This past January, millionaire Dan Stoicescu paid a total of $350,000 for a complete map of his genes. He became the second person ever to have this done. The first few human genomes were funded by the government. Now this service is being opened to the public. Some may question whether the amount of money is worth it though. However, according to Mr. Stoicescu, it most certainly is. “I’d rather spend my money on my genome than a Bentley”, he says. With this genome, he can discover genetic diseases that could be passed down to future children. Mr. Stoicescu also feels that having his map of genes would tell him what changes he needs to make in his life to ensure that he lives a long and healthy one. Not only is his genome beneficial for his own life, but it plays a big role in ours as well. By having people buy their genomes the companies can “get the ball rolling” so to speak. Once more people sign up to have their genes mapped, more money is being pulled in so that one day, everyone will be able to afford this procedure. Dr. Watson, who actually helped to discover the structure of DNA, refers to this affordable gene map as a “Chevrolet genome.” For now, it seems that genome sequencing will only be available to high-end customers, given its current cost. This is certainly less than to be desired, but it is necessary. In fact, scientists insist that thousands upon thousands of genomes are needed in order to further research on the
disparity of humans. The expense of the technology used is decreasing as well as the price for the procedure, due to competition among companies. It seems as if the hope for the average American to know their genome is not far off. Mr. Stoicescu even said, “I view it as a kind of sponsorship. In a way you can also be part of this adventure, which I believe is going to change a lot of things.”

I can certainly see the appeal of knowing a complete map of your genes. Why wouldn’t be nice to know if you are susceptible to any diseases or not? However, I do not find it very practical to spend $350,000 on something that you can discover through family history. Ancestry gives you a good clue as to what may lie in your future. Also, the idea of only the wealthy knowing their genome and being able to do something about it is kind of unnerving. Would it create a whole generation of people who live longer than the average human being? However, I understand that the participation of those who can afford it is crucial to making sure that it will someday be available to everyone. I just can’t see this going anywhere anytime soon.