

Latvia launches the first publicly available contact tracing app using Apple and Google API

Latvia has become the first country to launch a contact tracing app using the newly-available exposure notification APIs by Apple and Google. The app is intended to increase reaction time to potential exposure to COVID-19 to reduce spread and ultimately eradicate the virus.

As of May 29, the app, called "[Apturi Covid](#)," (*eng. – "stop covid"*), is available on iOS and Android to all two million residents of Latvia, with the code available for adaptation in other countries and communities.

"Apturi Covid" is a voluntary, decentralized, fully GDPR-compliant app. It uses Bluetooth technology to identify other nearby devices that also have the app installed. Individuals will only be notified if they have been in proximity of 2 meters (6 feet) to an individual for more than 15 minutes who has tested positive for COVID-19. They will receive a message asking them to self-isolate to prevent the further spread of the disease. Due to the decentralized and encrypted nature of the app, it aligns with EU regulations on data protection. The availability of the newly released exposure notification API by Google and Apple is a fundamental building block to ensure widespread use of the app.

Latvia is experiencing one of the lowest incidences of infection per capita in Europe, whilst simultaneously enforcing some of the lowest restrictions on movement. This was accomplished through combining early social distancing restrictions with extensive manual contact tracing. The app is an extension of this approach to combatting the coronavirus and is expected to become a valuable and time-saving tool used by Latvia's Center for Disease Control.

The app was built in under a month as the result of a pro-bono not-for-profit initiative with participants from the country's private sector and has earned national endorsement. While other country and state initiatives are underway to develop contact tracing apps, the Latvian "Apturi Covid" initiative is ready to share the code for use in other countries. If interested, please contact info@apturicovid.lv.

The "Apturi Covid" app is developed by representatives of the Latvian ICT sector, including the country's largest mobile operator – LMT; software development companies MAK IT, Autentica, and Zippy Vision; software testing service TestDevLab; and IT security consultancy IT Centrs. Various experts have participated from the academic, non-profit, and governmental sectors, including startup community representative Andris K. Berzins, the University of Latvia, Chancellery of the President of Latvia, the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (SPKC), the NATO Centre of Excellence for Strategic Communications, medical professionals, and epidemiologists.

More information:

info@apturicovid.lv

<https://www.apturicovid.lv/#en>