

Life and Death Decisions

Lessons From a
Pandemic CPO

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[@mr_randers](#)



A product you build **will kill**
someone.

A decision you make **will kill**
someone.

What will you do to **make sure**
your conscience is clear?

You regret
joining this
talk?



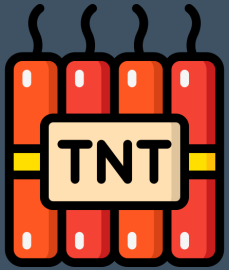
A meme featuring the character Batman from the 1960s television series. He is shown from the chest up, wearing his iconic black cowl with pointed ears and a black cape over a grey suit. He is holding a black megaphone to his mouth with his right hand, as if he is about to make an announcement. The background consists of dark green foliage. At the bottom of the image, the text "I HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT" is written in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font with a black outline.

I HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT

Pandemic: **unpredictable**

Extreme stress: **daily**

No different from a startup!



3 lessons during stress



Universal = Behaviour



Trying to be honest

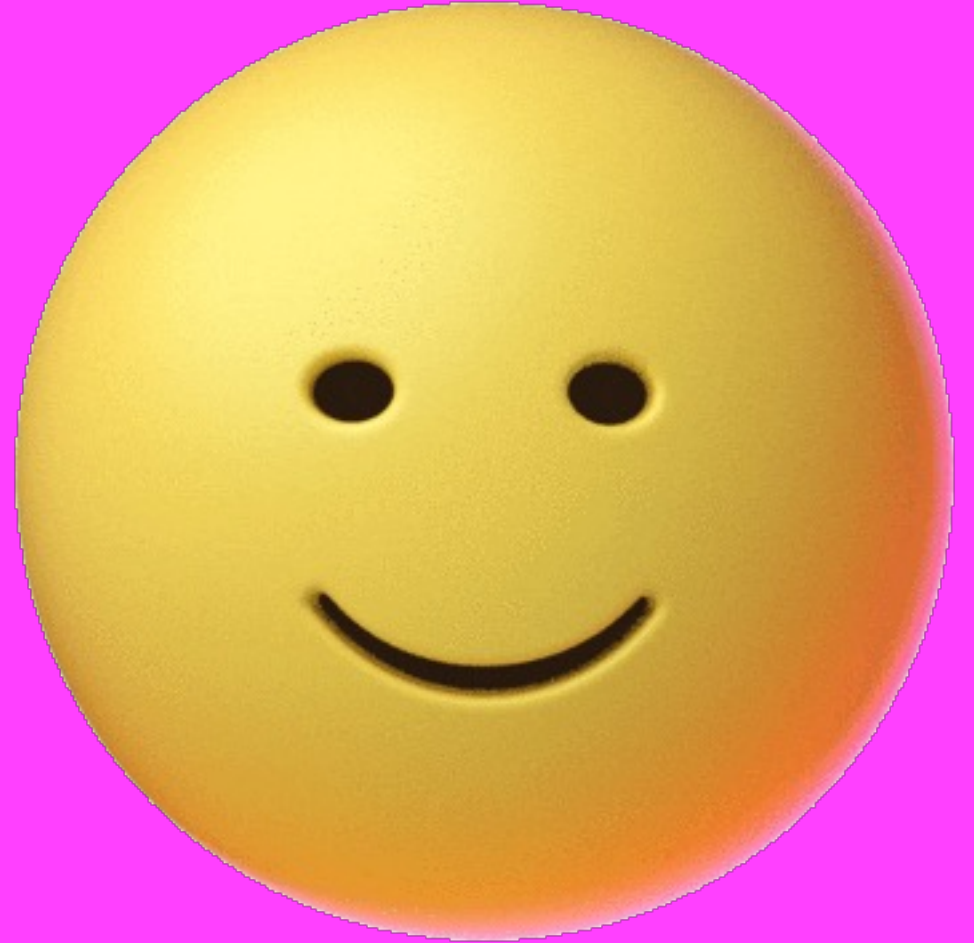
Under stress:

1. My behaviour
2. User behaviour (& product)
3. Why impact is hard

Hi



I'm Randeep



Recently **Chief Product Officer** at:



Using Technology to Make
Healthcare Accessible and
Affordable in Emerging
Markets

200k patients in Nigeria and
Egypt so far

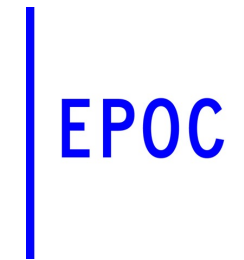


What else I do:

Advising



Non-Profit



Product

Chief Product Officer



Director / Lead



Product Director



Strategy Consultant



June 2020

I'm working

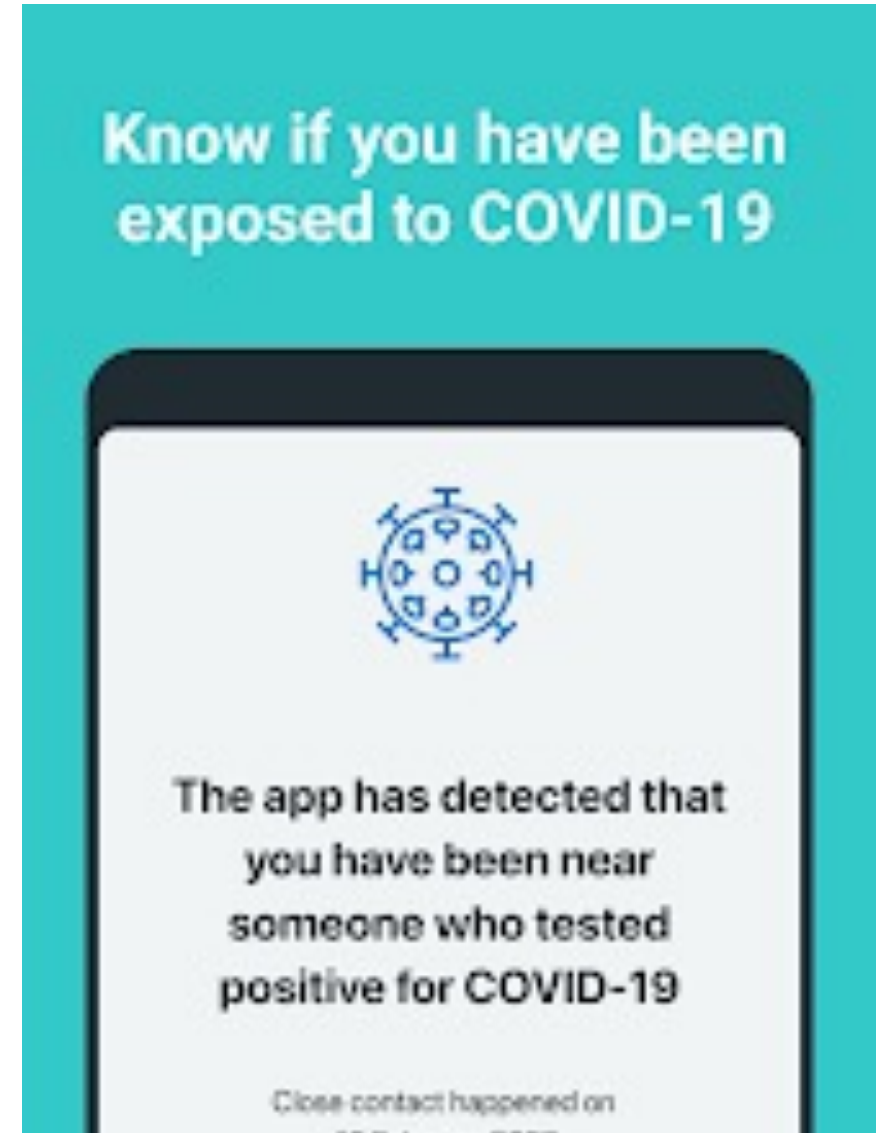


Product Director

- AI health tech
- Largest GP
- US, Canada, UK, Rwanda
- **Doing Covid help!**

March - June 2020

UK Gov building Covid App



June 2020

NHS App fails

Why the NHS Covid-19 contact tracing app failed

Test, track and trace – just not with the NHS app



By MATT BURGESS

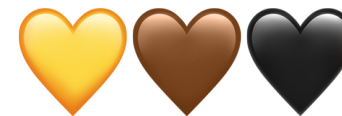
Friday 19 June 2020



Credit WIRED

June 2020

I get series of urgent calls



URGENT:

2 days later

- Leave my job
- Join Gov.
- All < 1 week

“This will be career suicide”

“What do you think you can change... it's failed once already!”

Why did I
say yes?

**1. So my
conscience is
clear**

***2. I can do
something
others can't?!***



**I think I'm a
Saviour?!**

***Magical Punjabi Jesus**

Reality 1
**So I think I'm a
*superhero?***

Example:

Building languages



*Sikh Batman

It's a s**t show
Let me do my job!



Official Languages

English

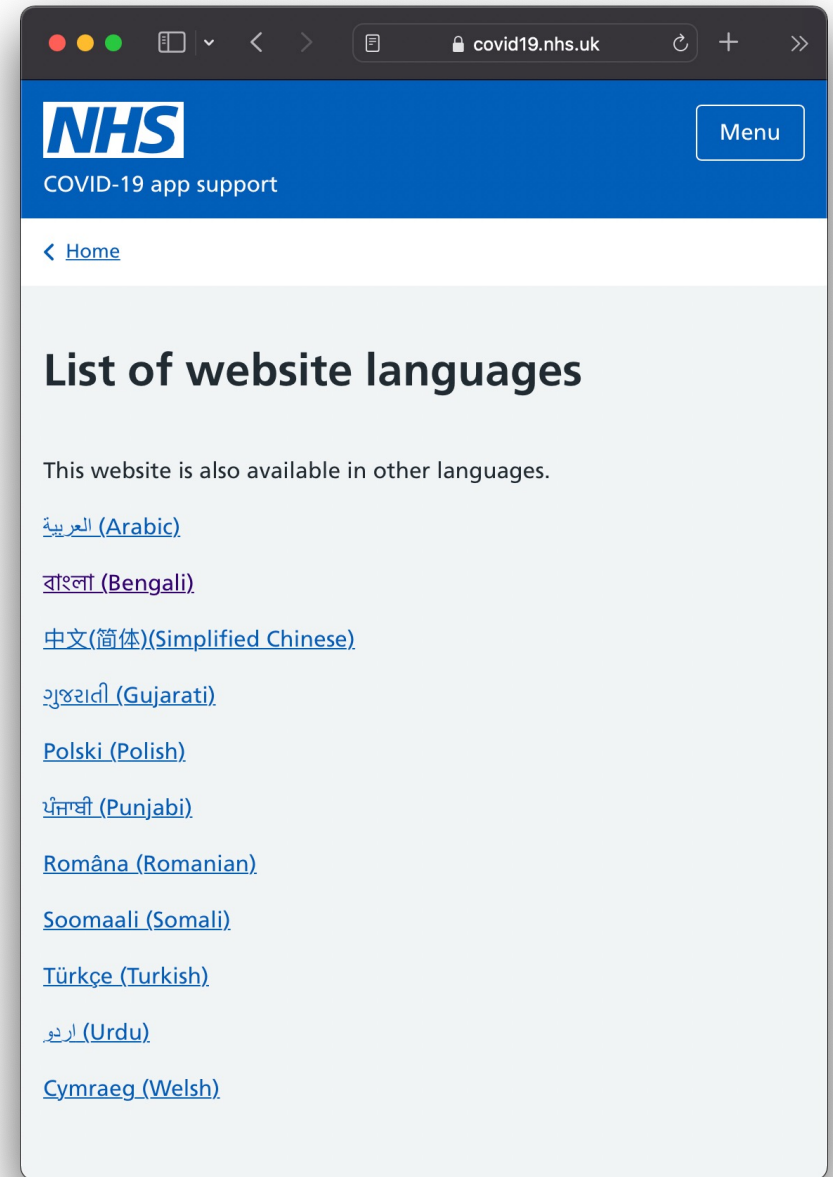
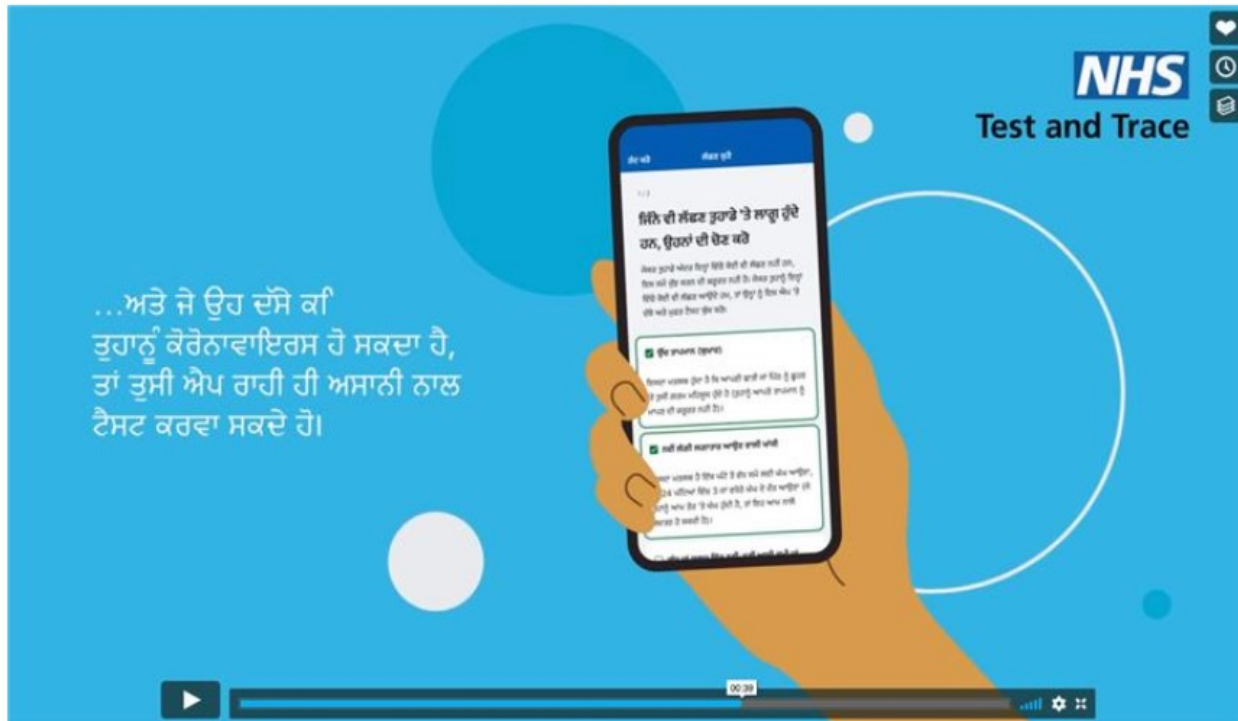
Welsh



Built for all

App/Assets in 12 Languages

98% first languages in UK

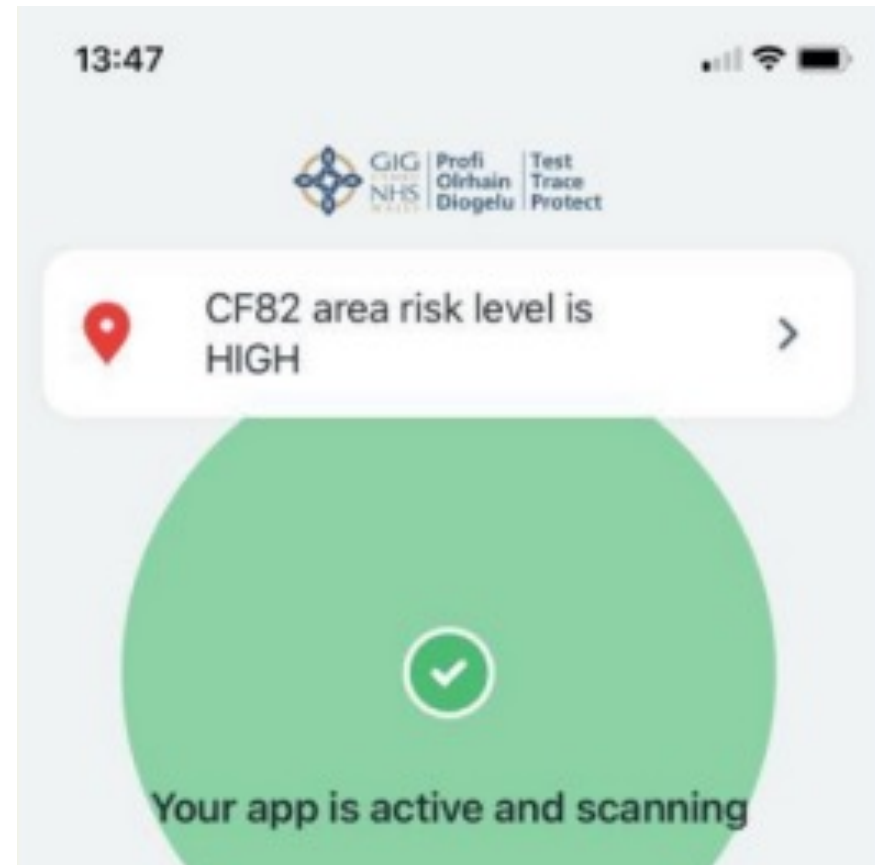
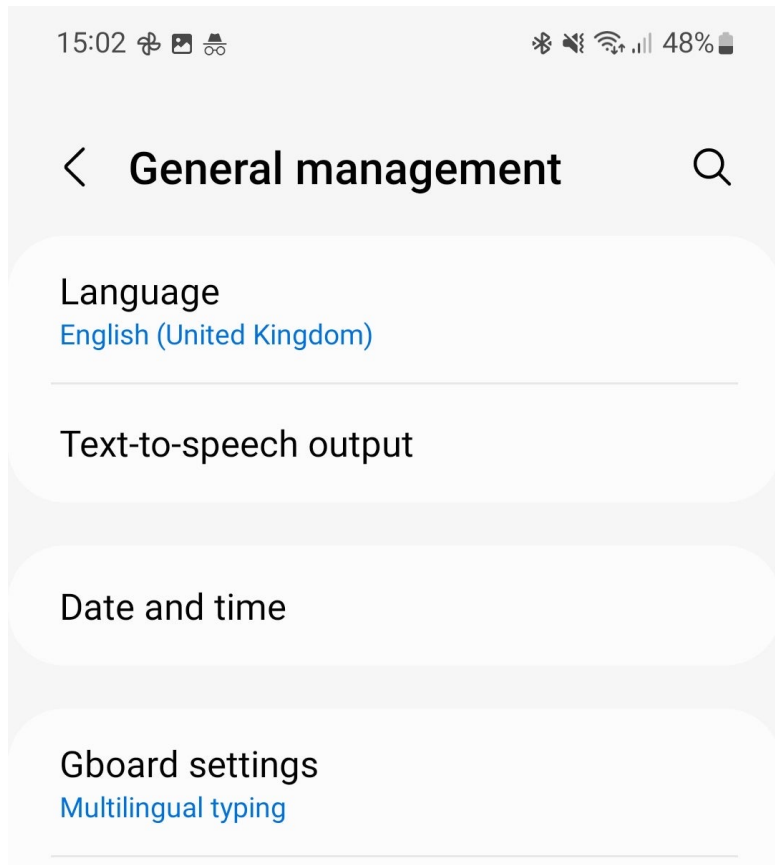


Q – How to pick your language?

Change language
at system level

OR

Change language
only in NHS app



Agency push back

Not my lived experience

Did research

- Language switch not needed in app

Felt Odd

- *"Did anyone have English as 2nd language?"*
- OOPS



*Superheroes doing UX app research



YOU SEE – I'm right

I'm not the hero

Gotham deserves

I'm the hero

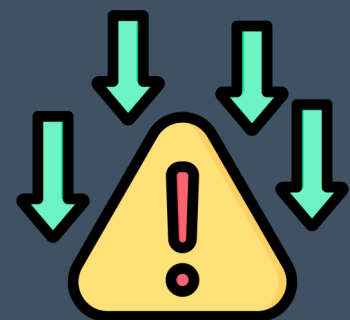
Gotham needs

Umm... Really?





Public

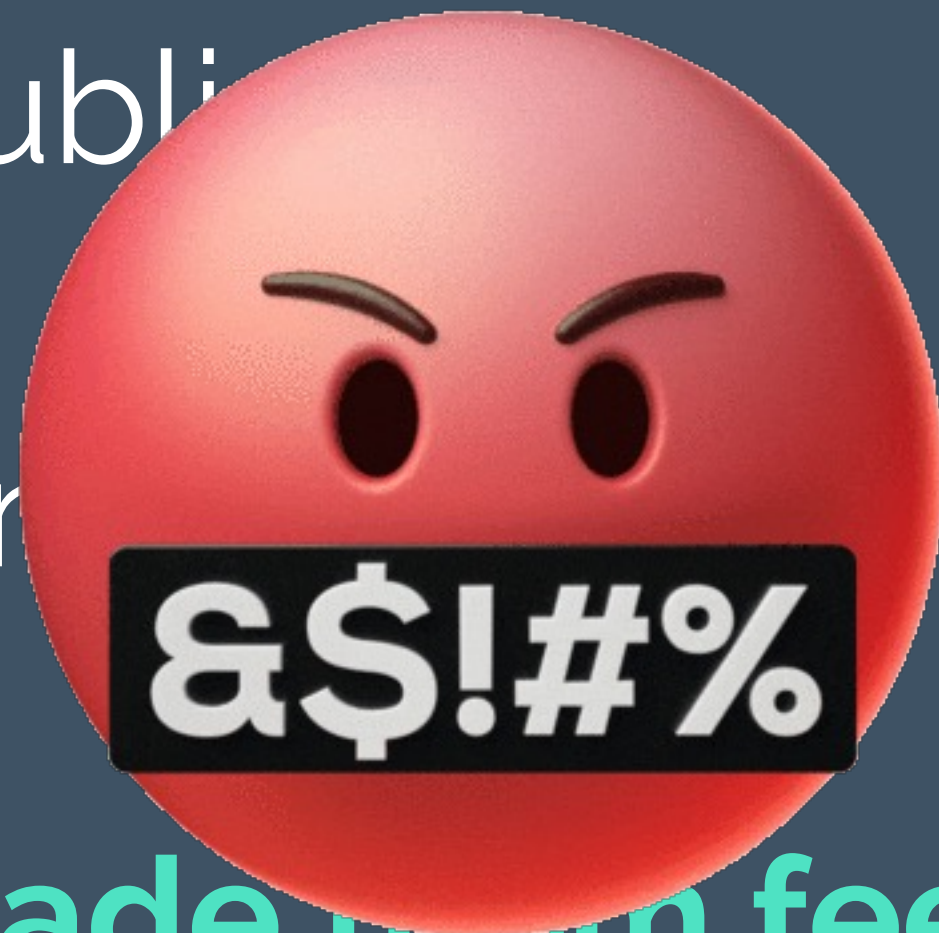


Un

ork



Made them feel stupid





Reality 1

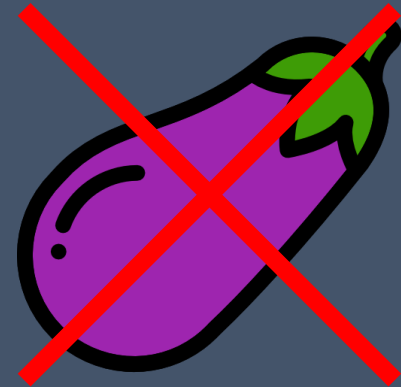
You are not acting
the hero

When moving at
speed - **You are
likely to act the
villain**



Learning 1

If you are likely to act
the villain:



Reality 2

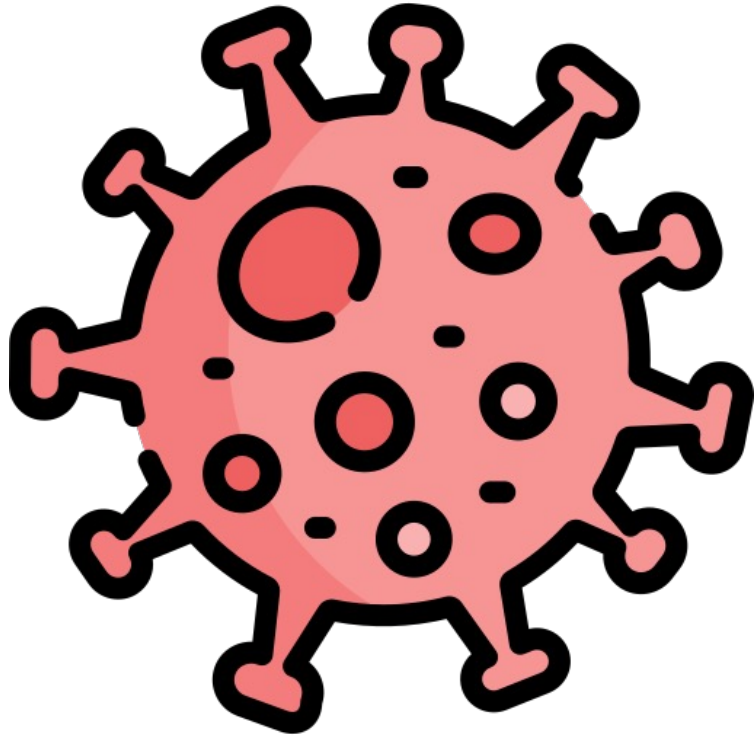
Users: **Chaos
versus control**

Example:

QR check in feature

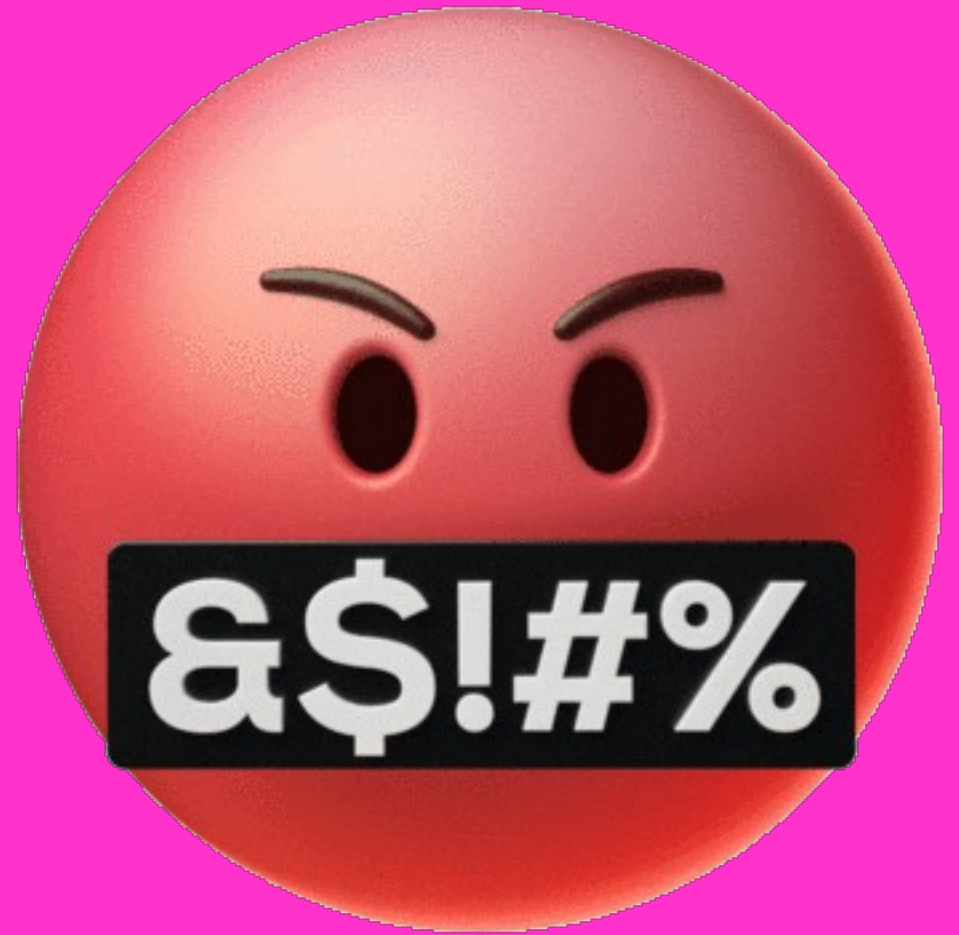


Chaos



Users:

- **Scared**
- **Angry with the app**



But the app **WAS** a success?

nature

**The epidemiological impact of the NHS
COVID-19 app**

- App averted 1 million infections
- App saved 10,000 lives

Success because **focus on USERS** behaviour



Adrenal
Medulla



Anxiety &
Paranoia

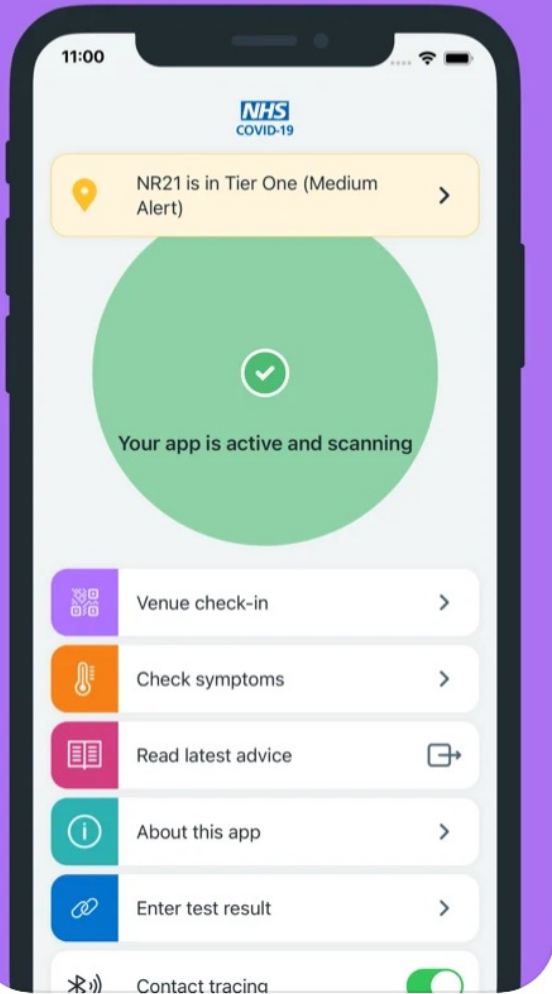


Looking for
danger
(hypervigilance)



Focus on lowering adrenaline

Receive updates on the risk of coronavirus in your area



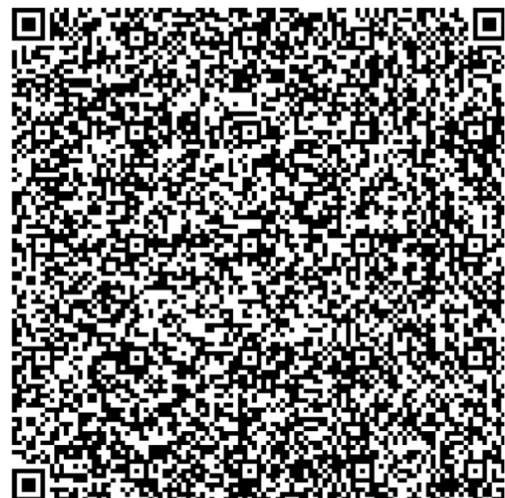
Check in now



Test and Trace



Before entering, everyone must scan with the NHS COVID-19 app or provide their name and contact details



The Drapers Arms

29-31 Cowgate, Peterborough PE1 1LZ

The NHS COVID-19 app is proven to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Protect your loved ones. Use the app.



Why did people use it?

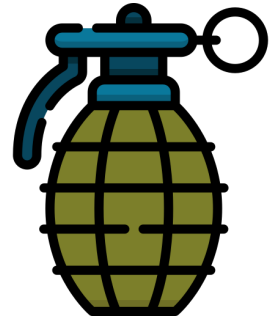


Not by using
more force or
pressure

No threats
No fear or panic

What we did:

Control

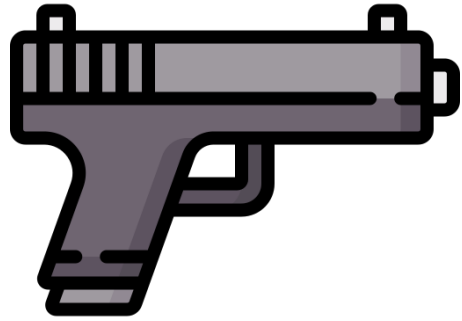


Immediate
insurance

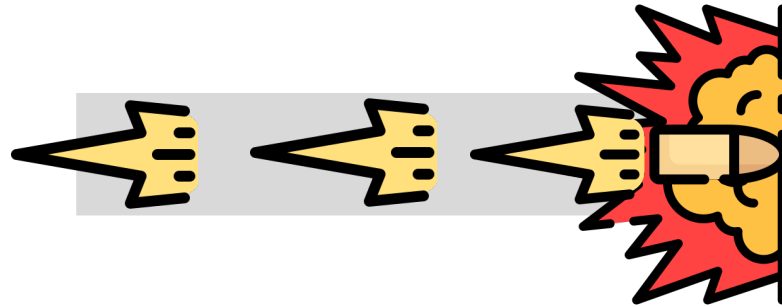


Friction





Threats =
More gunpowder

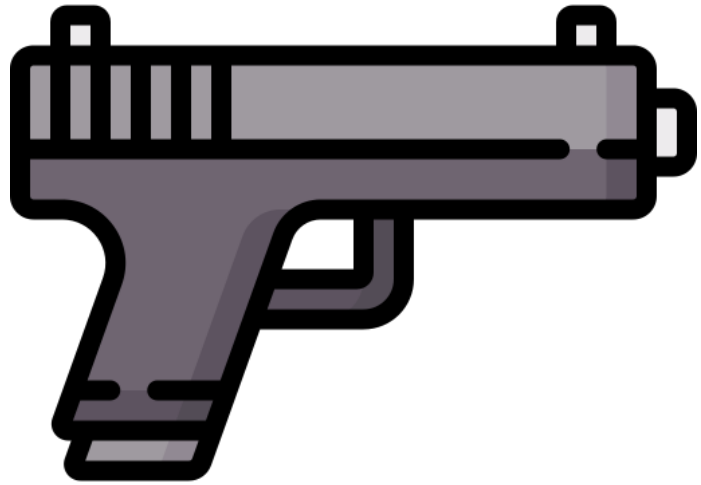


Less Friction =
More aerodynamic

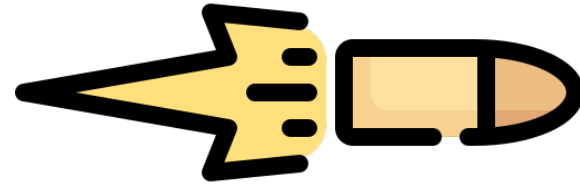


Learning 2:

During stress your users need:



1. Increased
control



2. Reduced
friction

Reality 3

Why impact is hard to make

(aka **What is a villain really?!**)

Example:

User research

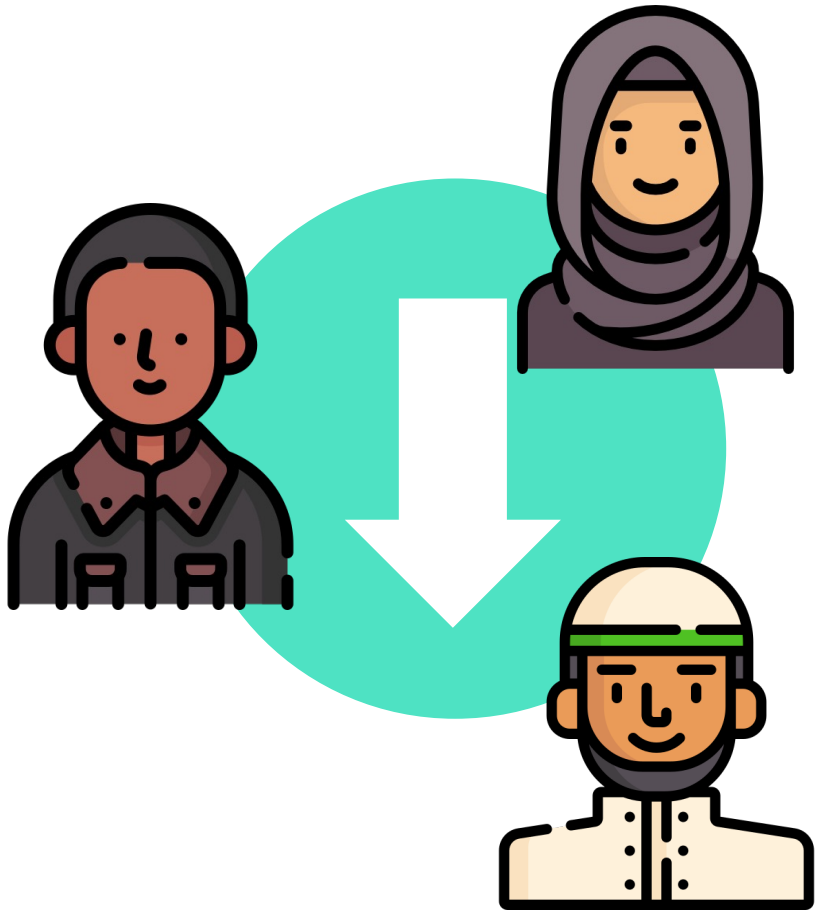


*Thanos playing boardgames



Issue:

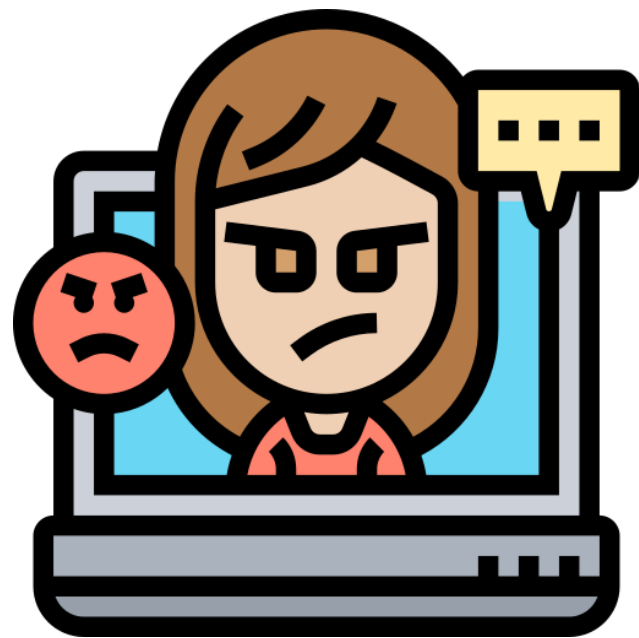
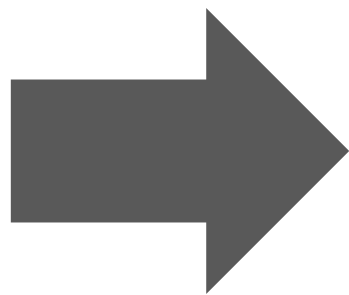
User numbers not high enough



If **these people** don't want to work with us, what can we do?

It's not our fault, **these people** are not listening





RESEARCH. Who do users **trust to help them**?

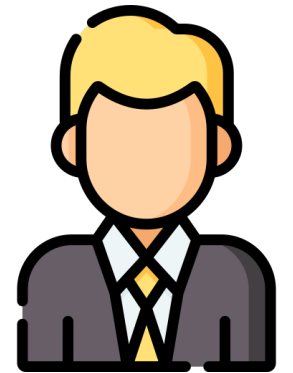
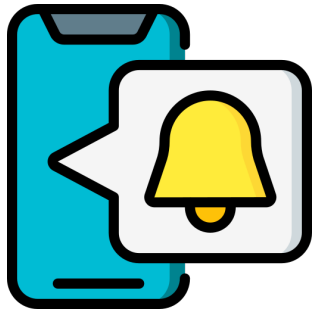
The Covid App

Covid Division

The NHS

UK Government

Boris Johnson



Gov.

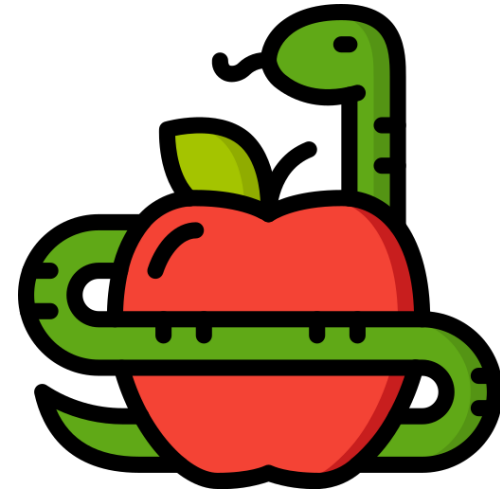
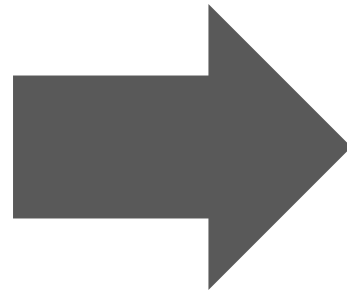
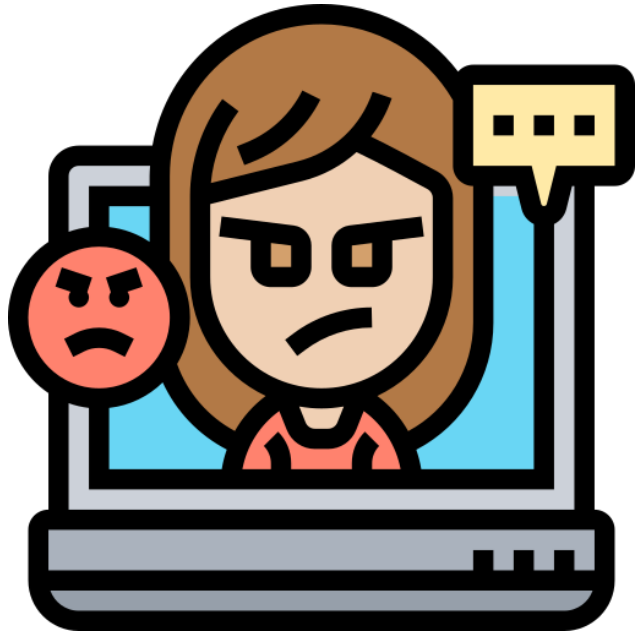


Gen. Public



Rejectors





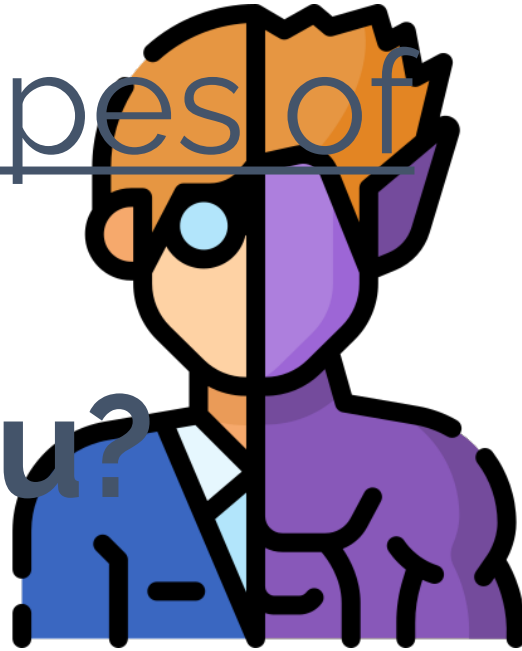
I challenged the
STATUS QUO

2 different types of

people:

What are you?

Heroes



Villains

- 1. Needs to be liked**
- 2. Defend the status quo**
 - keep things as they are
- 3. Reactive**
- 4. Comfortable**
 - Don't look to improve

- 1. Don't need to be liked**
- 2. Challenge the status quo**
 - know today is not perfect
- 3. Proactive**
- 4. Striving**
 - want to improve things

**Very
close**

**Want
different
things**





SUPERMAN IV
THE QUEST FOR PEACE

Villains
challenge the
status quo

The issue is
their methods

*Killmonger having a
birthday party

Challenging status
quo creates
discomfort
**Even if doing it
right!**

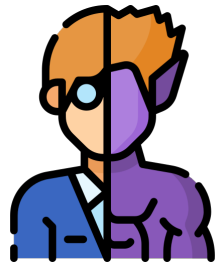
**People will vilify
you for it**



*Apologies for the bad art

Learning 3:

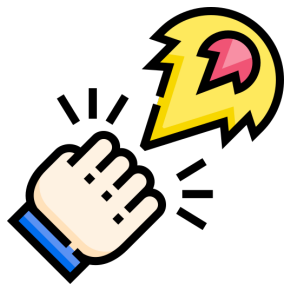
Change is hard because



Challenging status quo can make you SEEM a villain



You need to get comfortable in the discomfort, and know you are right



Don't ACT a villain - Always punch UP not down, and keep empathy



Reality 1
You are not a hero



Reality 2
Chaos vs Control



Reality 3
Villains change the world

1. You should check your ego & power, as you are more villain than hero

2. Your users need **control and less friction.**
Not more pressure

3. Changing status quo **makes you seem a villain.** Be ok with not being liked. **Always punch up!**

Before I go Remember separating Gov and App?

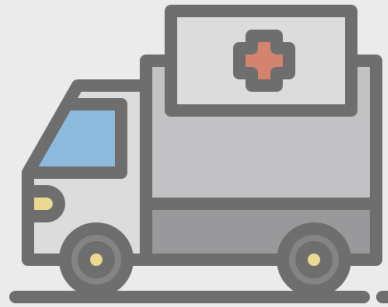
The Covid App



Covid Division



The NHS



UK Government



Boris Johnson



Rejectors





**Reach out for
Q's, advice or
*mutual therapy***



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