EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE, I'LL BE WATCHING YOU.

(UN)MAKING SENSE OF ALGORITHMIC THROUGH COUNTERSURVEILLANCE MEASUREMENTS IN THE HEALTHCARE

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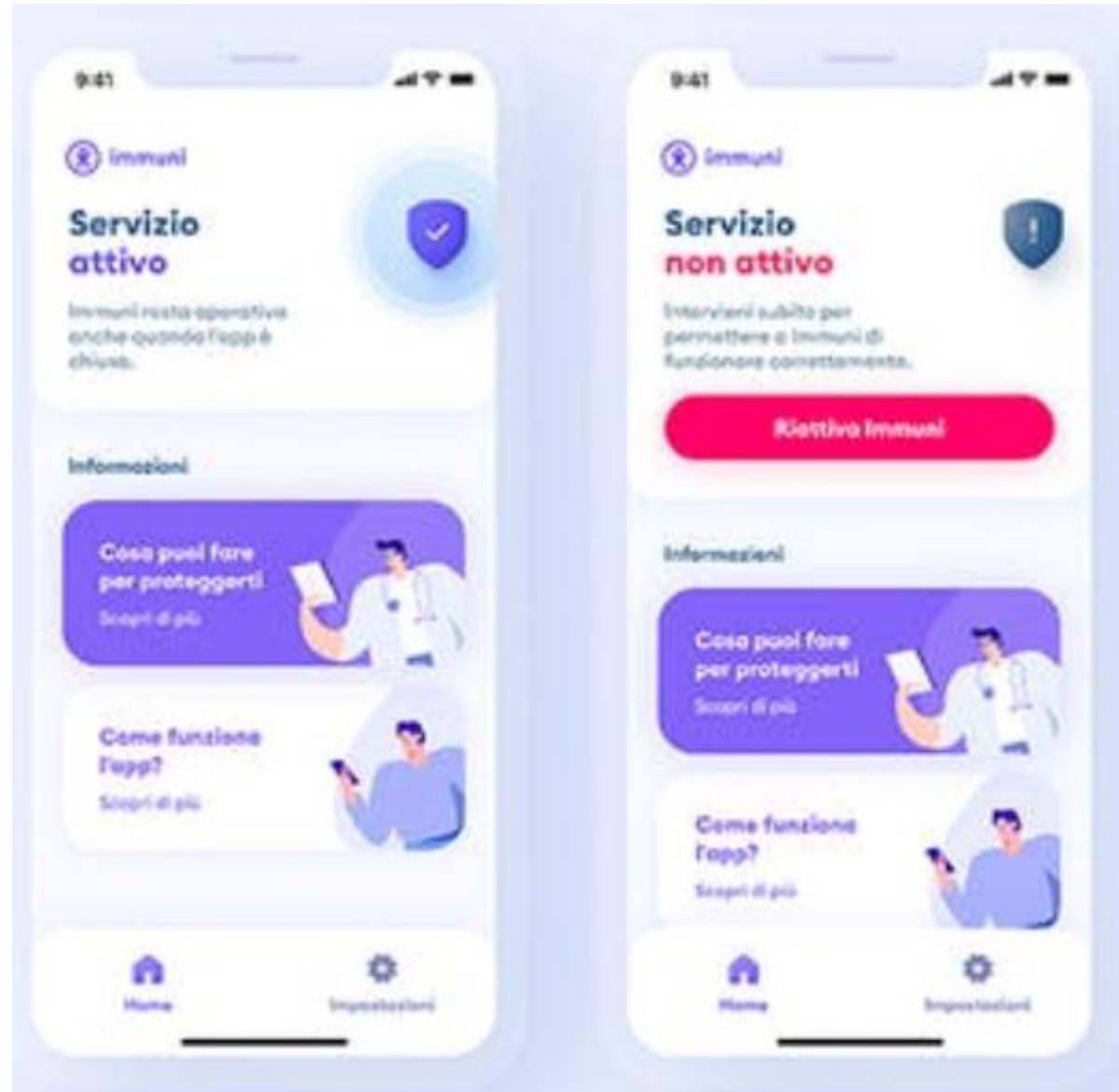
COUNTERSURVEILLANCE

Countersurveillance is the practice of making surveillance activities of institutions difficult or implementing technologies to evade surveillance altogether. Countersurveillance achieves its goal by subverting various components of the surveillance process (Wood, Thompson 2018) and it has many applications. It can be used to protect privacy, civil liberties, and against abuses of surveillance. Additionally, it may be employed to push surveillance systems beyond their breaking point and in doing so it identifies potential vulnerabilities and points of error.

APP IMMUNI

The official exposure notification app of the Italian government, developed by the Extraordinary Commissioner for the COVID-19 Emergency, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry for Innovation Technology and Digitalization.

Since June 2021 the App is one of the access points to get the EU Digital COVID Certificate, a digital document implemented at EU level to facilitate safe free movement of the European citizens during the pandemic.

More than 21 million people downloaded Immuni and roughly 194.000 notifications have been sent.

...THE BIG FIASCO?

However, and despite its promises, Immuni came under fire also for lack of user support. The main problem is that contact tracing requires a strict and unambiguous organization, while Immuni has showed confusion, scarce information and often worsened the already complicated scenario. Additionally, many devices currently in use are running older versions of iOS and Android software, while others are not able to run the app.

The digital sphere, and particularly social networks, are enabling individuals to monitor and countersurveil other top-down health measures.

METHODOLOGY

Research Goal

The goal of the research is to explore how, and if, Italian citizens adopted countersurveillance measurements towards the Immuni contact tracing app. We started questioning in what way people negotiate official surveillance strategies and also adopt them as their own, modifying them for their circumstances and initiating forms of countersurveillance on themselves and others (e.g., Trottier, 2012).

Research Questions

- In what way do surveillance practices and imaginaries are related to the Italian contact tracing app?
- Is the online audience proposing an alternative body of knowledge related to health-veillance?
- What role can digital sphere play in promoting form of countersurveillance?

Nome	Voti	Commenti	Periodo	Link
Il MIT sta tracciando e valutando tutte le app Covid 19	673	521	2020	https://redd.it/hfghil
L'app di tracking "Immuni" per gestire i contagi da coronavirus è closed source, e perché questo è un importante problema	1k	375	2020	https://www.reddit.com/r/italy/comments/g4r7d5/lapp_di_tracking_immuni_per_gestire_i_contagi_da/
Cosa ne pensate di questa ignoranza generale dell'utente medio sui social riguardo la privacy	251	152	2021	https://redd.it/h83lzx
Scaricherete l'app Immuni? Perché sì e perché no?	43	126	2020	https://www.reddit.com/r/italy/comments/gqihtn/scaricherete_lapp_immuni_perché_si_e_perché_no/
Chi ha ucciso l'app Immuni e perché	16	93	2021	https://www.reddit.com/r/italy/comments/nu9m5z/chi_ha_ucciso_lapp_immuni_e_perché/
Immuni e consumo energetico	23	2	2021	https://redd.it/h9r3q7
Flop app Immuni!	12	4	2021	https://redd.it/ln8tze
App Immuni: come si usa e come funziona – Guida dettagliata	5	5	2020	https://redd.it/gvwdnn

CATEGORIES (ANALYSIS)

The data from Reddit was analyzed using the template analysis (King, 1997). We applied *a priori* themes (themes that are have been identified in advance of coding) sinche the research project has started out with the assumption that certain aspects of the research question being investigated should be focused on (Brooks, Kinkg 2014). Particularly, we explored the culture of countersurveillance measure by mapping users' discourse and comments on subreddits, dedicated to the topic of App Immuni.

We look at comments adopting three analytical categories proposed by Lyon:
Negotiation; Responsivness; Initiatory

(TEMPORARY) FINDINGS

<u>Negotiation:</u> capacity to act, to engage in, and to (not)legitimate surveillance practices exercised through the use of the Immuni contact tracing.

<u>Responsiviness:</u> suggests all the type of protection installed - or adopted - from unwanted control from the national agencies

<u>Initiatory:</u> We refer both to the counter-measurement adopted to not being monitored and the possible role played by user in pragmatically change the surveillance system

NEGOTIATION

One of the most relevant chinks in Immuni is the notification system. Most of the time the app doesn't report a potential contact until the user launches the app. On the other hand, tracing apps might lead to false positives or false negatives alerts

there may be false positives in fact the app collects data to "calibrate" the distances on the BLE. I don't feel like quarantining myself "by mistake".

the BLE is not a reliable system to steal precise distances, the same creators of Bluetooth said so.

I was going to take a test and in line then I received the notification that I had been in contact with a positive ... what useless

And ironically, the app doesn't allow people to reach a physician or get test for Covid in quick time. This worsened and already complicated scenario.

The app sent me a notification but they don't allow me to get a test, unless you are dying. So what should I do?

RESPONSIVINESS

Mapping the comments online, the following aspect have been highlighted:

- the exposure alert may not correspond to real risks because some exposures happened in contexts with adequate health safeguards

- the epidemiological and operational analytics in Immuni backend, is not sufficiently protect. According to online comments, it is necessary avoiding any possible reidentification of data subjects, informing users about the specific types of data processing with such analytics and which data are collected for different categories of data subjects;

- make the privacy information notice and the alert more legible, considering that also elderly can (or must) use the app;
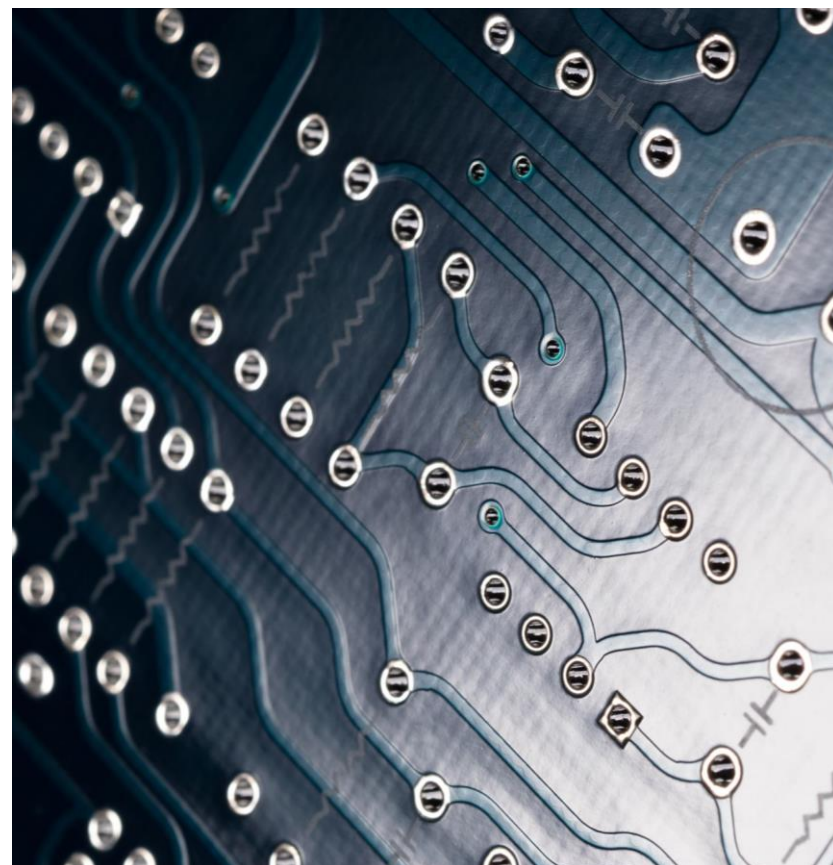
But most of the reactions concern the privacy.

- *The fact that the data is deleted on December 31st seems ridiculous to me, what if the pandemic continues? They will make a law to extend the validity of data retention. And then who guarantees me that data will be canceled for sure?*

- *No, I don't trust what ends up in the hands of the Italian state and the less information they have the better.*

- *I prefer to live in a democratic state where it is possible to die of a pandemic that we have not generated, than to live in a police state where you have trouble criticizing the government or you are in trouble.*

Ma infatti. Sono stime di laboratorio un po' datate ma le ho trovate comunque una guida migliore del semplice tirare ad indovinare. Per cautela ho considerato il valore più basso.

Se vuole migliorare la stima sarò felice di commentare le sue fonti.

⬆ 1 ⬇ Condividi ⋯

goldarkrai · 1a fa
Roma

Sì ma non mi dia del lei ahah

⬆ 1 ⬇ Condividi ⋯

wu_ming2 **AUTORE** · 1a fa

Abitudine.

⬆ 1 ⬇ Condividi ⋯

flauxsis · 1a fa

Senza aprire un altro thread, vorrei agganciarmi al più recente sull' app Immuni per porre timidamente una domanda. Sui quasi tre milioni di download ad oggi, tenuto conto che per avere una qualche utilità dovrebbero arrivare a dodici, quanti pensate siano stati fatti per curiosità senza che seguisse un effettivo uso dell'app? Insomma quanti la scaricano e la mollano subito dopo?

⬆ 1 ⬇ Condividi ⋯

wu_ming2 **AUTORE** · 1a fa · *modificato 1a fa*

In realtà non va usata ma solo attivata. Sarebbe interessante sapere quanti l'hanno poi disattivata.

Piuttosto ho scorso il documento ECDC riguardo la funzione di queste app e giustamente considerano il problema del funzionamento transnazionale. Credo debba essere il prossimo passo.

⬆ 2 ⬇ Condividi ⋯

INITIATORY

Other poeple were showing an individual response to the reccomended measurement

I prefer to keep my distance and take my precautions, I am not a person in contact with others people, I will not go to aperitifs, I do not go to the gym, I am not in contact with masses of people, indeed apart from shopping, with very few people

Healthcare operators recommend different approaches when their patients receive an alert by Immuni.

My doctor told me to ignore it!!
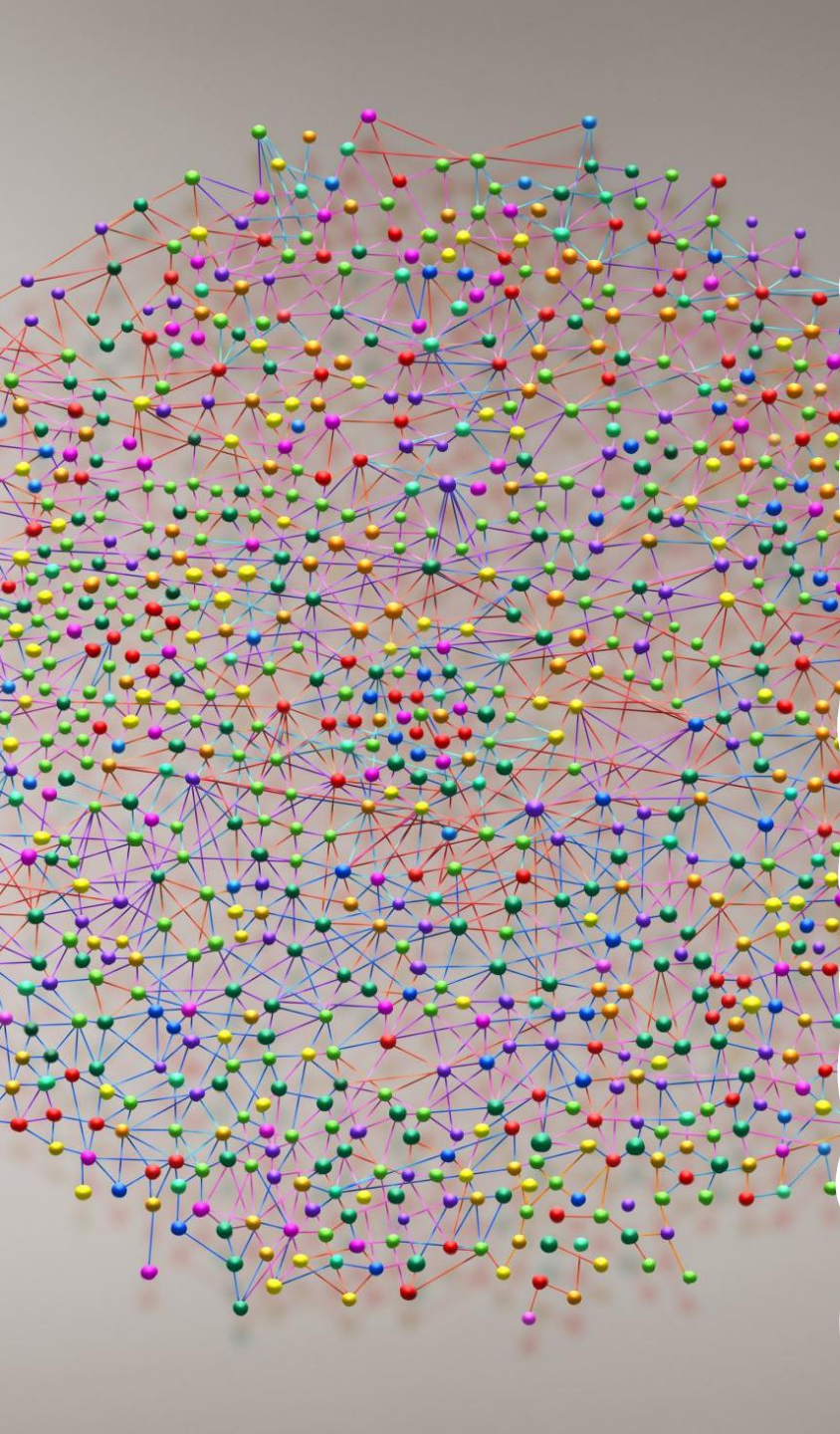
(IN) CONCLUSION

The digital sphere, and particularly social networks, are enabling individuals to monitor and countersurveil other top-down health measures.

The relationship between users/individuals and algorithms is far from being static. More accurately, algorithms are not a simple input, a line of code or sequences automated because they are shaped and mediated by social factors. Different authors (Seaver 2017; Introna 2016; Kitchin 2017; Liu Graham 2021) conceptualized algorithms as sociotechnical assemblage, focusing on how users *engage* (Brayne, Christin, 2020), *interact* (Knorr-Cetina 1999), *perceive* and *image* (Bucher, 2017) with them.

Every breath you take
Every move you make
Every bond you break
Every step you take

I'll be watching you

Every move you make
Every vow you break
Every smile you fake
Every claim you stake

I'll be watching you

GRAZIE!!

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