



# Multidimensionale Risks in the XXI Century

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## **Privacy violation risk in COVID-19 digital contact tracing: Italian app users' perception versus app developers' conceptualization**

Among the many different elements and phenomena that surrounded the COVID-19 pandemic, digital contact tracing has been a largely discussed one. Scholars from many disciplines wrote about the benefits and harms of using digital technologies to speed up and make the process of tracking positive patients' contacts more reliable. One of the main topics covered by social scientists has been the risk of privacy violation that this technological solution could have on users. As well, national public institutions and corporations largely discussed this risk while developing the protocols for the tracing apps' implementation. This research aims at studying whether such centrality of privacy preservation transferred also on users once the digital contact tracing app became available on Italian digital stores. Thanks to a web scraping technique, almost 23.5 thousand app reviews have been downloaded from the page of "Immuni", the Italian contact tracing app, on the Google Play Store. Among this large number of reviews, the ones containing the word "privacy" have been selected to create a database with around 1.1 thousand cases. Sentiment and thematic analysis are performed on this database to understand the users' perception of the risk of privacy violation by digital contact tracing. Moreover, what emerges from the analysis of users' perception is compared with the conceptualization of privacy violation risks by the actors involved in the app's design. The results will offer interesting evidence on one of the most discussed topics in digital contact tracing and shed light on differences and similarities of risk perception between the general public of users and a restricted pool of experts who developed the technological solution.

*Digital contact tracing, privacy, tracing app, COVID-19*