

Apple, Google to harness phones for virus infection tracking: 'We have to save lives'

POSTED APRIL 10, 2020, BY AP WIRE SERVICE



MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif. — Apple and Google launched a major joint effort to leverage smartphone technology to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

New software the companies plan to add to phones would make it easier to use Bluetooth wireless technology to track down people for who may have been infected by coronavirus carriers. The idea is to help national or regional governments roll out apps for so-called “contact tracing” that will run on iPhones and Android phones alike.

The technology works by harnessing short-range Bluetooth signals. Using the Apple-Google technology, contact-tracing apps would gather a record of other phones with which they came into close proximity. Such data can be used to alert others who might have been infected by known carriers of the novel coronavirus, although only in cases where the phones’ owners have installed the apps and agreed to share data with public-health authorities.

Software developers have already created such apps in countries including Singapore and China to try to contain the pandemic. In Europe, the Czech Republic says it will release such an app after Easter. Britain, Germany and Italy are also developing their own tracing tools.

Privacy and civil liberties activists have warned that such apps need to be designed so governments cannot abuse them to track their citizens. Apple and Google [said in a rare joint announcement](#) that user privacy and security are baked into the design of their plan.

[Read full article here...](#)