



Covid Contact Tracing

Alexis Earp, Senior

Just a month into the coronavirus pandemic, Governor Charlie Baker's administration created the Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC) to help public health officials handle the challenges the virus caused. This group was responsible for calling individuals who tested positive to inform them about isolation requirements, provide them with services they may need, and assist close contacts. The CTC remained active until December of 2021, when the state government decided to pivot to local contact tracing efforts. For over a year and a half, contact tracers at the CTC made phone calls to Massachusetts residents who tested positive for coronavirus and their contacts in an attempt to stop the virus from spreading. The transition from a statewide contact tracing model to various local models occurred during an uptick in the number of cases in Massachusetts, giving local boards of health and contact tracing consortiums more to do as they began their own programs. To learn more about what this transition looked like, I spoke to Jason Phillips, a former CTC contact tracer who is currently working as a contact tracer for a group of six towns in western Massachusetts.

Phillips and his colleagues are responsible for calling residents in Chesterfield, Easthampton, Granby, Hadley, Hatfield, and Northampton. Due to the increase in cases and the limited capacity of local boards of health, this team mostly calls families of children in daycare, families with children in grades K - 12, and senior citizens. Phillips noted that this approach was similar to how the CTC dealt with the rising case count shortly before it was shut down. In addition to calling fewer people who have tested positive, Phillips and his coworkers are requesting that people who contact coronavirus reach out to their own close contacts because local groups do not have the capacity to do so. Informing people with coronavirus about health guidelines is also more difficult at the local level because local boards of health are not equipped to provide the same resources the CTC did. As a CTC employee, Phillips could work

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with interpreters if he was speaking to someone who was not fluent in English, but at the local level, translation services are not available. The switch from a statewide contact tracing program to smaller local programs has also made it more difficult to track the spread since contact tracers are now speaking only to those in the communities they serve, not people all across Massachusetts.

Despite the difficulties posed by transitioning to smaller contact tracing programs, Phillips also told me that there are many positive aspects to this change. Many local businesses and nonprofits have been willing to donate resources to help those who need to isolate, and seeing how people are willing to aid their communities has been heartwarming. The calls the local groups make are also shorter than the calls the CTC makes, so disseminating information to those who need to quarantine becomes a faster process. Phillips said that informing people about how they can keep others safe after they have tested positive is rewarding. With misinformation about the pandemic being so widespread, helping people understand the current guidelines is imperative to public safety.

At the end of the interview, I asked Phillips what the public can do to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. He stressed the importance of staying updated on constantly changing safety guidelines and ensuring the information you receive is accurate. I implore everyone to follow the guidelines, not just for their own health, but for the health and mental wellbeing of others. Contact tracing takes a toll on tracers who speak to family members of individuals who died after contracting coronavirus, and the illness itself can leave some with long-lasting health conditions. Even if you do not believe that the virus will negatively affect you, please continue to be cautious for the sake of those who are immunocompromised and those tasked with slowing the spread.

Community Tracing Collaborative



Source Material by Deca

Benjamin Burns, Sophomore

I am reviewing *Source Material* by New York City producer Deca. This album was released on November 19th, 2021. It is eight songs that total 18 minutes and 36 seconds long. I think the album was very well made as Deca keeps a consistent sound throughout the album, yet it never gets stale which could be helped by the short runtime. The songs vary in mood, with "Summer Song" being fairly upbeat, while songs like "Wellspring" sounding reflective. If you like instrumental music, and instrumental hip hop in particular, I would definitely recommend this album.

There is something unique about this album: it was produced in partnership with KPM, a music library founded and intended for film and television. Most of their older music, from around the 70's, was used in many popular shows around that time. Four composers who are seen throughout their library are Keith Mansfield, Alan Hawkshaw, Les Baxter, and Brian Bennett. Their music would also get a second life when rap producers started to sample songs from the KPM library for their songs. A notable example is the beat for "Intergalactic" by the Beastie Boys using "Prelude in C# Minor" by Les Baxter.



They allowed Deca to go through their entire catalog, and he could use whatever he found interesting to make the beats on his album. A producer having an opportunity to do something like this is extremely uncommon, and the only thing similar I can think of is when Blue Note Records allowed producer Madlib to take whatever he wanted from their catalog of records, which resulted in the album *Shades of Blue*. This deal between KPM and Deca is what made me interested in the album in the first place.

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Animal Crossing Excitement

Sophia Bottari, Freshman

For Animal Crossing gamers, January is a month filled with good news. Later this month, Animal Crossing will drop Patch 2.0. This update is anticipated to include activities for players to partake in, such as the Winter Fishing Tourney and Bug-Off event. Through gaining points for every fish or bug caught, players will be able to compete against their town and have the opportunity to



win event-exclusive prizes. Another upcoming event that runs through January and February is the Groundhog Day celebration which will come with festive activities and items in Nook Shopping. Back in 2021, The New Year's Countdown event released limited edition gifts that will be available throughout January. Additionally, new catchable critters, including the grasshopper, puffer fish, and moon jellyfish, will come out in the southern hemisphere this month. Enjoy exploring this exciting new patch!

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