



Dear IA friends,

I hope you and your loved ones are well. I want to thank you all for the excellent contributions you have sent me about the corona related apps in your areas. I sincerely apologize for not replying sooner, I hope to explain some of the reasons behind that in this e-mail.

We've been quite busy with this topic. Allow me to give you an overview:

On April 6, the Outbreak Management Team (OMT) that advises the Cabinet on COVID-19 measures, asked the Ministry of Health to explore use of mobile technology to support the public health authorities in their source- and contact tracing work, to reach more people faster.

On April 7 the Minister of Health wrote to parliament that he would do just that. On April 8 parliament accepted a motion that asked us to take into account the proportionality of use of this technology, as well as guarantees for privacy and security. Public trust in this technology is essential.

On April 11th we published a public RFI on TenderNed asking for smart solutions to apply mobile technology to support the pubic health authorities work. Since this was the Friday before Easter weekend, and the deadline was the day after Easter Monday, we expected about 200 proposals. On the 14th, we had received 750 submissions, 660 of which were proposals. We decided to focus on contact tracing proposals leaving us with 176 proposals.

On April 15, we did a first selection, based on deployment readiness, privacy approach and availability to be publicly discussed and tested in a weekend Appathon. This left us with 63 proposals. On April 16, groups of experts from public health, human rights, technology, epidemiology and behaviour assessed these proposals, where all proposals that everyone agreed was not ready to be tested were dismissed. This left us with 8 potential solutions to be tested that weekend, we invited them to join out Appathon. One declined the invitation, as they couldn't meet the (incredibly short) deadlines.

With the other 7, we held an appathon. That meant that groups of experts could interview the developing teams, ask them detailed questions about how their solution worked, what the logic was, how it respected privacy, how secure it was, etc. And give them suggestions on how to improve their solution. The 7 used this feedback to improve their solution and do another pitch the next day. All 7 made their source code public. This was all broadcast live on YouTube (you can binge on this on YouTube.com/user/MinVWS), with over 90k viewers (5000+ concurrent on day 1, 2800 concurrent on day 2). Also, the public could send in their questions to a special e-mail address during the event (1300+ mails received, with multiple questions and suggestions) and vote on usability aspects of each proposal (23500 votes sent in).

Parallel, KPMG did (limited) security (pen)tests and source code reviews, the Privacy Authority reviewed the compliance to privacy regulations, the National Lawyer did a (limited) privacy assessment, the National Scientific Health Council held a debate on the use of apps to fight corona and the effectiveness of that, a large developers community participated reviewing the code and claims made.

This was all set up 3 days in advance and produced by an ad-hoc team from the MoH, other Ministries (including Economic Affairs, Defence, Foreign Affairs) and other partners.

The independent tests showed that none of the proposals were secure enough and respected privacy enough to be deployed. The public discussions generated a huge amount of input and knowledge about how mobile tech should be used to support public health work in this crisis, and the legal requirements and technical translations necessary. All this in less then a week, on a huge scale. As for the conclusion, it depends on who you ask. Media assumed that the result of the appathon would be a winner. But this was still only the 'information' phase. We hear that solutions are already working abroad, so why reinvent the wheel. We thoroughly challenged that assumption in the Dutch context. And learned a lot. The next phase is that the Public Health Authorities will expand on their requirements, drawing from the input that was generated this weekend. A team of top-experts will be gathered to start the open source development project, and a multi-disciplinary team of scientists will look at vindende of what kind of technology-support work, how behavioral aspects factor into this and how the technology would need to fit into the broader comprehensive measures. Also, a legal taskforce will be looking into the legal safeguards to make sure this technology (if any is used) is temporary and cannot be misused (for instance an employer demanding you show your status).

As you can see, a lot is happening here. It was a VERY intense week and very publicly intense weekend, where we had 17 million virologists and 17 million app developers looking over our shoulders because we invited them all to do so. We strongly believe in this transparant approach, and to publicly 'fail' in finding a solution that meets all our strict requirements is something very thrilling and vulnerable. But, for us it is the only way.

Your contributions will help us put our national developments in the proper context, and help us to give you feedback on the progress we have made in relation we what's happening in your countries.

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We will continue to use your contributions to make an overview of what happens around the world, and probably will be seeking collaboration on different levels soon. What this will look like, we don't know yet, but I'll keep you posted.

See https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/coronavirus-app for more info, documents, links to source code, test reports, etc.

Met vriendelijke groet, warm regards and stay well and safe,

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