

# “You can’t just give people more data and expect them to act differently” | MIT Technology Review

By Lindsay Muscato

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Digital contact tracing apps first emerged early in the pandemic. They’d let you know if you’d been around anyone who had tested positive, and they worked on a regular personal smartphone. So far, they haven’t been a silver bullet, and they’ve faced criticism over usability, privacy, and more. But they’re low-cost tools based on technology already in our pockets. Do they have a role now, as cases of covid-19 continue to spike, especially in the US?

I spoke about these issues with Rajeev Venkayya, who served as the White House’s biodefense advisor under George W. Bush and was responsible for that administration’s national strategy for pandemic preparedness. After that, he was the director of vaccine delivery at the Gates Foundation. He now heads the vaccine business of Takeda, a Japanese pharmaceutical company that is hoping to manufacture Novavax’s vaccine candidate.

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