# THE DATA AND THE VIRUS
# REPORT #7

Nature publishes list of questions for the creation of Contact Tracing apps. Tracing technology is used in protests in the United States. Current epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, Latin America suffers from police repression and structural inequalities. Check this and other news in the third report of the project "The Data and the Virus".

**What will the post-pandemic world look like? See what some experts think.**

What you need to know...

> - Contact Tracing applications emerge around the world as a weapon against COVID-19
> - Populations from different countries are required to use Contact Tracing applications developed by the government
> - Economy undergoes changes in post pandemic
> - Buying behavior will also be different when Coronavirus passes

Since the beginning of the year, much has been said about "when this is all over", with thousands of possibilities about what the "post pandemic" world will be like.

Among the changes that we can signal and that are already becoming a reality around the world is the advancement of monitoring platforms. Surveillance technology has been used in our daily lives for years, whether by digital fingerprinting in the gym or in the office, through advertising of our consumer behavior or even by facial recognition cameras.

Since the beginning of the year, with the advancement of the new Coronavirus, such tools have multiplied around the world under the justification of fighting the pandemic, but not always observing the fundamental rights to privacy and data protection.

The NGO Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) published a text on what the post-pandemic world will look like and how the protection of our data could be at risk. In the publication, the NGO says that, at the beginning, there was an effort by public health authorities and governments to adopt modern and efficient means of Contact Tracing to control the spread and outbreak of COVID-19.

And so it was done: several countries took advantage of the "omnipresence" of cell phones to understand and control the steps of individuals, as was discussed in the previous reports of "The Data and the Virus". Some countries have adopted the technology voluntarily, such as the United Kingdom, several states in the United States and France.

"To no surprise, several autocratic countries, such as China, Iran and Turkey, have made it mandatory to download applications. Although the same behavior was not expected from India, the

country also bet on mandatory contact tracking technology. The country's lawyers raised red flags and argue that the application is unconstitutional ", said Bessma Momani, author of the publication.

The GICI text also warns that there is a strong inclination to make all applications mandatory, taking into account that voluntary downloading will prove to be ineffective. According to a [report](#) by the Big Data Institute in Oxford, at least 80% of mobile phone users in the region need to join the app for it to be really useful. So far the most successful voluntary approach is [Iceland's](#), with only 38% of the population using the technology.

"Increasingly, the global use of digital surveillance tools may be required of citizens to monitor their movements and this is a cause for concern. What harm would there be if our governments knew our whereabouts? Surveillance measures can become inefficient without the independent supervision of an auditor. Without adequate controls, they can become invasive, reaching the movements of political activists, critical journalists and political opponents. Finally, these applications can become enticing tools that governments want to keep beyond the containment of COVID-19 ", concludes the author.

In addition to the issue of data security and privacy through Contact Tracing applications and other monitoring tools, we can also say that the economy is no longer the same as it was by the end of 2019.

In another [publication](#), the Centre for International Governance Innovation brought together Bob Fay, research director for the digital economy, and Dan Ciuriak, senior researcher at the institution, to talk about how data changes the economy and how the new Coronavirus accelerated digital transformation.

''Early on in this century, a quiet revolution took place: businesses began putting more money and resources into developing things you can't see. Uber doesn't own cars. Airbnb doesn't own properties. Rather, these two companies have grown exponentially through their data and software.'' exemplified the NGO.

The publication shows the evolution that has been demonstrated in the market and that tends to be enhanced with the pandemic. Examples include physical stores that increasingly migrate to the digital environment, corporate offices giving way to Home Office, with occasional meetings that can be performed online or in co-workings, as well as rental services meeting the need for card and houses.

It is worth remembering that all this transformation includes changes in the sharing and use of personal data, whether from consumers or the companies themselves. Apparently we are ready to face the change in the economy, but are we already prepared to ensure the protection of this data?

**Nature publishes list of questions for the creation of ethically justified Contact Tracing applications**

What you need to know...

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- The list has 16 questions and is for developers, designers and companies
- Currently, more than 47 Contact Tracing applications work around the world
- The World Health Organization has made a list of best practices for Contact Tracing
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In the last week of May, Nature magazine gathered a group of experts to discuss guidelines on what should be done when creating or using a Contact Tracing application.

The discussion on digital tracking technologies is one of the hottest topics of the moment, due to the promise of being an efficient weapon in the fight against the new Coronavirus and for bringing up the risks to privacy and data protection in its use. Contact Tracing already has more than 47 applications worldwide, including countries like Japan, the United Kingdom, France and Australia.

Jessica Morley, Josh Cowls, Mariarosaria Taddeo and Luciano Floridi were responsible for the publication, which aims to help governments, public health agencies and suppliers in the development of ethically justifiable applications.

In summary, tracking applications in the fight against SARS-COV-2 work as follows: after the download, the platform starts to run on a cell phone. Through the use of geolocation data or Bluetooth, the user receives warnings whenever they spend time with someone infected with the virus and are also able to know if the location is free from Coronavirus or not. This way, they are informed if they should be in isolation or not.

"These digital interventions come at a price. The collection of potentially sensitive personal data threatens privacy, equality and justice. Even though COVID-19 applications are temporary, the rapid implementation of tracking technologies includes the risk of creating permanent health records, as well as records of people's movements and social interactions, over which they have little control, " said the publication.

While experts remain wary about application security, governments have pledged to protect data privacy. The giants Apple and Google, which have developed tracking technology that can be used in different countries, said that their platform does not require central storage, thus being more secure.

The temporary restriction of some fundamental rights and freedoms may be ethically justified in the context of hastening the end of the pandemic. Quarantining individuals, for example, helps prevent the spread of the disease. It can be argued that it is unethical not to use digital tracking applications when necessary. However, it depends a lot on the effectiveness of the application, the objective pursued, the type of system and the context in which it will be implemented.

Experts also warned: "Implementing an application without considering its broad ethical and social implications can be dangerous, expensive and useless. For example, Bluetooth signals that show the proximity of two people's cell phones are not a sure indicator of risk of infection - the two people can be in the same space, but physically separated by a wall. A high level of false positives for such an application can cause unjustified panic."

Still on acting in an ethical manner, the experts affirm that the Contact Tracing application must obey four principles: it must be necessary, proportionate, scientifically valid and with a fixed term. These principles are derived from the European Convention on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the United Nations Principles, which specify the provisions of the ICCPR and limit its application.

In order for the four principles to be followed, a list of 16 questions was created, which serve as a basis for questioning whether the creation of the application is really justified and made for designers, implementers and evaluators to execute the project in the most ethical way possible.

Among the questions on the list published by Nature are: "Is it really necessary?"; "Can users delete their data?"; "Is it equally accessible?" Check out the [full list](#).

The World Health Organization (WHO) also carried out a [study on the subject](#). In addition to warning about the danger of the leakage of personal data and the exposure of users' privacy, WHO also develops a list of principles to be followed.

Among the principles are: transparency, anonymization and minimization of users' personal data, security and disposal after use for the predefined purpose.

On June 4, Maria Paz Canales, one of the experts consulted for the execution of the WHO study, was with the coordinator of the project "The data and the virus" Rafael Zanatta. At the time, Contact Tracing was discussed, as well as its effectiveness and safety regarding user data.

**George Floyd case: Contact Tracing used to track protesters in Minnesota**

What you need to know...

- US government uses contact tracking to target protesters in the Minneapolis area
- EFF explains difference between manual tracking and tracking via app
- Actions can make the population stop using applications to fight the new Coronavirus

Since May 25, the date marked by the assassination of George Floyd, the streets of American cities and major cities in the world have been filled with anti-racist and anti-fascist demonstrations. Minneapolis, a city in the state of Minnesota and home to Floyd's murder, has faced peaceful and - in some cases - violent demonstrations.

According to the [american website](#) BGR, under the allegation of combating the violence of the demonstrations, some cities - including Minneapolis - are beginning to resort to digital contact tracing.

Minnesota Law Enforcement Commissioner John Harrington said during a [news conference](#) that the technology is being used to understand the profile of the protesters and whether they are also part of an organization.

As we've begun making arrests, we have begun analyzing the data of who we have arrested, and begun, actually, doing what you would think as almost pretty similar to our COVID. It's contact tracing. Who are they associated with? What platforms are they advocating for?

Tim Walz, the state governor, added the information that about 80% of the seized protesters are from outside Minnesota.

Without taking into account the data cited, or making analyzes around the subject, what draws attention is the use of Contact Tracing for something other than fighting the Coronavirus. Trackers need personal details, including detecting where one has been during a certain period of time, bringing a great alert to data security and privacy of the population.

The NGO Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) also [spoke on the subject](#), and warned of the danger of using Contact Tracing to control the lives of citizens and for any purpose other than fighting the pandemic. In addition, it points to the importance of public health authorities to practice rigorous care with the minimization and anonymization of data and care with privacy policies.

The publication also explains the difference between Digital Contact Tracing (via application) and manual contact tracing, done through interviews of professionals, and data collection that may be relevant for the control of the disease, for example.

''Interrogating arrested protesters about their beliefs and associations is a longstanding police practice. So is [social media](#) [surveillance](#) by police of dissident movements. These practices must be carefully restricted, lest they undermine our First Amendment rights to associate, assemble, and protest'', they explained.

The real concern, according to the EFF, is the crossing of data, along with the automation made by

other applications and data collected indiscriminately, bringing insecurity to the population and preventing everyone from using the applications to combat COVID -19.

The NGO also stresses the importance of anonymizing data, as well as its disposal. "No questioning about movements, activities and associations should be made. If something similar happens, people will stop cooperating and this will have serious consequences ", he concluded.

**Latin American countries suffer from structural inequality and police repression during the COVID-19 pandemic, say NGOs**

What you need to know...

> - COVID-19 pandemic triggered arrests and police repression in several Latin American countries
> - Structural inequality is evident during pandemic
> - Applications and technology can be decisive in the increase of discrimination among the population

In the last week of May, the independent newspaper Democracy Now published about authorities' abuses in the midst of the new Coronavirus pandemic crisis.

As the epicenter left Europe and the United States and arrived in Latin America, repression and imprisonment also increased in the region.

The vehicle interviewed Jorge Cuéllar, assistant professor specializing in Latin America and the Caribbean at Dartmouth College, in the United States, who is currently in El Salvador and talked about what the region has been through in recent months.

Cuéllar revealed that several people are being arrested due to the quarantine and sent to places with no hygiene and overcrowding. "A climate of intimidation was created for people who seek to carry out their daily tasks, such as going to the pharmacy or shopping at the supermarket. Everyone is vulnerable and there are more risks of being infected by the coronavirus in these containment centers where citizens are being taken away than by being released or at home" he said.

According to the interviewee, there are vast military blockades in the region in order to control the COVID-19 pandemic. "What is very strange about what is happening is that there is no clarity and transparent information about what is really happening. People are arrested and given inadequate treatment, with minimal hygiene conditions, trashed bathrooms and overcrowding, "he added.

Democracy Now also interviewed Louise Tillotson, a researcher at Amnesty International and a member of the team that created the [report](#) called "The authorities must protect people from COVID-19 instead of resorting to repressive measures."

The researcher revealed that the organization has received dozens of reports of abuse suffered in several countries, including Paraguay and Venezuela.

"Everything we have seen indicates that people living in poverty, homeless people, migrants and refugees are much more likely to suffer such punitive measures. We are seeing that COVID-19, as well as previous pandemics, amplifies structural discrimination. And, unfortunately, the most marginalized are the first targets of these punitive responses ", explained the researcher.

Social and regional inequalities have also been increasingly exposed in Brazil. While several applications appear to fight the virus, part of the population is marginalized and excluded from these processes due to lack of accessibility.

A [study](#) by the Heinrich Böll Foundation shows that the lack of adequate legal frameworks and institutions that can supervise the use of technologies during the pandemic are the biggest problems faced by a large part of the population.

"At this moment, data collection and classification are advancing exponentially, whether for research in the medical field and / or for surveillance in relation to social distance," said the publication.

The foundation also said that the pandemic leads us to think about the real meaning of privacy in a country like Brazil. It concluded: "The international scenario shows how the infinite database available to governments and companies based on our interactions with technologies can end up determining whether or not we will have access to respirators in a context of announced shortage of medical supplies. In the Brazilian case, there is no doubt that such systems would end up legitimizing the historical policy of genocide of populations that manifests itself in a number of other ways ".

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