

It's been 25 years since the release of the dystopian film *GATTACA*. How close are today's scientific advances to the film's 'futuristic' technologies?

GATTACA, a film directed by Andrew Niccol, was released 25 years ago, only a couple of years before the June 2000 announcement of the first working draft sequence of the human genome at the White House Rose Garden.

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The film's technologies, pervasive notion of surveillance, and concomitant privacy issues seem prescient. Since the movie came out, science has produced rapid, accurate and cheap genome sequencing, genome-wide association studies, and precision genetic manipulation tools such as synthetic biology and CRISPR. Arguably, in the United States, much of this state of the art can be attributed to vast investments by the biotechnology industry, the profit margins that entice them, and extensive support by the government for both public genomic endeavors and private ones. In contrast, although innovative, the privately funded billionaire space-exploration class is still in its nascent phase, conceivably driven more by vanity than by profits.

Given that advancements in genetics continue to approximate and perhaps even supersede the innovations of the film, *GATTACA* remains a relevant touchstone — 25 years later — in discussions related to the ethical, legal and social implications of genomics and bioengineering for scientists, policymakers and the lay public.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the full article here**](#)