological data](#)