



The G7 Research Group presents the

2020 G7 Virtual Summit Final Compliance Report

17 March 2020 to 6 May 2021

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“We have meanwhile set up a process and there are also independent institutions monitoring which objectives of our G7 meetings we actually achieve. When it comes to these goals we have a compliance rate of about 80%, according to the University of Toronto. Germany, with its 87%, comes off pretty well. That means that next year too, under the Japanese G7 presidency, we are going to check where we stand in comparison to what we have discussed with each other now. So a lot of what we have resolved to do here together is something that we are going to have to work very hard at over the next few months. But I think that it has become apparent that we, as the G7, want to assume responsibility far beyond the prosperity in our own countries. That’s why today’s outreach meetings, that is the meetings with our guests, were also of great importance.”

Chancellor Angela Merkel, Schloss Elmau, 8 June 2015

G7 summits are a moment for people to judge whether aspirational intent is met by concrete commitments. The G7 Research Group provides a report card on the implementation of G7 and G20 commitments. It is a good moment for the public to interact with leaders and say, you took a leadership position on these issues — a year later, or three years later, what have you accomplished?

Achim Steiner, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme,
in G7 Canada: The 2018 Charlevoix Summit

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9. Health: Online Platforms

“We will coordinate with online platforms to maximize public access to the latest correct and relevant official information, in recognition that millions of citizens receive information and news via social media.”

G7 Leaders’ Statement

Assessment

	No Compliance	Partial Compliance	Full Compliance
Canada			+1
France			+1
Germany			+1
Italy			+1
Japan			+1
United Kingdom			+1
United States			+1
European Union			+1
Average	+1.00 (100%)		

Background

The global response to the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of leveraging all available measures to protect people at risk from COVID-19.¹⁷⁸¹ This includes coordinating with online platforms and utilizing social media to provide citizens with the latest credible information on the pandemic.¹⁷⁸² At previous G7/G8 summits, the importance of coordinating with online platforms and social media has been recognized to help promote an open, free and secure digital transformation.¹⁷⁸³

At the 2011 Deauville Summit, the G8 leaders recognized that the Internet has become a valuable information and education source for citizens.¹⁷⁸⁴ They noted that Internet technologies can help improve government efficiency, the provision of services, and enhancing relations with citizens.¹⁷⁸⁵

At the 2013 Lough Erne Summit, the G8 leaders adopted the G8 Open Data Charter in recognition of the global proliferation of technology, social media and information.¹⁷⁸⁶ They stated that this global movement “contains enormous potential to create more accountable, efficient, responsive, and effective governments and business, and to spur economic growth.”¹⁷⁸⁷ They committed to releasing open data on government and business operations, noting that citizens expect free access to information and services electronically.¹⁷⁸⁸

¹⁷⁸¹ G7 Leaders’ Statement, G7 Information Centre (Toronto) 16 March 2020. Access Date: 21 December 2020. <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2020usa/covid-200316.html>.

¹⁷⁸² G7 Leaders’ Statement, G7 Information Centre (Toronto) 16 March 2020. Access Date: 21 December 2020. <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2020usa/covid-200316.html>.

¹⁷⁸³ Biarritz Strategy for an Open, G7 Information Centre (Toronto) 26 August 2019. Access Date: 21 December 2020. <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2019biarritz/biarritz-strategy-for-digital-transformation.html>.

¹⁷⁸⁴ Deauville Declaration: Internet, G7 Information Centre (Toronto) 26 May 2011. Access Date: 21 December 2020. <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2011deauville/2011-internet-en.html>.

¹⁷⁸⁵ Deauville Declaration: Internet, G7 Information Centre (Toronto) 26 May 2011. Access Date: 21 December 2020. <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2011deauville/2011-internet-en.html>.

¹⁷⁸⁶ G8 Open Data Charter, G7 Information Centre (Toronto) 18 June 2013. Access Date: 21 December 2020. <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2013lougherne/lough-erne-open-data.html>.

¹⁷⁸⁷ G8 Open Data Charter, G7 Information Centre (Toronto) 18 June 2013. Access Date: 21 December 2020. <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2013lougherne/lough-erne-open-data.html>.

¹⁷⁸⁸ G8 Open Data Charter, G7 Information Centre (Toronto) 18 June 2013. Access Date: 21 December 2020. <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2013lougherne/lough-erne-open-data.html>.

At the 2016 Ise-Shima Summit, the G7 leaders adopted the Charter for a Digitally Connected World, recognizing that the rapid evolution and spread of Internet technologies has created new opportunities for cooperation and addressing global challenges.¹⁷⁸⁹ They affirmed that the historic shift towards the digitally connected view requires promoting and protecting the free flow of information.¹⁷⁹⁰

At the 2019 Biarritz Summit, the G7 leaders adopted the Biarritz Strategy for an Open, Free and Secure Digital Transformation.¹⁷⁹¹ They recognized that the Internet and related technologies have “brought new ways of empowering all individuals and communities, and provided access to an unprecedented body of information and knowledge.”¹⁷⁹²

On 16 March 2020, under the U.S. presidency, G7 leaders met virtually to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time, they expected to meet again in three months at their regularly scheduled summit on 10-12 June 2020, which was later postponed indefinitely.

Commitment Features

The G7 members agreed to “coordinate with online platforms to maximize public access to the latest correct and relevant official information, in recognition that millions of citizens receive information and news via social media.”

The first component of the commitment is “coordinating with online platforms.” These coordination efforts must also “maximize public access to the latest correct and relevant official information.” “Coordinate” is defined as “to bring into a common action, movement, or condition.”¹⁷⁹³ An online platform is understood as “a digital service that facilitates interactions between two or more distinct but interdependent sets of users (whether firms or individuals) who interact through the service via the Internet.”¹⁷⁹⁴ To maximize is “to increase to a maximum,” or to increase to “the greatest quantity or value attainable.”¹⁷⁹⁵ Public access is understood as perceptible and exposed to a general view.¹⁷⁹⁶ Information is defined as “knowledge obtained from investigation, study or instruction” and may include intelligence, news, facts, or data.¹⁷⁹⁷ The information must also be official, correct, and relevant, meaning it is “authoritative” or “relating to an authority or public body and its duties, actions, and responsibilities.”¹⁷⁹⁸

This commitment continues by stating that coordination efforts will be done in recognition that millions of citizens receive information and news via social media.” To recognize is to “acknowledge formally” and it

¹⁷⁸⁹ Charter for the Digitally Connected World (Toronto) April 30 2016. Access Date: 21 December 2020. <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/ict/2016-ict-charter.html>.

¹⁷⁹⁰ Charter for the Digitally Connected World (Toronto) April 30 2016. Access Date: 21 December 2020. <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/ict/2016-ict-charter.html>.

¹⁷⁹¹ Biarritz Strategy for an Open, G7 Information Centre (Toronto) 26 August 2019. Access Date: 21 December 2020. <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2019biarritz/biarritz-strategy-for-digital-transformation.html>.

¹⁷⁹² Biarritz Strategy for an Open, G7 Information Centre (Toronto) 26 August 2019. Access Date: 21 December 2020. <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2019biarritz/biarritz-strategy-for-digital-transformation.html>.

¹⁷⁹³ Coordinate, Merriam Webster Dictionary (Massachusetts). Access Date: 21 December 2020. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/coordinate>

¹⁷⁹⁴ An Introduction to Online Platforms and their Role in the Digital Transformation, OECD (Paris) May 13 2019. Access Date: 21 December 2020. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/science-and-technology/an-introduction-to-online-platforms-and-their-role-in-the-digital-transformation_53e5f593-en#page1.

¹⁷⁹⁵ Maximize, Merriam Webster Dictionary (Massachusetts). Access Date: 21 December 2020. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/maximize>.

¹⁷⁹⁶ Public, Merriam Webster Dictionary (Massachusetts). Access Date: 21 December 2020. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/public>.

¹⁷⁹⁷ Information, Merriam Webster Dictionary (Massachusetts). Access Date: 21 December 2020. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/information>.

¹⁷⁹⁸ Official, Merriam Webster Dictionary (Massachusetts). Access Date: 21 December 2020. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/official>.

should be interpreted to mean “explicit acknowledgment of something.”¹⁷⁹⁹ Social media is understood as “forms of electronic community (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content (such as videos).”¹⁸⁰⁰ Thus, while there are two parts to this commitment, the second part is connected to the first part by the conjunction “in recognition,” suggesting that the first more general part on coordinating with online platforms to maximize public access to information is the intended core of this commitment. Examples of compliance include distributing public information by working directly with online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube, TikTok, Google, and others. Actions may include hosting informal and formal meetings with such platforms, establishing memorandums of understanding, or creating joint policies and content strategies.

The extent to which a G7 member fulfills this commitment will be measured by a depth analysis. A G7 member “fully coordinating” with online platforms to maximize public access to the latest and correct relevant information will have publicly and directly engaged in coordinated efforts with online platforms in pursuit of this goal. A G7 member “partially coordinating” with online platforms may unilaterally launch online social media campaigns to provide public information, but not have coordinated directly with online platforms in pursuit of this goal. Examples of partial compliance include only unilaterally launching online marketing campaigns, new social media accounts with relevant information, creating online content such as videos, and launching new web portals.

To achieve full compliance, G7 members must take action according to both parts of the commitment by maximizing public access to the latest and relevant information in recognition that millions of citizens receive information and news via social media, while also coordinating directly with online platforms to achieve this goal.

Partial compliance will be awarded only if G7 members seek to maximize public access to information and news via online platforms and social media, but efforts do not cooperate directly with online platforms. A score of no compliance will be awarded only with no demonstrable compliance to any part of the commitment.

Scoring Guidelines

-1	G7 member does NOT take any efforts to coordinate with online platforms AND has not attempted to maximize public access to the latest correct and relevant official information via social media.
0	G7 member has taken efforts to maximize public access to the latest correct and relevant official information via social media, but HAS NOT coordinated with online platforms.
+1	G7 member has taken efforts to coordinate with online platforms AND has demonstrated efforts to maximize public access to the latest correct and relevant official information via online platforms.

*Compliance Director: Foti Veto
Lead Analyst: Kiyala Amos-Flom*

Canada: +1

Canada has fully complied with its commitment to coordinate with online platforms to maximize public access to the latest correct and relevant official information, in recognition that millions of citizens receive information and news via social media.

¹⁷⁹⁹ Compliance Coding Manual for International Institutional Commitments, Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy Global Governance Program (Toronto) 6 August 2019. Access Date: 21 December 2020. http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/compliance/Compliance_Coding_Manual_2019.pdf.

¹⁸⁰⁰ Social Media, Merriam Webster Dictionary (Massachusetts). Access Date: 21 December 2020. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social%20media>.

On 22 March 2020, the Government of Canada launched a CAD30 million ad campaign promoting methods to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including personal hygiene and social distancing, across print, television, radio, and federal social media accounts on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn.¹⁸⁰¹

On 28 April 2020, the Public Health Agency of Canada began an education video series on COVID-19 in collaboration with YouTube.¹⁸⁰² The series featured four videos where some of Canada's top YouTube creators interviewed Deputy Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Howard Njoo.¹⁸⁰³

On 31 July 2020, the Government of Canada rolled out COVID Alert, a digital app that aims to help mitigate the spread of the coronavirus in Canada.¹⁸⁰⁴ The app helps to notify a user should they have been exposed to another user who has COVID-19.¹⁸⁰⁵ First launched in the province of Ontario, the Canadian government aims to soon have it available across Canada.¹⁸⁰⁶ The Government of Canada's contemporary awareness of their citizens' usage of apps and social media has helped to increase public access to prevalent information as well as keep citizens safe and informed.¹⁸⁰⁷

On 27 October 2020, the Government of Canada launched a second bilingual ad campaign featuring prominent health officers reminding citizens of basic health precautions and encouraging downloads of the federal "COVID Alert" app.¹⁸⁰⁸ This ad campaign was simultaneously distributed across online platforms and social media as well as on television and radio.¹⁸⁰⁹

On November 2020, the Government of Canada launched a CAD850,000 ad campaign warning Canadians to stay home and avoid travelling abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁸¹⁰ The campaign will run until March 2021 and targets "snowbirds" on Facebook, Twitter, travel websites, online magazines, and other digital platforms.¹⁸¹¹

¹⁸⁰¹ Feds launch ad campaign urging social distancing, hygiene during COVID-19 crisis, CTV News (Ottawa) 22 March 2020. Access Date: 5 March 2021. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/feds-launch-ad-campaign-urging-social-distancing-hygiene-during-covid-19-crisis-1.4863845>.

¹⁸⁰² Dr. Howard Njoo answers COVID-19 questions in new YouTube series, Toronto Star (Toronto) 28 April 2020. Access Date: 5 March 2021. <https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/2020/04/28/dr-howard-njoo-answers-covid-19-questions-in-new-youtube-series.html>.

¹⁸⁰³ Dr. Howard Njoo answers COVID-19 questions in new YouTube series, Toronto Star (Toronto) 28 April 2020. Access Date: 5 March 2021. <https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/2020/04/28/dr-howard-njoo-answers-covid-19-questions-in-new-youtube-series.html>.

¹⁸⁰⁴ Canada launches COVID-19 tracking app — but only in Ontario, Global News (Toronto) 31 July 2020. Access Date: 20 February 2021. <https://globalnews.ca/news/7239119/coronavirus-exposure-notification-app-covid-19-ontario/>.

¹⁸⁰⁵ Canada launches COVID-19 tracking app — but only in Ontario, Global News (Toronto) 31 July 2020. Access Date: 20 February 2021. <https://globalnews.ca/news/7239119/coronavirus-exposure-notification-app-covid-19-ontario/>.

¹⁸⁰⁶ Canada launches COVID-19 tracking app — but only in Ontario, Global News (Toronto) 31 July 2020. Access Date: 20 February 2021. <https://globalnews.ca/news/7239119/coronavirus-exposure-notification-app-covid-19-ontario/>.

¹⁸⁰⁷ Canada launches COVID-19 tracking app — but only in Ontario, Global News (Toronto) 31 July 2020. Access Date: 20 February 2021. <https://globalnews.ca/news/7239119/coronavirus-exposure-notification-app-covid-19-ontario/>.

¹⁸⁰⁸ Feds launch new ad campaign reminding Canadians of COVID-19 basics, CTV News (Ottawa) 27 October 2020. Access Date: 5 March 2021. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/feds-launch-new-ad-campaign-reminding-canadians-of-covid-19-basics-1.5163582>.

¹⁸⁰⁹ Feds launch new ad campaign reminding Canadians of COVID-19 basics, CTV News (Ottawa) 27 October 2020. Access Date: 5 March 2021. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/feds-launch-new-ad-campaign-reminding-canadians-of-covid-19-basics-1.5163582>.

¹⁸¹⁰ Ottawa launches \$850,000 ad campaign advising Canadians to stay home during COVID-19, CBC News (Toronto) 24 December 2020. Access Date: 7 March 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/travel-borders-federal-government-snowbirds-covid-19-1.5849599>.

¹⁸¹¹ Ottawa launches \$850,000 ad campaign advising Canadians to stay home during COVID-19, CBC News (Toronto) 24 December 2020. Access Date: 7 March 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/travel-borders-federal-government-snowbirds-covid-19-1.5849599>.

On 14 February 2021, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Theresa Tam recognized the role social media platforms have in keeping Canadians "safe, informed and connected."¹⁸¹² Dr. Tam underlined the importance however, in also "distinguish[ing] between misinformation" and fact on these platforms.¹⁸¹³

On 8 April 2021, the Government of Canada updated the COVID-19 vaccine section of its federal website, to reflect up-to-date information on vaccine availability, vaccine shipments and deliveries, the types of vaccines available, the current groups of eligibility for the vaccine and the different steps needed to book a vaccine appointment, which varies by province.¹⁸¹⁴ The government website allows key information to be accessed on one platform.¹⁸¹⁵

Canada has fully complied with this commitment though strong actions aimed at coordinating with online platforms to maximize public access to the latest correct and relevant official information, in recognition that millions of citizens receive information and news via social media."

Thus, Canada receives a score of +1.

Analyst: Khalil Khalifa

France: +1

France has fully complied with its commitment to coordinate with online platforms to maximize public access to the latest correct and relevant official information, in recognition that millions of citizens receive information and news via social media.

On 18 March 2020, the Government of France¹⁸¹⁶ and Public Health France¹⁸¹⁷ began posting correct and relevant COVID-19 health information on social media platforms including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

On 22 October 2020, the Government of France launched TousAntiCovid, a contact tracing application that also gives the user access to COVID-19 health information.¹⁸¹⁸ TousAntiCovid is an updated version of the StopCovid application.¹⁸¹⁹

On 19 February 2021, Public Health France posted an epidemiological update on the surveillance of COVID-19, which presented a detailed analysis of the indicators put in place by Public Health France and its network of partners.¹⁸²⁰ The information is updated weekly.¹⁸²¹

¹⁸¹² Tam takes aim at COVID-19 'infodemic,' urges vigilance over misleading online content, CBC News (Toronto) 14 February 2021. Access Date: 23 February 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/theresa-tam-covid-19-infodemic-1.5914178>.

¹⁸¹³ Tam takes aim at COVID-19 'infodemic,' urges vigilance over misleading online content, CBC News (Toronto) 14 February 2021. Access Date: 23 February 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/theresa-tam-covid-19-infodemic-1.5914178>.

¹⁸¹⁴ Vaccines for COVID-19: Authorized vaccines, Government of Canada (Ottawa) 8 April 2021. Access Date: 20 April 2021. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines.html>.

¹⁸¹⁵ Vaccines for COVID-19: Authorized vaccines, Government of Canada (Ottawa) 8 April 2021. Access Date: 20 April 2021. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines.html>.

¹⁸¹⁶ Coronavirus Information, the Government of France (Paris) 24 February 2021. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus>.

¹⁸¹⁷ Public Health France (Paris). Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.santepubliquefrance.fr/>.

¹⁸¹⁸ TousAntiCovid application, the Government of France (Paris) 2 December 2020. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus/tousanticovid>.

¹⁸¹⁹ TousAntiCovid application, the Government of France (Paris) 2 December 2020. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus/tousanticovid>.

¹⁸²⁰ Covid-19 epidemiological update of February 25, 2021. Increase in contamination, predominance of variants: signs of a possible worsening of the epidemic, Public Health France (Paris) 19 February 2021. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.santepubliquefrance.fr/presse/2021/point-epidemiologique-covid-19-du-25-fevrier-2021.-augmentation-des-contaminations-predominance-des-variants-les-signes-d-une-possible-aggravati>.

On 24 February 2021, the Government of France updated its online COVID-19 information platform to show the new confirmed cases and new patients in intensive care.¹⁸²² This information is updated on a daily basis.¹⁸²³ Other information, such as vaccine administration and positivity rate, is provided but updated less frequently.¹⁸²⁴

France has fully complied with its commitment to maximize public access to online health information by taking efforts to coordinate with online platforms and by demonstrating efforts to provide correct and relevant health information, with many ways for the public to access government-provided health information.

Thus, France has received a score of +1.

Analyst: Andrew McFall

Germany: +1

Germany has fully complied with its commitment to coordinate with online platforms to maximize public access to the latest correct and relevant official information, in recognition that millions of citizens receive information and news via social media.

On 20 March 2020, the Federal Chancellery, along with the Ministry for Education and Research, began their #WirVsVirus hackathon.¹⁸²⁵ This digital program brought together citizens, non-governmental organizations, and corporations to solve a variety of COVID-19 related social problems, including issues of online access to information. A number of organizations provided support for the implementation of digital solutions or project funding.¹⁸²⁶

On 20 March 2020, the Government of Germany also began a social media campaign called #WirBleibenZuhause, which translates in English to #WeStayatHome.¹⁸²⁷ Health Minister Jens Spahn later personally involved himself in the production of video promotions for the campaign.¹⁸²⁸

On 14 June 2020, the Government of Germany announced the launch of its own COVID-19 warning app, available for iOS and Android.¹⁸²⁹

¹⁸²¹ Covid-19 epidemiological update of February 25, 2021. Increase in contamination, predominance of variants: signs of a possible worsening of the epidemic, Public Health France (Paris) 19 February 2021. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.santepubliquefrance.fr/presse/2021/point-epidemiologique-covid-19-du-25-fevrier-2021.-augmentation-des-contaminations-predominance-des-variants-les-signes-d-une-possible-aggravati>.

¹⁸²² Coronavirus Information, the Government of France (Paris) 24 February 2021. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus>.

¹⁸²³ Coronavirus Information, the Government of France (Paris) 24 February 2021. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus>.

¹⁸²⁴ Coronavirus Information, the Government of France (Paris) 24 February 2021. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus>.

¹⁸²⁵ The #WirVsVirus implementation program, WirVsVirus (Berlin) n.d. Access Date: 24 February 2021. <https://wirvsvirus.org/umsetzungsprogramm/>.

¹⁸²⁶ Together against the virus: a unique digital project brings people together, Google (Mountain View) n.d. Access Date: 24 February 2021. https://about.google/intl/ALL_de/stories/wirvsvirus/.

¹⁸²⁷ The Federal Government informs about the corona crisis, Federal Foreign Office (Berlin) 20 March 2020. Access Date: 24 February 2021. <https://www.deutschland.de/en/news/german-federal-government-informs-about-the-corona-crisis>.

¹⁸²⁸ #WirBleibenZuhause, Zusammen gegen Corona, Health Ministry of Germany (Berlin) n.d. Access Date: 24 February 2021. <https://www.zusammengegencorona.de/wirbleibenzuhause/>.

¹⁸²⁹ Germany says coronavirus tracing app ready to go, Reuters (Berlin) 14 June 2020. Access Date: 24 February 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-germany-app/germany-says-coronavirus-tracing-app-ready-to-go-idUSKBN23L0P5>.

On 21 June 2020, Chancellor Angela Merkel promoted the app on her weekly podcast, which features up-to-date statistics and warns users of recent possible exposures.¹⁸³⁰ By 1 February 2021, the app had been downloaded over 25 million times.¹⁸³¹ The exposure-tracking technology for the app was developed in coordination with Google.¹⁸³²

On 12 November 2020, Minister Spahn announced that internet searches on Google would return a highlighted Knowledge Panel containing links to the National Health Portal website, if certain medical keywords were used.¹⁸³³ This website offers current information on COVID-19, and Google Knowledge Panels also provide links to official information regarding 160 other diseases.¹⁸³⁴

Germany has coordinated with online platforms such as Google to maximize public access to official health information, while also promoting its informational websites through its own social media accounts.

Thus, Germany receives a score of +1.

Analyst: Daniel Parsons

Italy: +1

Italy has fully complied with its commitment to coordinate with online platforms to maximize public access to the latest correct and relevant official information, in recognition that millions of citizens receive information and news via social media.

On 27 March 2020, the Ministry of Health launched a COVID-19 communication campaign featuring Amadeus, a famous television presenter, promoting simple precautions and to use the Health Ministry's website as a reputable source of COVID-19 information.¹⁸³⁵ The campaign was spread across television, radio, and the Ministry of Health's social media accounts.¹⁸³⁶

On 6 October 2020, the Ministry of Health launched the app Immuni, to aid in contact tracing and to contain the spread of COVID-19.¹⁸³⁷ The app helps to notify a user should they have been exposed to another user who has COVID-19. A test of the contract-tracing app had previously been launched on 1 June 2020.¹⁸³⁸

On 31 January 2021, the Italian Government last updated their website to provide detailed information on the COVID-19 Pandemic.¹⁸³⁹ The website provides information and updates on travel restrictions, vaccine rollout, symptoms of the virus, and containment measures.¹⁸⁴⁰

¹⁸³⁰ The Federal Government informs about the corona crisis, Federal Foreign Office (Berlin) 24 February 2021. Access Date: 24 February 2021. <https://www.deutschland.de/en/news/german-federal-government-informs-about-the-corona-crisis>.

¹⁸³¹ The Federal Government informs about the corona crisis, Federal Foreign Office (Berlin) 24 February 2021. Access Date: 24 February 2021. <https://www.deutschland.de/en/news/german-federal-government-informs-about-the-corona-crisis>.

¹⁸³² COVID-19 Notifications: How We Help Health Authorities Control COVID-19 Through Technology, Google n.d. Access Date: 24 February 2021. https://www.google.com/intl/de_de/covid19/exposurenotifications/.

¹⁸³³ The Federal Government informs about the corona crisis, Federal Foreign Office (Berlin) 24 February 2021. Access Date: 24 February 2021. <https://www.deutschland.de/en/news/german-federal-government-informs-about-the-corona-crisis>.

¹⁸³⁴ The Federal Government informs about the corona crisis, Federal Foreign Office (Berlin) 24 February 2021. Access Date: 24 February 2021. <https://www.deutschland.de/en/news/german-federal-government-informs-about-the-corona-crisis>.

¹⁸³⁵ "Let's help each other. Together we will make it", the commercial with Amadeus against the Coronavirus, Ministry of Health (Rome) 27 March 2020. Access Date: 5 March 2021. <http://www.salute.gov.it/portale/nuovocoronavirus/dettaglioCampagneNuovoCoronavirus.jsp?lingua=english&menu=campagne&p=dacampagne&id=143>.

¹⁸³⁶ "Let's help each other. Together we will make it", the commercial with Amadeus against the Coronavirus, Ministry of Health (Rome) 27 March 2020. Access Date: 5 March 2021. <http://www.salute.gov.it/portale/nuovocoronavirus/dettaglioCampagneNuovoCoronavirus.jsp?lingua=english&menu=campagne&p=dacampagne&id=143>.

¹⁸³⁷ App Immuni, Presidency of the Council of Ministers (Rome) 6 October 2020. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <http://www.governo.it/it/approfondimento/immuni/15336>.

¹⁸³⁸ App Immuni, Presidency of the Council of Ministers (Rome) 6 October 2020. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <http://www.governo.it/it/approfondimento/immuni/15336>.

Italy has fully complied with its commitment to maximize public access to online health information by taking efforts to coordinate with online platforms and by demonstrating efforts to provide correct and relevant health information, with many ways for the public to access government-provided health information.

Thus, Italy receives a score of +1.

Analyst: Khalil Khalifa

Japan: +1

Japan has fully complied with its commitment to coordinate with online platforms to maximize public access to the latest correct and relevant official information, in recognition that millions of citizens receive information and news via social media.

On 3 April 2020, Opposition Member Kazuma Nakatani of the Constitutional Democratic Party submitted a question to the government in the National Diet.¹⁸⁴¹ He argued that the government's informational websites were not effective enough in providing access to pandemic guidelines and asked if the government had plans to coordinate with social media platforms to improve public access to official health information.¹⁸⁴²

On 14 April 2020, the Cabinet issued a written response which stated that the government was disseminating health guidelines by posting links to government websites on PMO social media accounts of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).¹⁸⁴³ The PMO continues to link the latest official health information to its social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

On 16 June 2020, the Government of Japan released its COVID-19 tracking app for iOS and Android, which it developed in coordination with an engineering team at Microsoft.^{1844,1845} By 26 June, the app had 4 million downloads, and Health Ministry official Yasuyuki Sahara said that the government hoped for as many downloads as possible.¹⁸⁴⁶

On 9 February 2021, Digital Transformation Minister Takuya Hirai joined other legislators for a public discussion on the new platform Clubhouse.¹⁸⁴⁷ They discussed how government officials can use online platforms to connect with voters.¹⁸⁴⁸

¹⁸³⁹ FAQ - Covid-19, questions and answers, Ministry of Health (Rome) 31 January 2021. Access Date: 24 February 2021. <http://www.salute.gov.it/portale/nuovocoronavirus/dettaglioFaqNuovoCoronavirus.jsp?lingua=english&id=230>.

¹⁸⁴⁰ FAQ - Covid-19, questions and answers, Ministry of Health (Rome) 31 January 2021. Access Date: 24 February 2021. <http://www.salute.gov.it/portale/nuovocoronavirus/dettaglioFaqNuovoCoronavirus.jsp?lingua=english&id=230>.

¹⁸⁴¹ 201st Session of the Diet, Question 157, "Letter of intent concerning the current state of infodemic about the novel coronavirus", Information on the progress of question answers, House of Representatives (Tokyo) 14 April 2020. Access Date: 24 February 2021. http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_shitsumon.nsf/html/shitsumon/201157.htm.

¹⁸⁴² 201st Session of the Diet, Question 157, "Letter of intent concerning the current state of infodemic about the novel coronavirus" Question body information, House of Representatives (Tokyo) 14 April 2020. Access Date: 24 February 2021. http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_shitsumon.nsf/html/shitsumon/a201157.htm.

¹⁸⁴³ 201st Session of the Diet, Question 157, "Letter of intent concerning the current state of infodemic about the novel coronavirus", Answer text information, House of Representatives (Tokyo) 14 April 2020. Access Date: 24 February 2021. http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_shitsumon.nsf/html/shitsumon/b201157.htm.

¹⁸⁴⁴ Japan rolls out Microsoft-developed COVID-19 contact tracing app, The Verge 19 June 2020. Access Date: 23 February 2021. <https://www.theverge.com/2020/6/19/21296603/japan-covid-19-contact-tracking-app-cocoa-released>.

¹⁸⁴⁵ Contact-tracing app set to debut in Japan this week, Nikkei Asia (Tokyo) 16 June 2020. Access Date: 23 February 2021. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Coronavirus/Contact-tracing-app-set-to-debut-in-Japan-this-week>.

¹⁸⁴⁶ Japan's COVID-19 app hits 4 million downloads in 1st week, The Asahi Shimibun 26 June 2020. Access Date: 23 February 2021. <http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/13492591>.

¹⁸⁴⁷ Japan lawmakers join Clubhouse app to reach voters, Nikkei Asia (Tokyo) 10 February 2021. Access Date: 23 February 2021. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Technology/Japan-lawmakers-join-Clubhouse-app-to-reach-voters>.

On 3 March 2021 organizers for the Tokyo Olympics, including the Government of Japan, introduced a policy that all athletes would use the Cocoa tracing app on their smartphones to help prevent a COVID-19 outbreak from occurring during the upcoming games.¹⁸⁴⁹

Japan has coordinated with online platforms such as Microsoft to maximize public access to official health information, while also promoting its informational websites through its own social media accounts.

Thus, Japan receives a score of +1.

Analyst: Daniel Parsons

United Kingdom: +1

The United Kingdom has fully complied with its commitment to coordinate with online platforms to maximize public access to the latest correct and relevant official information, in recognition that millions of citizens receive information and news via social media.

On 16 March 2020, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) website began to upload daily news stories and health and safety documents, which are all available under the headline “Latest from the Department of Health and Social Care.”¹⁸⁵⁰ The DHSC has also shared health information to the public through Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and email newsletters.¹⁸⁵¹

On 16 March 2020, the DHSC YouTube Channel created a playlist that informs of National Restrictions, COVID-19 information, and tracking updates.¹⁸⁵² The playlist is continuously updated with new videos.¹⁸⁵³

On 17 April 2020, the Government of the United Kingdom partnered with the online and print newspaper industry for a three-month COVID-19 ad campaign titled “All in, all together.”¹⁸⁵⁴ The campaign aims to help keep the public safe and the nation united throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁸⁵⁵

On 24 September 2020, the Government of the United Kingdom launched the National Health Service (NHS) COVID-19 contact-tracing app in England and Wales, with the additional purpose of ensuring easy

¹⁸⁴⁸ Japan lawmakers join Clubhouse app to reach voters, Nikkei Asia (Tokyo) 10 February 2021. Access Dates: 23 February 2021.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Technology/Japan-lawmakers-join-Clubhouse-app-to-reach-voters>.

¹⁸⁴⁹ A Buggy Contact-Tracing App is Latest Setback for Tokyo Olympics, Bloomberg (New York City) 3 March 2021. Access Date: 23 April 2021. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-03-03/a-buggy-contact-tracing-app-is-latest-setback-for-tokyo-olympics>.

¹⁸⁵⁰ Department of Health and Social Care, (London) n.d. Access Date: 25 February 2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care>

¹⁸⁵¹ Department of Health and Social Care, (London) n.d. Access Date: 25 February 2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care>

¹⁸⁵² Coronavirus, Department of Health and Social Care (London) n.d. Access Date: 25 February 2021.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvaBZskxS7tZJPUDRAf8aGw2mEF9tvLg3>.

¹⁸⁵³ Coronavirus, Department of Health and Social Care (London) n.d. Access Date: 25 February 2021.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvaBZskxS7tZJPUDRAf8aGw2mEF9tvLg3>.

¹⁸⁵⁴ “All in, all together”: UK government partners with newspaper industry on Covid-19 ad campaign, Society of Editors (Cambridge) 17 April 2020. Access Date: 25 February 2021. https://www.societyofeditors.org/soe_news/all-in-all-together-uk-government-partners-with-newspaper-industry-on-covid-19-ad-campaign/.

¹⁸⁵⁵ “All in, all together”: UK government partners with newspaper industry on Covid-19 ad campaign, Society of Editors (Cambridge) 17 April 2020. Access Date: 25 February 2021. https://www.societyofeditors.org/soe_news/all-in-all-together-uk-government-partners-with-newspaper-industry-on-covid-19-ad-campaign/.

access to information.¹⁸⁵⁶ The framework of the app was developed in collaboration with Apple and Google.¹⁸⁵⁷

On 22 January 2021, the DHSC launched an ad called “Look into my eyes.”¹⁸⁵⁸ This video is a national campaign featuring hospital staff and COVID-19 patients urging people to stay home during the national lockdown.¹⁸⁵⁹

The United Kingdom has fully complied with its commitments to maximizing public access to health information, through its consistent efforts to disseminate the latest correct and relevant official information on social media platforms and partnerships with the newspaper and advertisement industries.

Thus, the United Kingdom has received a score of +1.

Analyst: Sher Yao

United States: +1

The United States has fully complied with its commitment to coordinate with online platforms and demonstrates effort to maximize public access to the latest correct and relevant official information, in recognition that millions of citizens receive information and news via social media.

On 16 March 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Facebook page began posting daily updates on COVID-19.¹⁸⁶⁰ The CDC Instagram has created daily posts for credible health and safety updates.¹⁸⁶¹

On 16 March 2020, the Instagram page of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) began posting daily health information and added a story series titled “The President’s Coronavirus Guidelines for America” to its COVID-19 story highlight.¹⁸⁶²

On 16 March 2020, the CDC began publishing ongoing news related to health through monthly press releases, media advisories, transcripts, and statements on their official website.¹⁸⁶³

On 16 March 2020, the National Library of Medicine MedlinePlus Twitter account began creating daily posts related to the “latest news & info on health & medicine” available for the public.¹⁸⁶⁴

¹⁸⁵⁶ NHS coronavirus app to launch in England and Wales on 24 September, The Guardian (London) 11 September 2020. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/11/nhs-coronavirus-app-launch-england-wales-24-september>.

¹⁸⁵⁷ NHS coronavirus app to launch in England and Wales on 24 September, The Guardian (London) 11 September 2020. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/11/nhs-coronavirus-app-launch-england-wales-24-september>.

¹⁸⁵⁸ ‘Look into my eyes’: UK government launches hard-hitting ‘stay at home’ advert, The Guardian (London) 22 January 2021. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThkLdlwFdZA>.

¹⁸⁵⁹ New hard-hitting national TV ad urges the nation to stay at home, Department of Health and Social Care (London) 22 January 2021. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-hard-hitting-national-tv-ad-urges-the-nation-to-stay-at-home>.

¹⁸⁶⁰ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Facebook (Washington) n.d. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.facebook.com/CDC>.

¹⁸⁶¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Instagram (Washington) n.d. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.instagram.com/cdcgov/?hl=en>.

¹⁸⁶² United States Health and Human Services, Instagram (Washington) n.d. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.instagram.com/hhs.gov/?hl=en>.

¹⁸⁶³ 2020 News Releases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Washington) n.d. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/archives.html>.

¹⁸⁶⁴ MedlinePlus.gov, Twitter (Bethesda) n.d. Access Date: 25 February 2021.

https://twitter.com/medlineplus?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Eembeddedtimeline%7Ctwtterm%5Eprofile%3Amedlineplus&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fmedlineplus.gov%2F.

On 16 March 2020, the HHS YouTube channel began posting weekly videos of virtual meetings and topics related to health.¹⁸⁶⁵

On 27 March 2020, the White House Coronavirus Task Force and HHS, in partnership with Apple, released a COVID-19 screening app and website that guides Americans through a series of questions about their health and exposure to determine if they should seek care for COVID-19 symptoms.¹⁸⁶⁶

On 3 April 2020, the CDC modified and re-launched existing surveillance system to track COVID-19 called "COVIDView."¹⁸⁶⁷ The report, updated each Friday, summarizes and interprets key indicators, including information related to COVID-19 outpatient visits, emergency department visits, hospitalizations and deaths, as well as laboratory data.¹⁸⁶⁸

Since 3 June 2020, the CDC Instagram account has also created a new COVID-19 story highlight and provides ongoing health information accessible to the public.¹⁸⁶⁹

On 20 November 2020, the Online Guide to Government Information and Services updated its Health Information from the Government page. The page now includes COVID-19 information and the National Library of Medicine Medline Plus database to answer any medical questions.¹⁸⁷⁰

The United States has fully complied with its commitment to maximize public access to health information through its consistent effort to disseminate the latest correct and relevant official information on social media platforms and coordinate with online platforms to produce screening websites and apps.

Thus, the United States has received a score of +1.

Analyst: Sher Yao

European Union: +1

The European Union has fully complied with its commitment to coordinate with online platforms and demonstrated efforts to maximize public access to the latest correct and relevant official information, in recognition that millions of citizens receive information and news via social media.

On 16 March 2020, the European Parliament, the European Commission, and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) began posting correct and relevant information on social media platforms including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube.^{1871,1872,1873}

¹⁸⁶⁵ United States Department of Health and Human Services, YouTube (Washington) n.d. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/c/HHS/videos?pbjreload=102>.

¹⁸⁶⁶ CDC Statement on COVID-19 Apple App, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Washington) 27 March 2020. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/s0327-statement-covid-19-apple-app.html>.

¹⁸⁶⁷ CDC Launches New Weekly COVID-19 Surveillance Report, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Washington) 3 April 2020. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/s0404-covid19-surveillance-report.html>.

¹⁸⁶⁸ CDC Launches New Weekly COVID-19 Surveillance Report, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Washington) 3 April 2020. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/s0404-covid19-surveillance-report.html>.

¹⁸⁶⁹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Instagram (Washington) n.d. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.instagram.com/cdcgov/?hl=en>.

¹⁸⁷⁰ Health Information from the Government, Guide to Government Information and Services (Washington) 20 November 2020. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.usa.gov/health-resources#item-214585>.

¹⁸⁷¹ The Social Network at a Glance, European Parliament (Brussels) n.d. Access Date: 25 February 2021. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/external/html/socialmediaatagance/default_en.html.

¹⁸⁷² Social Networks, European Union (Brussels) n.d. Access Date: 25 February 2021. https://europa.eu/european-union/contact/social-networks_en.

¹⁸⁷³ ECDC in Social Media, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (Solna). Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/about-us/press-and-media/ecdc-social-media>.

On 19 October 2020, the European Commission set up an “EU wide system to ensure interoperability” between COVID-19 tracing apps across EU member states.¹⁸⁷⁴ The system allows for COVID-19 tracing apps to work across EU members states so users will only need to install one app, and if users travel to another participating European country, they will still benefit from contact tracing and receiving alerts.¹⁸⁷⁵

On 17 December 2020, the ECDC switched to a weekly reporting schedule for COVID-19 updates worldwide, in the EU, and in the United Kingdom.¹⁸⁷⁶ The ECDC discontinued daily updates on 14 December 2020.¹⁸⁷⁷

On 5 February 2021, the European Ombudsman decided that there were no cases of maladministration in regard to the gathered and communicated information during the COVID-19 crisis.¹⁸⁷⁸ Decision 78 reports the ECDC publishes news articles on its website and communicates its work on social media channels (principally Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn).¹⁸⁷⁹

On 19 March 2021, the European Parliament updated its website pages that provide COVID-19 vaccine information with relevant news about the vaccine.¹⁸⁸⁰

On 21 April 2021, the European Union External Action Service updated its page on COVID-19 to provide current and relevant information about the COVID-19 vaccination process. The website also provides news on Team Europe Support, disinformation, reparations, and solidarity stories.¹⁸⁸¹

The European Union has fully complied with its commitment to health and online platforms by maximizing public access to correct and relevant official health information as well as by coordinating with online platforms.

Thus, the European Union has received a score of +1.

Analyst: Andrew McFall

¹⁸⁷⁴ Coronavirus: EU interoperability gateway goes live, first contact tracing and warning apps linked to the system, European Commission (Brussels) 19 October 2020. Access Date: 25 February 2021.

¹⁸⁷⁵ Coronavirus: EU interoperability gateway goes live, first contact tracing and warning apps linked to the system, European Commission (Brussels) 19 October 2020. Access Date: 25 February 2021.

¹⁸⁷⁶ COVID-19 situation update worldwide, as of week 7, updated 25 February 2021, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (Solna) 25 February 2021. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/geographical-distribution-2019-ncov-cases>.

¹⁸⁷⁷ COVID-19 situation update worldwide, as of week 7, updated 25 February 2021, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (Solna) 25 February 2021. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/geographical-distribution-2019-ncov-cases>.

¹⁸⁷⁸ Decision in strategic inquiry OI/3/2020/TE on how the ECDC gathered and communicated information during the COVID-19 crisis, European Ombudsman (Strasbourg) 5 February 2021. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/decision/en/137815>.

¹⁸⁷⁹ Decision in strategic inquiry OI/3/2020/TE on how the ECDC gathered and communicated information during the COVID-19 crisis, European Ombudsman (Strasbourg) 5 February 2021. Access Date: 25 February 2021. <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/decision/en/137815>.

¹⁸⁸⁰ Vaccines Against COVID-19: Ensuring safe Vaccines for EU Citizens, European Parliament (Brussels) 19 March 2021. Access Date: 22 April 2021. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/priorities/vaccines-against-covid-19>.

¹⁸⁸¹ Coronavirus: News on EU Action, Vaccines, Team Europe Support, Disinformation, Reparation and Solidarity Stories, European Union External Action Service (Brussels) 21 April 2021. Access Date: 22 April 2021. https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/76341/coronavirus-news-eu-action-vaccines-team-europe-support-disinformation-repatriation-and_en.