

IBM, Rolls-Royce and the Emergent Alliance Help Local Authorities Track Effects Of COVID-19 Among Population

London, 23rd February 2021 - IBM, Rolls-Royce and the Emergent Alliance have launched a [selection of dashboards](#) and predictive risk assessment tools using the IBM Cloud Pak for Data, designed to help better understand the attitudes and behaviours among the general population, in regards to the ongoing pandemic. All Data is anonymised and aggregated. The tools are the result of a collaboration between IBM, Rolls-Royce, [Meltwater](#), Echosec Systems and other members of the Emergent Alliance, a not-for-profit association counting dozens of enterprises, dedicated to supporting innovation and resilience as organisations move towards a post COVID-19 future, as part of the Regional Risk Pulse Index project. Areas that can benefit from these tools include healthcare, government, business, and the general public, with the focus currently on supporting the NHS.

[IBM Cloud Pak for Data](#), which includes services such as IBM Watson and provides organisations with the tools to collect, organise and analyse data, was made available to all alliance members. Using several of the advanced AI solutions on IBM Cloud Pak for Data, including [IBM Watson Studio](#), [AutoAI](#), and [IBM Cognos Analytics](#), has enabled members to build an end-to-end analytics pipeline, to help their data scientists rapidly catalogue and analyse data from multiple sources and display insights in intuitive dynamic dashboards.

Data is curated from numerous trusted sources including social media content supplied by Meltwater and Echosec Systems, stringency Index published by University of Oxford, which quantifies the government measures, OEDC data on economic impact and travel data from WFP (World food programme). All data is anonymised and aggregated.

The new Regional Risk Pulse Index project, which the dashboards and virtual assistants are part of, will help local authorities determine the level of risk to health by incorporating information about population density, age of the local population, predicted COVID-19 infections, stringency index, as well as the change of behaviour and sentiment in the population. They will now be able to see if the stringency measures put in place have made a difference to how people behave and to the economic impact. Now more than ever, decision making needs to be guided by reliable data rather than gut feeling.

Andrew Brown General Manager Cloud and Cognitive Software Europe commented "Trust is foundational to IBM Watson and we are committed to driving initiatives that use our technology and talent to address societal challenges providing trusted data and insights. With the Emergent Alliance, IBM hopes to help local authorities in their decision making and planning regarding the pandemic."

The project team also built a COVID-19 virtual assistant using IBM's Watson Assistant on IBM Cloud to enable users to ask questions such as, "What regions are currently hotspots in the UK?" and "What is the risk of infection in Nottingham?" and get answers to queries such as "Where can I travel?" to provide clarity on where travel restrictions are in place.

"It is hoped, the introduction of a virtual assistant to help with COVID-19-related questions could make a big difference to local authorities and help ease the strain on health services," adds Scott Couper, Business Operations and Transformation at IBM.

Watson is also helping the alliance work with Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care System (ICS) to provide extra insights about how the pandemic is influencing mental wellbeing. It can be used to monitor social media channels and provide insights to the NHS to see how the virus and the vaccination is being talked about and to see how the population feels about this from a sentiment perspective. This will allow Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care System (ICS) at no cost, and the local authority, to portray the right message with their announcements, driving the conversation and using their platforms as influential users, to relay the information in the best way possible to the local community.

Lastly, the team built an app aimed at economic experts in government, local authorities and businesses. The app simulates the impact of shocks to specific industrial sectors (transport, hospitality, and travel) and how they propagate to the whole economy. Equally, they can see how a stimulus in the form of extra resources (money) being injected into the economy by governments or other public authorities can help with economic recovery for a particular sector.

Jeff Oldenburg, CEO at Echosec Systems commented, "The Emergent Alliance brought forth an opportunity which enabled Echosec Systems to make a valuable contribution of data provision. Echosec's mission is to make the world's data more accessible and the insights delivered for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care System (ICS) are a testament to the data driven collaboration between IBM and Echosec Systems under this alliance. We are delighted with this outcome and look forward to wider collaboration with other Emergent Alliance partners."

Ramon Perez, Chair of Emergent Alliance commented, "The Emergent Alliance would not exist without the tremendous voluntary support of our members, and we are incredibly proud of the work that IBM, Rolls-Royce, EchoSec Systems and Meltwater have done in this partnership for the NHS. We hope this shows the value of our alliance, where almost 50 companies have united to provide data, technology, and expertise to support the public sector during COVID-19 recovery."

Caroline Gorski, Group Director of R² Data Labs at Rolls-Royce, concluded "The combination of the passion from Emergent Alliance volunteers and the use of tech like IBM's Watson producing practical tools and insights can make a real difference to how we recover and grow following the COVID-19 pandemic. That's

what we all signed up to do and it's great to see that vision come to life.”

More authorities in the UK are encouraged to adopt and integrate the tool into their future planning, making the UK all the more prepared for dealing with the challenges the pandemic brings both in the immediate and long-term future.

Each playing to their strengths, IBM, Rolls-Royce and the various members of the Emergent Alliance have made it their mission to support regions across the UK in the fight against COVID-19 by introducing new technologies that can help make more accurate predictions, track movements and monitor social media activity.

About IBM Watson

Watson is IBM's AI technology for business, helping organizations to better predict and shape future outcomes, automate complex processes, and optimize employees' time. Watson has evolved from an IBM Research project, to experimentation, to a scaled, open set of products that run anywhere. With more than 30,000 client engagements, Watson is being applied by leading global brands across a variety of industries to transform how people work. To learn more, visit: <https://www.ibm.com/watson>

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