

## Publication

## Early Perceptions of COVID-19 Contact Tracing Apps in German-Speaking Countries: Comparative Mixed Methods Study

**JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)****ID** 4618942**Author(s)** Zimmermann, Bettina Maria; Fiske, Amelia; Prainsack, Barbara; Hangel, Nora; McLennan, Stuart; Buyx, Alena**Author(s) at UniBasel** [Zimmermann, Bettina](#) ; [Mc Lennan, Stuart Roger](#) ;**Year** 2021**Title** Early Perceptions of COVID-19 Contact Tracing Apps in German-Speaking Countries: Comparative Mixed Methods Study**Journal** Journal of Medical Internet Research**Volume** 23**Number** 2**Pages / Article-Number** e25525**Keywords** COVID-19; app; contact tracing; content analysis; digital surveillance; interview; interview study; newspaper content analysis; privacy; privacy paradox; surveillance; trust**Mesh terms** Adolescent; Adult; Aged; COVID-19, epidemiology; Contact Tracing, methods; Germany, epidemiology; Humans; Middle Aged; Mobile Applications; Perception; SARS-CoV-2, isolation & purification; Young Adult

The main German-speaking countries (Germany, Austria, and Switzerland) have implemented digital contact tracing apps to assist the authorities with COVID-19 containment strategies. Low user rates for these apps can affect contact tracing and, thus, its usefulness in controlling the spread of the novel coronavirus.; This study aimed to assess the early perceptions of people living in the German-speaking countries and compare them with the frames portrayed in the newspapers during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.; We conducted qualitative interviews with 159 participants of the SolPan project. Of those, 110 participants discussed contact tracing apps and were included in this study. We analyzed articles regarding contact tracing apps from 12 newspapers in the German-speaking countries.; Study participants perceived and newspaper coverage in all German-speaking countries framed contact tracing apps as governmental surveillance tools and embedded them in a broader context of technological surveillance. Participants identified trust in authorities, respect of individual privacy, voluntariness, and temporary use of contact tracing apps as prerequisites for democratic compatibility. Newspapers commonly referenced the use of such apps in Asian countries, emphasizing the differences in privacy regulation among these countries.; The uptake of digital contact tracing apps in German-speaking countries may be undermined due to privacy risks that are not compensated by potential benefits and are rooted in a deeper skepticism towards digital tools. When authorities plan to implement new digital tools and practices in the future, they should be very transparent and proactive in communicating their objectives and the role of the technology-and how it differs from other, possibly similar, tools. It is also important to publicly address ethical, legal, and social issues related to such technologies prior to their launch.

**Publisher** JMIR Publications**ISSN/ISBN** 1439-4456 ; 1438-8871**URL** <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/pmc7872326/>**edoc-URL** <https://edoc.unibas.ch/82844/>**Full Text on edoc** No;

**Digital Object Identifier DOI** 10.2196/25525

**PubMed ID** <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/33503000>

**ISI-Number** WOS:000616270600003

**Document type (ISI)** Journal Article