ARMONK, NY — In the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic, IBM’s clients are facing unprecedented circumstances. Much of the world’s critical infrastructure such as governments, healthcare, transportation, financial services and other major industries depend on IBM – which is why being of service to our world and the systems that power it remain their top priority.

In particular, for some states this is manifesting in processing a record number of unemployment claims and facing some temporary challenges. Industry sees these customers needing to rapidly scale their systems to handle the increase in demand and IBM has been actively working with clients to manage those applications. There are also some states that are in need of additional programming skills to make changes to COBOL – a language that has been widely reported to have an estimated 220 billion lines of code being actively used today. These changes to the code are required to take into account any new parameters for unemployment payment eligibility, in a very short timeframe.

IBM has a long history of investing in mainframe skills. In addition to contributing to the Open Mainframe Project Community Forum and providing expanded open-source training, there are a number of initiatives that IBM has been participating in to address the continuous need for COBOL skills by our community. For immediate career opportunities in this space, learn more at bdpatoday.com.

— by Meredith Stowell, Vice President, IBM Z Ecosystem

Source: IBM

In Case You Missed IT

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Apple and Google partner on COVID-19 contact-tracing technology

CUPERTINO, CA — Across the world, governments and health authorities are working together to find solutions to the COVID-19 pandemic, to protect people and get society back up and running. Software developers are contributing by crafting technical tools to help combat the virus and save lives. In this spirit of collaboration, Google and Apple are announcing a joint effort to enable the use of Bluetooth technology to help governments and health agencies reduce the spread of the virus, with user privacy and security central to the design.

Since COVID-19 can be transmitted through close proximity to affected individuals, public health officials have identified contact tracing as a valuable tool to help contain its spread. A number of leading public health authorities, universities, and NGOs around the world have been doing important work to develop opt-in contact tracing technology. To further this cause, Apple and Google will be launching a comprehensive solution that includes application programming interfaces (APIs) and operating system-level technology to assist in enabling contact tracing. Given the urgent need, the plan is to implement this solution in two steps while maintaining strong protections around user privacy.

Next month, both companies will release APIs that enable interoperability between Android and iOS devices using apps from public health authorities. These official apps will be available for users to download via their respective app stores.

During the following months, Apple and Google will work to enable a broader Bluetooth-based contact tracing platform by building this functionality into the underlying platforms. This is a more robust solution than an API and would allow more individuals to participate, if they choose to opt in, as well as enable interaction with a broader ecosystem of apps and government health authorities. Privacy, transparency, and consent are of utmost importance in this effort, and both corporations look forward to building this functionality in consultation with interested stakeholders. Each plans to openly publish information about their work for others to analyze.

— Sources: Apple and Google

Source: IBM
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All,

The circumstances surrounding the coronavirus are continuing to develop each day. This is a rapidly evolving situation and we encourage our members to exercise safety and caution. We are closely monitoring developments and offer the following information and guidance.

What to know about COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus):

The general risk remains low; however, there have been several confirmed cases across the country including two confirmed cases in Georgia (Our conference location).

In confirmed COVID-19 cases, reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death. Symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

According to the CDC, older adults and those with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19.

Please follow guidance from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, World Health Organization and U.S. State Department for recommendations and travel advisories.

Person-to-person spread is occurring, although it’s unclear exactly how it is transmitted and how easily the virus spreads between people.

The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a face mask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.

We could be in this state for an extended period of time and encourage you to plan accordingly for student and adult programming. Crisis ultimately breeds innovation. This is a unique opportunity for us to re-evaluate how we may still nurture and develop working professionals and future STEM leaders, all while being mindful of our members’ health, safety, and being intentionally inclusive of those without resources.

The National Executive Committee and Conference Team are working closely to assess the situation and consider the potential options for the conference. We are evaluating the development of a virtual conference experience. Our goal is to create an unmatched experience that retains the same energy, value, and diverse experience for all participants no matter the format the conference takes. Rest assured, we are continuously monitoring this developing situation and will continue to keep you all updated on plans for the conference experience as we move forward.

Sincerely,

**Terry J. Morris**, BDPA President

**BDPA2020**: Register Now!

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