POSTER – APPS AGAINST THE SPREAD: PRIVACY IMPLICATIONS AND USER ACCEPTANCE OF COVID-19-RELATED SMARTPHONE APPS ON THREE CONTINENTS

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Paper Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has fueled the development of smartphone applications to assist disease management. Many "corona apps" require widespread adoption to be effective, which has sparked public debates about the privacy, security, and societal implications of government-backed health applications. We conducted a representative online study in Germany (n = 1003), the US (n = 1003), and China (n = 1019) to investigate user acceptance of corona apps, using a vignette design based on the contextual integrity framework. We explored apps for contact tracing, symptom checks, quarantine enforcement, health certificates, and mere information. Our results provide insights into data processing practices that foster adoption and reveal significant differences between countries, with user acceptance being highest in China and lowest in the US. Chinese participants prefer the collection of personalized data, while German and US participants favor anonymity. Across countries, contact tracing is viewed more positively than quarantine enforcement, and technical malfunctions negatively impact user acceptance.