

You might know Bluetooth best for helping you pair your headphones and smartphone, but the 21-year-old wireless technology is getting a new wave of attention now that it's at the heart of contact-tracing apps designed to show whether you might have been exposed to the novel coronavirus.

Google and Apple, for example, are building a system to track contact between people who might spread the disease. The idea is simple: since Bluetooth is constantly scanning for other devices, your phone can use wireless signals to see who you've been near. Somebody who gets a positive diagnosis can tell the app, which will inform everyone else who has been in proximity to alert them about risks of possible transmission.

In reality, though, getting the right information from Bluetooth can be a complicated and technically difficult task that experts are working hard to perfect in time...

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