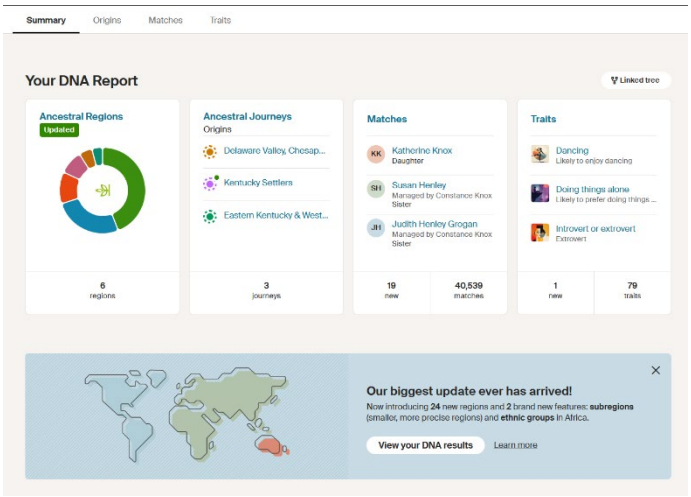
Understanding Ancestry's 2024 DNA Update

Video Link

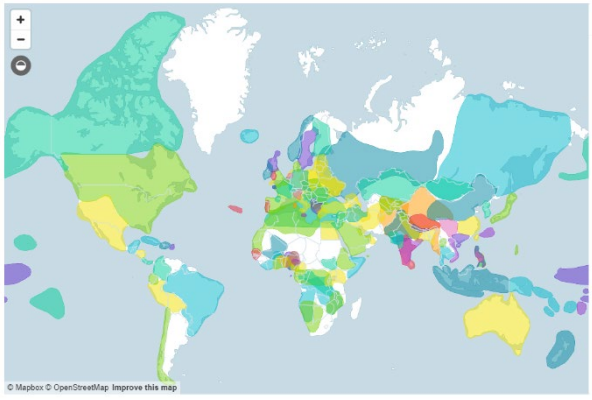
A Guide Based on Interview with Aaron Wolf, Senior Population Geneticist

By Connie Knox



In 2024, Ancestry introduced significant updates to their DNA testing service, including new regions and refined analysis methods. This document summarizes key changes and features based on an interview with Aaron Wolf, Senior Population Geneticist at Ancestry. Below are some key takeaways from the interview.

Database and Recent Changes



Ancestry's current database includes approximately 25 million DNA samples, combining customer submissions and proprietary research samples. The 2024 update introduced 24 new regions:

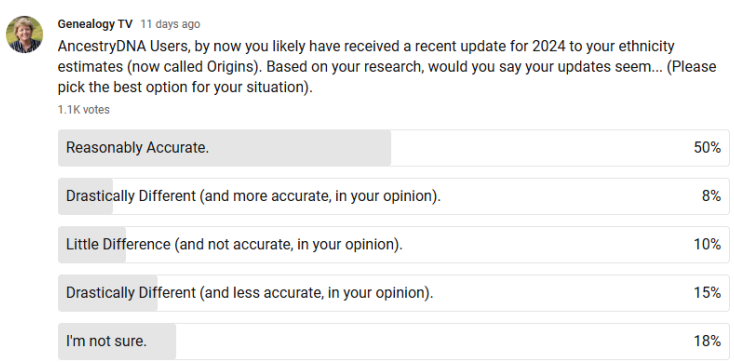
- 5 new regions in Europe
- Multiple new regions in West Africa
- Additional regions in West Asia and Southeast Asia

Ethnicity Estimates Now Called Origins

The service has rebranded "Ethnicity Estimates" as "Origins."

A user poll conducted by Genealogy TV (1,100 respondents) showed:

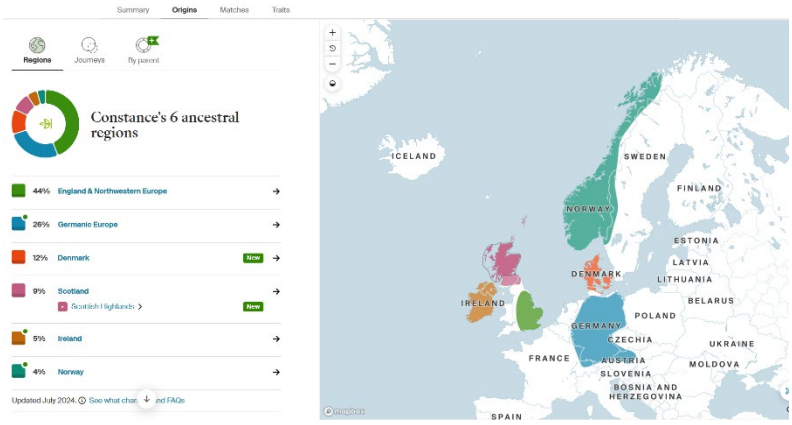
- 58% found results more accurate
- 25% found results less accurate
- 18% were unsure



How Origins Work

Time Frame:

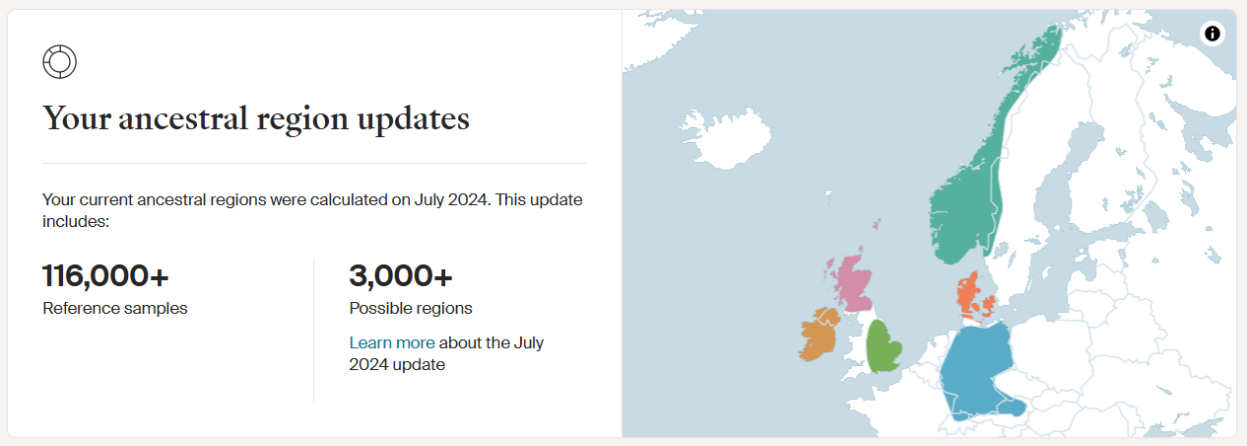
- Generally, covers 500-1,000 years of ancestry
- Focuses on more recent generations than previous updates



Reference Panel Components:

- Uses DNA test results
- User-generated family trees

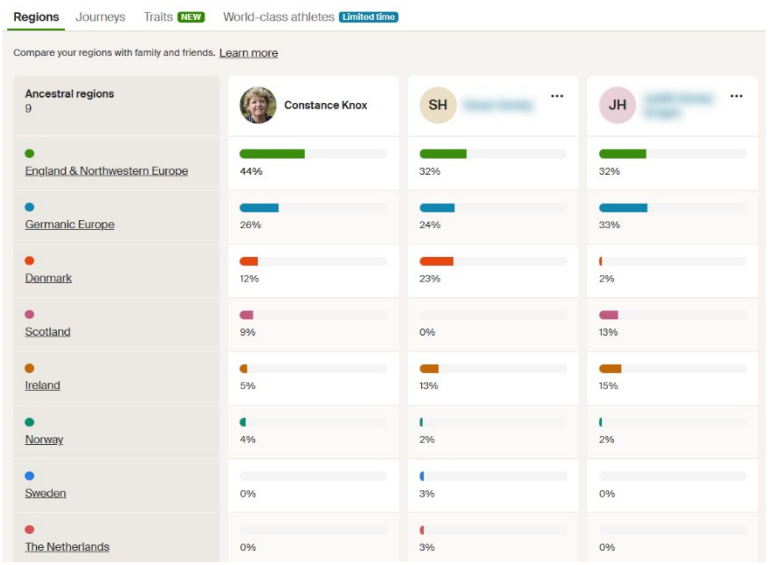
Note: Historical records and AI are not directly used in creating estimates



Understanding DNA Inheritance

Important Considerations:

- DNA inheritance is random
- Siblings may show different results despite identical ancestry
- Example: One sibling might show 23% Danish ancestry while another shows 12%



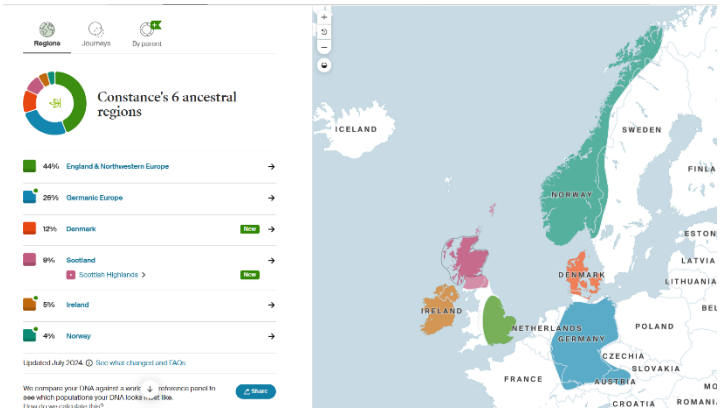
Best Practice:

- Test multiple family members for a comprehensive picture
- Compare results among siblings and close relatives

Regions vs. Journeys

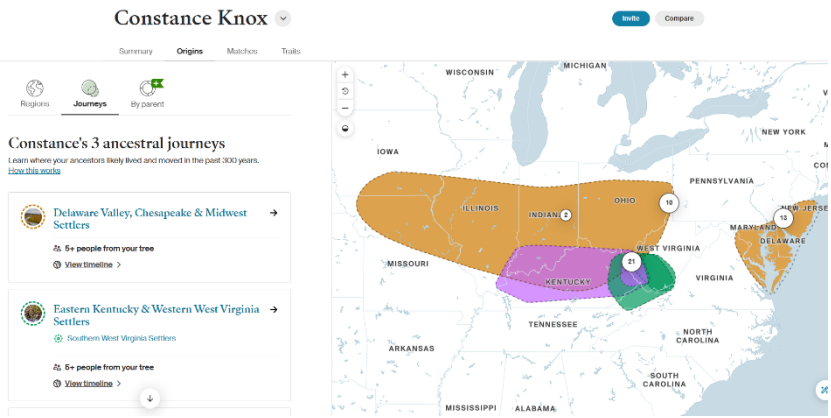
Regions (formerly Ethnicity Estimates):

- Cover broad geographical areas
- Look back 500-1,000 years
- Based on DNA patterns and reference panels



Journeys (formerly Communities):

- Cover more recent history (50-300 years)
- Can be specific to county level
- Show migration patterns
- Use networks of DNA matches
- Rely heavily on family tree data
- Include historical context



Technical Features

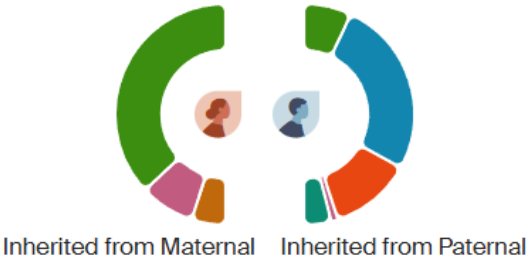
Current Features:

• ThruLines (unaffected by 2024 update)

• TIMBER technology is a filter used for reducing false positives in an effort to find cousins with common ancestors

• 8 centimorgan minimum threshold for matches

• SideView® technology for separating maternal/paternal inheritance



Future Development

Areas Under Consideration:

• More granular results

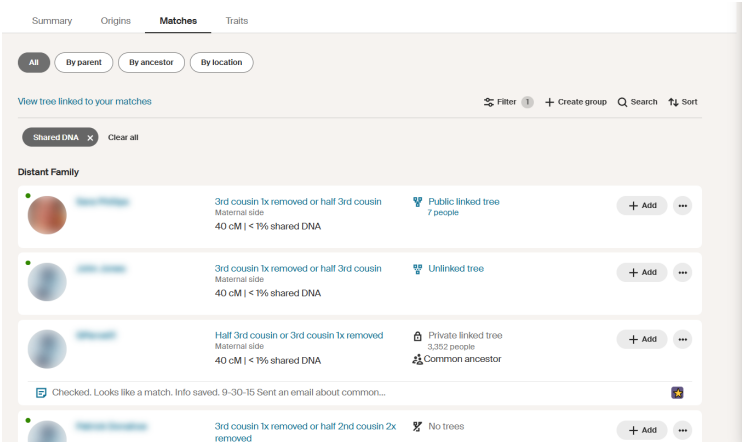
• Refined reference panels

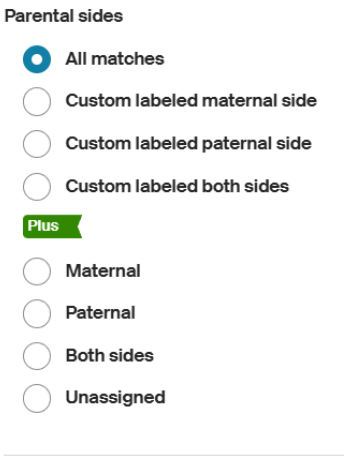
• Enhanced integration of family history with DNA results

• Potential new features:

- Match organization by grandparent (hopeful)

- Enhanced chromosome analysis tools (not promised)





Key Takeaways

1. Results will continue to evolve as reference panels improve

2. Multiple family member testing provides better insights

3. Updates focus on increasing precision and granularity

4. Results now align with more familiar timeframes

Additional Notes

• Updates aim to better reflect recent family history

• Reference panels continue to be refined

• Future updates will focus on increased precision

• Family tree connections remain crucial for accurate results

Document prepared based on interview with Aaron Wolf, Senior Population Geneticist at Ancestry

Conducted by Connie Knox

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