

## Publication

### A Novel Risk and Crisis Communication Platform to Bridge the Gap Between Policy Makers and the Public in the Context of the COVID-19 Crisis (PubliCo): Protocol for a Mixed Methods Study

#### **Journal Article (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)**

**ID** 4634933

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**Year** 2021

**Title** A Novel Risk and Crisis Communication Platform to Bridge the Gap Between Policy Makers and the Public in the Context of the COVID-19 Crisis (PubliCo): Protocol for a Mixed Methods Study

**Journal** JMIR Research Protocols

**Volume** 10

**Number** 11

**Pages / Article-Number** e33653

**Keywords** COVID-19; COVID-19 questionnaires; COVID-19 surveys; coronavirus; disease outbreaks; health literacy; policy making; qualitative methods; risk and crisis communication

Since the end of 2019, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on people around the globe. As governments institute more restrictive measures, public adherence could decrease and discontent may grow. Providing high-quality information and countering fake news are important. However, we also need feedback loops so that government officials can refine preventive measures and communication strategies. Policy makers need information-preferably based on real-time data-on people's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions to public health messages and restrictive measures. PubliCo aims to foster effective and tailored risk and crisis communication as well as provide an assessment of the risks and benefits of prevention and control measures, since their effectiveness depends on public trust and cooperation.; Our project aims to develop a tool that helps tackle the COVID-19 infodemic, with a focus on enabling a nuanced and in-depth understanding of public perception. The project adopts a transdisciplinary multi-stakeholder approach, including participatory citizen science.; We aim to combine a literature and media review and analysis as well as empirical research using mixed methods, including an online survey and diary-based research, both of which are ongoing and continuously updated. Building on real-time data and continuous data collection, our research results will be highly adaptable to the evolving situation.; As of September 2021, two-thirds of the proposed tool is operational. The current development cycles are focusing on analytics, user experience, and interface refinement. We have collected a total of 473 responses through PubliCo Survey and 22 diaries through PubliCo Diaries.; Pilot data show that PubliCo is a promising and efficient concept for bidirectional risk and crisis communication in the context of public health crises. Further data are needed to assess its function at a larger scale or in the context of an issue other than COVID-19.; DERR1-10.2196/33653.

**Publisher** JMIR Publications

**ISSN/ISBN** 1929-0748

**edoc-URL** <https://edoc.unibas.ch/86190/>

**Full Text on edoc** Available;

**Digital Object Identifier DOI** 10.2196/33653

**PubMed ID** <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/34612823>

**ISI-Number** WOS:000750050500029

**Document type (ISI)** Journal Article