

‘Game changer’ for genetic privacy: Court forces GEDmatch to open its million-person genealogy database to police scrutiny

A Florida state judge has reportedly allowed police to search the entirety of the public genealogy website [GEDmatch](#) — home to the DNA profiles of more than a million Americans. The decision, the first of its kind, has alarmed some legal experts and sparked fears that similar searches will be sanctioned at genetic testing giants, like 23andMe and AncestryDNA.

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The judge’s order is “a huge game changer,” law professor Erin Murphy, of New York University, is quoted by the Times as saying. “The company made a decision to keep law enforcement out, and that’s been overridden by a court. It’s a signal that no genetic information can be safe.”

Science News spoke with lawyer and bioethicist Kayte Spector-Bagdady.

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What can people do to protect their genetic privacy?

“Individuals don’t have much recourse,” Spector-Bagdady says. Those who’ve had their DNA tested by a company can request to have their data removed from its databases. But [there’s no guarantee](#) that all of that data will be erased.

People who haven’t had their DNA tested [could also be affected](#). “The likelihood that someone you’re related to having done genetic testing is astronomical,” she says.

Read full, original post: [Why a warrant to search GEDmatch’s genetic data has sparked privacy concerns](#)