

Student coronavirus tracking website tops nearly 1.4 million views from 193 countries

March 17 2020, by Fariss Samarrai



Computer science students James Yun and Soukarya Ghosh are the creators of the public service website TrackCorona. Credit: Dan Addison, University Communications

[TrackCorona](#), a COVID-19 tracking website developed by two

University of Virginia students, James Yun and Soukarya Ghosh, and friends at Virginia Tech and Stanford University, is proving to be a valuable public service for anyone who wants to know more about the development of the pandemic. The website went live in early February with only a smattering of clicks by people who already knew about the site. Now, more than 300,000 people in 193 countries have visited the website about 1.4 million times. "We're averaging more than 40,000 users per day for the last week, with a record 50,000 users on March 12," said Ghosh, a third-year computer science and mathematics major who helped lead development of the site. "We're on trajectory for 50,000 more on the 16th."

TrackCorona provides up-to-date information about the spread of the virus, including infection and [mortality rates](#), recovery rates and locations by country, with links to the latest news and accurate information. The [student](#) team uses data from the World Health Organization, the U.S. Center for Disease Control and other infectious disease information sources. The data is made visual with a near-real-time map that displays the growth of the pandemic.

The students have consulted with several UVA faculty members in the development of their site, seeking to optimize the quality of the data and information.

Dr. Christopher Holstege, director of UVA Student Health, is serving as a contact to the students for medical questions. Wladek Minor, a professor of molecular physiology and biology physics, has offered the students an opportunity to co-write a research paper analyzing the spread of COVID-19. David Leblang, a professor of politics and public policy, has proposed a research role for the students in a study on the cascading effects of the pandemic. And Bryan Lewis, an epidemiologist at UVA's Biocomplexity Institute, has offered advice and a summer internship.

Fellow students also have proposed ideas to Yun and Ghosh and suggested sources for reliable information about the virus and its spread.

"It's not every day that you get to work on something with this large of an audience and potentially save lives," Yun, a fourth-year computer science major, said. "Being part of this startup-like journey has taught me how to manage exponential user growth, seek funding and deal with the occasional cyberattack."

This summer Yun will begin work as a software engineer at Capital One, where he says he will use the skills he's "picked up along the way," in his classes and through development of the website.

"TrackCorona is a visually compelling website, well designed, user-friendly, full of relevant information," epidemiologist Bryan Lewis said. "The team has done a nice job of creating this, especially considering their busy schedules as students. It is a form of citizen science that is valuable to the community."

TrackCorona is a nominee for the Social Good of the Year award by the Charlottesville Business Innovation Council; as well as for Innovator of the Year; and Student Entrepreneurs of the Year awards. The students are seeking funding to keep the site operating, as costs for cloud computing and other resources are running about \$350 per day.

"Doing this work has been very fulfilling," Ghosh said. "I already had a strong urge to do work that would benefit the welfare of the public, and this experience has further engrained and confirmed that for me. I hope to continue to do similar work in my career after UVA, using the skills I have learned here to make an even bigger impact."

Provided by University of Virginia

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