# 650 GROUP
## MARKET INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH

# Contact Tracing - Using Wi-Fi and Bluetooth to Reduce Risk as Employees Return-to-Work

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# Report

**Contact Tracing - Using Wi-Fi and Bluetooth to Reduce Risk  as Employees Return-to-Work**

The COVID-19 pandemic that caused personal and economic lockdowns in early 2020 has caused mayhem and necessary employee work-from-home environments. As governments and enterprises prepare to return employees safely back to the physical workplace, there is a pressing need to provide for a safe work environment. Organizations are contemplating many procedures, including staggered employee hours, modified workspaces, reduced meeting sizes, added oversight personnel, and technology solutions. Businesses are taking focus on various Information Technology (IT) solutions to monitor the density and flow of employees, contractors, and guests while on an organization's campus to decrease the risks of COVID-19 transmission and to alert users when there has been a potential exposure risk. While no IT service is going to eliminate health risks on its own, in many circumstances, organizations can invest in a contact tracing and crowd monitoring cloud service that can leverage existing wireless systems to assist in safety efforts.

Vast Wi-Fi coverage at most organizations is a given. Most modern Wi-Fi Access Points support Bluetooth, whether integrated or as a complementary overlay solution . As a matter of background, some retail and hospitality companies have been using clever cloud-delivered services that detect customer activity on Wi-Fi and Bluetooth networks to gain insights on customer behavior for quite some time. Examples of such services include dwell-time activity, journey mapping, wayfinding, and engagement for repeat-customer visits. These services are available from third-party vendors as well as from some of the Wi-Fi Access Point vendors themselves. These cloud services use the data that the wireless infrastructure devices gather via Wi-Fi and Bluetooth signals that communicate with customer smartphones or with employee or hotel key badges. There are countless ways to analyze this network telemetry data, and now, some services are emerging that can assist with reducing risks in the return-to-work challenge.

Among the Wi-Fi / Bluetooth services we have encountered is Juniper Network's Contact Tracing cloud service, which comes from its recent-acquisition of Mist Systems. We would not be surprised to see competing solutions from other Wi-Fi companies, but as of late May 2020, we see no contract tracing specific collateral available. Third-party services that we have encountered include PWC's contract tracing application, part of its Check-In product. Several governmental agencies, including India and  around the world, are also introducing contract tracing apps, but these are of little use outside the country's boundaries and are not workplace-specific solutions. The two messages we take from our investigation is clear. First, it is early days in the IT industry's efforts to develop useful contact tracing services, and second, we will see many new services coming to market.

Data privacy is a concern for employers, employees and visitors. We expect that tracking people on a campus can either be executed wrong or right. These systems need to comply with regulations and, at a minimum, should not retain personal information. State and local government rules may require tweaking for large multi-national organizations. We should expect that the rules will change over time as regional governments adapt to the post-COVID era. Organizations should establish minimum data storage practices while at the same time enhancing the safety of employees and visitors.

In conclusion, we see it as a moral imperative and, in some cases, a liability reduction strategy that organizations can use a combination of revised procedures to address the new post-COVID workplace environment. We cannot eliminate the risk of transmission entirely, but we can and should consider using the best available tools available in the marketplace today. Today, there are few commercially available choices in the marketplace, yet there is a pressing commercial purpose to return employees to work and to permit visitors to enter workplaces. Today's investment in contact tracing leverages investments already made on wireless infrastructure. Besides, by investing in cloud services such as contact

tracing, organizations may benefit down the road as additional services emerge that can address other business needs in the future, such as attendance-taking in schools or enabling digital workplace applications. We encourage the use of these innovative cloud services to reduce the risks to enterprises and to increase the safety of employees and visitors.

## About 650 Group

650 Group is a leading market intelligence research firm focused on cloud and IoT growth markets, as well as the broader communications and Information Technology industries.  Our team has decades of research experience, has worked in the technology industry, and is actively involved in standards bodies.

For more information, please visit us at www.650group.com, find us on social media (@650group), or call us at +1 650 600 7104.