

<https://www.wired.com/story/why-contact-tracing-apps-not-slowed-covid-us/>

The idea of contact tracing is nothing new to healthcare providers, but it is a slow and tedious task. The sheer scale of the COVID-19 meant that many health departments would be overrun. To deal with the impending outbreak, developers rushed to create contact tracing apps to automate the process. This process is not without difficulties. Division among states, lack of infrastructure, and lack of trust all contribute to the failures of contact tracing apps.

Some European countries have had some success with contact tracing apps due to a national plan. Many of these countries are smaller and more centralized. The US is very large and divided. There is very little national unity. Many states are attempting to carry out their plans, but counties within the states have their own plan. Even national unity might not be enough. A study at Oxford University showed that 60 percent of the population would need to use an app for it to work.

Privacy Concerns have also been rampant. Many people are afraid that these apps will run silently in the background of their phones. They are afraid that they will not be able to turn the app off and that people will be able to get access to their information. These fears were not unfounded as some apps were found to be sending location information to third parties.

Contact tracing is meaningless without efficient testing. Tests are in short supply, and there isn't consistent guidance on who should get a test. Even traditional contact tracing has been slowed by this.

All in all, using smart phones to automate contact tracing seemed like an innovative idea. Unfortunately, the political climate and compartmentalized nature of the US doomed it from the start. A lack of any kind of national plan meant that states, cities, and counties were left to solve the contact tracing problem on their own. Even with a national plan, contact tracing app most likely will not work due to a lack of trust in the apps and leadership.

- The fragmented nature of the US has made the implantation of a contact tracing app difficult.
- Many people don't trust contact tracing apps to keep their information private.
- A lack of testing equipment and infrastructure has made contact tracing ineffective.