

MYTHS & FACTS DIGITAL EXPOSURE NOTIFICATION

In an effort to provide public health officials with an additional tool to slow the spread of COVID-19, Apple and Google have entered a unique partnership to develop innovative, privacy-protected software that can notify individuals that may have come in contact a carrier of the virus. Since the April announcement, there has been confusion and misstatements surrounding the program. Here are the facts.



The Myths

Google/Apple will store this information for advertising purposes.

The technology will track the location of my phone and share that information.

This technology will use my device against my will.

The Facts

The gathered information is solely for the use of COVID-19 tracing and the system will be deleted when the crisis is over. There will be no monetization from this project.

There is no collection of location data and no record of where people are, but simply that they were near each other.

Participation is entirely voluntary. Each user has to consent to using the app and being part of the process.

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The Myths

Tech companies should not take the place of public health officials.

Manual contact tracers are doing this work already, so there is no need for exposure notification.

If I report that I tested positive for COVID-19, others will know it was me that exposed them to the virus.

I don't need to participate in this program, because others will.

The Facts

While Apple and Google have developed the technology, the application will be developed for and fully administered by public health officials.

This program is designed to supplement, not replace, manual contact tracers. Because the manual process can be labor intensive, imperfect, and time consuming, this innovative tech-oriented process can alleviate some of the challenges manual contact tracers face.

Users' identity will not be shared with others. When a user receives an exposure notification message, they will only know that at some point in the past two weeks they were exposed to someone who had tested positive. No date, time, or location data is revealed so you will be totally anonymous.

Participation is critical. Studies conducted in the U.K. (1) and in the U.S. (2) found that isolating confirmed cases and contacting exposed individuals could significantly reduce transmission rates.

1: https://cmmid.github.io/topics/covid19/reports/bbc_contact_tracing.pdf

2: <https://cosnet.bifi.es/wpcontent/uploads/2020/05/main.pdf>