

Towards a Digital Police State? Former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair Calls for Coronavirus Digital IDs to Prove 'Disease Status'

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'Unless you're able to record some of this data in a way that people can use it's going to be difficult to go back to anything like a near normal in things like transport,' said Tony Blair.

Former U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair has called for the creation of digital IDs to track "disease status" as part of the plans for restarting international travel after the global coronavirus crisis.

Blair, who now leads the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, said in a recorded message digital IDs were a "natural evolution of the way that we're going to use technology in any event to transact daily life, and this covid crisis gives an additional reason for doing that."

"I could be wrong about this, but when I can look at for example how you restart some businesses, how you restart international travel...I think people's disease status, for example have they been tested? What is the result of that test? Have they had the disease? Do they have the disease? I think unless you're able to record some of this data in a way that people can use it's going to be difficult to go back to anything like a near normal in things like transport," Blair said.

[An article published in Forbes last month](#) said that future air travel could involve "no cabin bags, no lounges, no automatic upgrades, face masks, surgical gloves, self-check-in, self-bag-drop-off, immunity passports, on-the-spot blood tests and sanitation disinfection tunnels."

"Digital technologies and automation will play a critical role in the future of air travel," Forbes predicted.

"The need to reduce 'touchpoints' at airports implies mandatory use of biometric boarding that allows passengers to board planes with only their face as a passport."

The Forbes article noted that a number of airlines including British Airways, Qantas, and EasyJet are already using the technology.

Earlier this week an article published in [The Guardian](#) warned that proof of immunity to the coronavirus could be used to create “a new class system.”

“Experts predict that if [coronavirus] survivors are found to be immune, they could perform a range of jobs and services – such as volunteering in hospitals and nursing homes, caring for coronavirus patients and working in shops and food processing plants – risk-free,” journalist Miranda Bryant wrote.

“And, depending on how authorities, business and society at large respond, they could also be entitled to greater freedoms.”

Bryant pointed to Chile issuing “release certificates” to people who “complete quarantine after testing positive” for the coronavirus and comments from Dr. Anthony Fauci and Dr. Ezekiel J Emanuel supporting the idea of immunity “certificates” or “passports.”

Emanuel is advising former Vice President and 2020 candidate Joe Biden. Fauci has been director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases for decades and is one of the top people leading President Donald Trump’s coronavirus response.

Even left-wing groups such as [The American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\)](#) have cautioned against plans to introduce coronavirus “immunity passports.” In [an article published last month](#), senior members of the ACLU argued that immunity passports could “harm public health, incentivize economically-vulnerable people to risk their health by contracting COVID-19, exacerbate racial and economic disparities, and lead to a new health surveillance infrastructure that endangers privacy rights.”

“An immunity passport system is fundamentally different from a regime whereby employers routinely test workers for COVID-19 or screen for symptoms, to ensure that no one with active infection is entering a workplace. In the latter system, only contagious workers are prevented from going to work and only for the period of time in which they are contagious,” the article continues.

“But an immunity passport system would divide workers into two classes — the immune and the non-immune — and the latter might never be eligible for a given job short of contracting and surviving COVID-19 if an immune worker is available to take the slot.”

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