

## Genetic genealogy leader 23andMe going public. What will that mean for your data?

California-based 23andMe will merge with Virgin Group's VG Acquisition Corp and raise a further \$250 million from new investors, [British billionaire Richard] Branson and 23andMe Chief Executive Anne Wojcicki, said [February 4].

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The deal would help fund 23andMe's transition away from the slowing consumer DNA-testing market toward the potentially more lucrative health market.

23andMe has for years used saliva test kits to tell millions of consumers how closely related they are to Neanderthals or whether they are likely to develop diseases like diabetes or Alzheimer's. Mr. Branson, an early investor in the company, said he learned that his own great-great-grandmother was Indian after using its products.

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With a database of over 10 million customers, 23andMe said it can still conduct health research even if sales continue to slow. Over 80% of customers have agreed to participate in research, and customers every day fill out over 30,000 surveys on various health and related issues, it said.

The company said it can leverage existing customers, such as the 1.7 million in the database with high cholesterol, nearly 1.6 million with depression and 539,000 with Type 2 diabetes, to ask research questions and identify people who might want to participate in clinical trials.

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