

# Toward reading your own personal 'Book of Life'

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What secrets about your risk for diseases are written in your own personal "Book of Life" -- the 30,000 or so genes that make you you?

Advances in DNA-sequencing technology are bringing closer the day when it will be more economical for [consumers](#) to get an answer to that question, and others, by ordering up the deciphering of their entire genetic endowment -- their "personal [genome](#)."

That's the possibility that *Chemical & Engineering News*, ACS' weekly newsmagazine, raises in a compelling new cover story. With their Book of Life in hand, consumers and their physicians could map out strategies for the prevention, early diagnosis, and more effective treatment of diseases ranging from cancer to rare-genetic disorders.

C&EN Senior Editor Celia Henry Arnaud notes that the first human genome sequence cost more than \$2 billion and took about a decade to complete. Technological advances now have cut the time to as little as one week, and some companies are charging individuals \$48,000 for the service, a cost that experts expect to drop sharply in the coming years, the article notes.

But the technology also raises important ethical and legal issues, including the possibility of discrimination on the basis of genetic information in the areas of employment and insurance coverage. Many believe that personal genomes are inevitable. "In the future, sequencing will be so cheap and so easy to access that everybody could get

sequenced if they want. It'll be iPod pricing," says the CEO of a company that specializes in direct-to-consumer genome sequencing.

**More information:** "Your own personal genome." This story is available at [pubs.acs.org/cen/coverstory/87/8750cover.html](https://pubs.acs.org/cen/coverstory/87/8750cover.html)

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