

Contact Tracing Apps have become trending topics all over the world during the last week. While the World Health Organization (WHO) launches two new Apps to fight the pandemic, South Korea faces its first clash over sharing personal data. How is the development of the so-called "Immunity passport" going? You will know all about these and other news in the fourth report of the project "The data and the Virus".

## Contact Tracing Apps rush the world and are the new bets on the war against Coronavirus

What you need to know...

- UK launches Contact Tracing App testing
- Israel starts Court battle over use of population's private data
- Iceland keeps app running with high number of users, but less results than expected

Whether using [technology](#) made in partnership by Apple and Google or not, several countries around the world, including Brazil, are pursuing the development of a Contact Tracing App - many of them are already using it - believing it to be one of the greatest weapons in the fight against COVID-19.

As explained in the [previous report](#), Contact Tracing refers to the identification of contact between a person infected by a contagious disease with other people and the consequent partial or total isolation of the people who maintained that contact, in order to reduce the speed of propagation of an infectious disease.

The UK has already started testing an App developed by the British National Health Service (NHS). The first region to receive the technology was the Isle of Wight and the impasses have already started on how it will influence the lives of its population.

A special BBC [news report](#) showed that island residents are very concerned about the App's efficiency in combating Coronavirus but they didn't show much interest in questions about the use of private data. "The problem for me is not privacy - what matters it if we are broke or dead? It is a question of effectiveness and competence", said a nurse who preferred to remain anonymous.

On May 13, a [news report](#) published by the Wired website revealed that NHS secret files were inadvertently left unsafe at Google Drive, so details of the planning for the following versions of the App were exposed, such as data collection of postal codes, demographic information (age, ethnicity, gender, income) and users' joint location status. The documents emphasize that all "self-reported" data would be processed, such as those found on social media.

Israel is having [strong discussions](#) on the safety of the technology and its usability. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is waging a battle with the Supreme Court to allow intelligence services to use infected people data tracked on the App.



The same is true in India, where the [dispute](#) between the government and the Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF) is still happening. IFF legally challenged the mandatory use of the App tracking called Aarogya Setu.

In Iceland, for example, the result has not been satisfactory. [According](#) to the MIT Technology Review, the country is one of the successful cases of the App implementation, research data and also detection of transmission between people. However, its use didn't bring the expected result, as it still requires human intervention to include data and phone calls to "control" the infected people.

The podcast "Dadocracia", from Data Privacy Brasil, talked about Contact Tracing on its [Chapter #8](#).

### **WHO launch two Applications to combat Coronavirus**

What you need to know...

- World Health Organization launches the WHO Academy App, aimed at healthcare professionals around the world.
- A second App, called WHO Info, handles information and reports in real time for the general public.
- The organization focuses on improving the App and introducing Contact Tracing as a tool for LDCs.

On May 13, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced the [launch](#) of two Apps to help in the fight against Coronavirus. The first is called WHO Academy App, designed to help healthcare professionals around the world and the second, WHO Info App, is aimed at the general public.

WHO Academy has extensive research material, training and virtual workshops. "The WHO is putting the power of information and knowledge directly into the hands of health professionals from all corners of the world," said Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the organization's Managing Director.

The App was developed from a study, carried out in early March, with 20 thousand health professionals from all over the world. The survey revealed that two-thirds of respondents feel they need to be better prepared on different topics involving the pandemic, such as infection control, case management, use of personal protective equipment, risk communication, among others.

People can download the [new platform](#) in different languages, such as Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

The second technology, called WHO Info App, was launched focusing on the population of all countries in the world. After the download, the user can find information in real time about the latest news and news about vaccines and treatments.



During a Reuters [interview](#), Bernardo Mariano, WHO's Head of Communication, said that the App still focuses on helping countries with fewer resources, as it informs and collects data to better understand regions with high-lethality due to COVID-19.

Mariano also said that the App is going to be adapted to different locations, with targeted information, and that Contact Tracing has been used by several countries and, therefore, should also be part of the platform.

Recently, InternetLab - an independent interdisciplinary research center, which promotes academic debate in the areas of law and technology - made a study on Government Apps aimed at Coronavirus and its privacy risks: [check it out](#).

### **Privacy at risk: Coronavirus infected are linked to LGBTQ + establishments in South Korea**

What you need to know...

- Country sent alert of data leak related to infected people.
- Local media points to a LGBTQ + group as cause of a new wave of infection.
- Mayor and Support Group reinforce the importance of protection and security of any data of groups that suffer discrimination.

While the world is looking for the best way and the best technology to fight the pandemic, South Korea faces the first warning of a [leakage of personal data](#) from patients with Coronavirus.

A symbol of efficiency in fighting the pandemic, South Korea has fewer than 11,000 confirmed cases and only 256 deaths. The region has been tracking and monitoring infected people, as well as conducting body temperature control. The use of masks is obligatory as are massive tests in the population. Thus, the country did not enter a lockdown.

However, a second wave of infections was reported [last Sunday](#), with 35 confirmed cases. Then, in just 48 hours, the number increased to 86 - 78 men and, of these, 72 between 20 and 30 years.

The outbreak [was linked](#) to several nightclubs in Itaewon, a capital's district. Although they do not describe themselves as LGBTQ + establishments, they were quickly identified as "gay clubs" on social media and on some local publications.

On May 11, during an interview, a member of the Ministry of Health named Yoon Tae-ho, alerted the population about the leakage of private data of those infected. "Spreading private information of patients or spreading unfounded rumors can harm citizens and is also a crime," he said of the possibility of criticism or hatred against a certain group of infected people.

Several reports published by the South Korean media have specified the age, region of infection, profession and workplace of patients diagnosed with Coronavirus. The person [responsible](#) for the

transmission is supposedly a 29-year-old man, who visited five different establishments on the same night.

Advocates of the cause soon arrived on the scene. South Korea's Solidarity for LGBT Human Rights Advocacy Group said in an [official statement](#) that revealing the patient's sexual orientation further increases the stigma of the disease, as well as homophobia.

In addition to South Korea, India's capital, New Delhi, also suffered from a [data leakage](#). A list of 10 names, phones and addresses was revealed on social media. The names would be of people linked to the Tablighi Jamaat - Islamic missionary movement - and, along with the private data, there were test results for COVID-19, part of them positive.

The event highlights the weakness of some tracking tools in relation to sensitive private data (e.g. inference about sexual orientation), as well as serving as a warning for discriminatory acts.

### **Immunity Passport: knowing more about its creation and features**

What you need to know...

- Governments discuss creating a Coronavirus immunity document
- Experts warn about increased discrimination with the creation of the "Immunity Passport"
- Special document for infected people can encourage the population to contract the virus
- Chile gives up creating "Immunity Cards"

Governments around the world are [discussing](#) the creation of an "immunity passport", a document that can be handed over to the population that has already been infected with COVID-19 and is then theoretically immune to the disease.

The subject is quite controversial and, among the warning points is the fact that it is still not possible to say that people infected with SARS-COV-2 really develop prolonged defense against the disease.

According to a [The Conversation publication](#), the Australian National University infectologist Sanjaya Sananayake said several infections never repeat, such as measles and smallpox, however, other infections such as influenza and tetanus work in another way.

"Most studies show that people who have recovered from the infection have antibodies to the virus. However, some of these people have very low levels of neutralizing antibodies in their blood, suggesting that cellular immunity may also be critical for recovery," said a spokesperson for the World Health Organization (WHO) in a [statement](#).

Another very sensitive aspect is the social one. Researchers believe that "passports" can lead people to become infected on purpose just to be free to leave their homes.



In a [study published](#) by The Lancet, public health specialist Alexandra Phelan said the document could cause problems even in the work market, where companies would give preference to immune people over those who can still become infected. In other words, the passport would only increase the damage already suffered by the population today.

"In countries without universal access to health care, those most encouraged to seek out the infection may also be those who are unable or hesitant to seek medical attention due to the cost and discriminatory access," mused Alexandra.

Among the countries that were about to start the documentation system was Chile, which [retreated](#) on May 11, giving in to warnings that immunity cards could encourage more infections and generate discrimination among the population.

Despite the controversial points, countries like the United States, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom and Brazil have not ruled out the creation of the document.