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New York's Vaccine Passport Program is Already Failing (/archives/featured-articles/2021/april/07/new-yorks-vaccine-passport-program-is-already-failing/)

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Liberty advocates, rejoice! The idiocracy is going to save us from another form of COVID tyranny. Thanks to a combination of bungling authoritarians and decaying legacy corporations, these entities are simply too incompetent to pull off a functioning vaccine passport program.

New York's rollout of its vaccine passport already has the markings of a five alarm dumpster fire. The New York State "Excelsior Pass" vaccine passport system, which was created by IBM, has so many issues that I wouldn't be surprised if the program was scrapped altogether before the end of the calendar year. It has massive security flaws, a shrinking customer base by design, it remains incredibly impractical, and it's incredibly easy to manipulate. Excelsior Pass sucks, thanks to the idiocracy that was responsible for its design and implementation.

A rigid system

Say you want to attend a Knicks game this evening at Madison Square Garden, a partner to the Excelsior Pass program. It's 9 a.m. and your event is at 7:30 p.m. If you don't have the vaccine yet, that means you will need to obtain a negative COVID-19 test to receive your pass. Want to take that test this morning? Not so fast! The antigen test needs to have been administered within the last 6 hours, so you better plan your entire day around navigating that short window between your COVID test and the event this evening.

Just received your second dose and you're ready to hit the town? Not so fast! You must wait at least two weeks before your green check mark appears on your vaccine passport.

Has it been more than 90 days since your last dose? Rejected! You only have a 76 day window (more than 14 days, under 90 days) to acquire a vax pass, which has to be renewed every 30 days.

Received a vaccine or COVID test from out of state? Took a private at home test kit or a test from a provider that is not registered in the New York State central database? Looks like you're out of luck. You will not be able to receive your prized Excelsior Pass, because your information never made it into the system.

Are you an out of state resident looking to attend an event or enter an Excelsior Pass participating store? You're out of luck! The New York system does not communicate with other databases, and other states plan on rewarding vaccine passport contracts to other companies.

Junk application

In order to download Excelsior Pass on your phone, you need the latest version of Android or iOS. For users of phones that are more than 4-5 years, this means you will not be able to access the application. If you have an iPhone 6 or earlier, you can't download Excelsior Pass because it only runs on the latest operating system,

which doesn't work on these older phones.

Users of the app are absolutely hammering it for its dysfunction. Of the 240 reviews for the application on iOS, over 100 reviews received 1 star out of 5.

Here's a small sample size of user complaints from the last week:

IBM sucks

New York's Excelsior Pass was constructed on IBM's Digital Health Pass platform. IBM claims that it keeps your data secure on its "blockchain technology" platform, which is a corporate buzzword excuse for a total lack of transparency about how it hosts your sensitive health records. In fact, a devastating February report on IBM's Blockchain program showed it failed (<https://www.coindesk.com/ibm-blockchain-revenue-misses-job-cuts-sources>) to produce anything meaningful, and the company has cut its staff by a reported 90 percent.

Overpromising and under delivering is nothing new for IBM. Before the blockchain hype, IBM promised it would help treat and cure cancer through its Watson artificial intelligence platform. Watson AI has been marketed for a decade (<https://spectrum.ieee.org/biomedical/diagnostics/how-ibm-watson-overpromised-and-underdelivered-on-ai-health-care>), and it has produced almost nothing of substance. Both IBM Blockchain and IBM's Watson AI has been catered specifically to health care applications, and neither has developed any substantial real world uses. Don't be surprised if IBM's vaccine passport program, which is part of its IBM Blockchain skeleton crew, meets the same fate.

Anyone can steal your information and take your Vax Pass

The IBM-New York vaccine passport system has incredibly lax security protocols, making it easy for a random individual to steal your identity and obtain Gov. Cuomo's vaunted Excelsior Pass.

In order to see if someone is eligible for an Excelsior Pass (and acquire their COVID-19 health records), all you need is a first and last name, a date of birth, and a zip code (yes, not even their address, just their zip code). If you're eligible for the pass, you then get taken to a second screen where you have to enter more relatively easily obtained information to "verify your identity." Even if you get some questions wrong, it appears that you can go back in and answer an unlimited amount of times until you get the right combination.

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Failure imminent

Vaccine passports are inhumane, discriminatory, and will lead America on a direct path to a China-like social credit score system that restricts our unalienable rights. The good news for you New Yorkers is that the Cuomo Administration and IBM are the dream team of incompetence. Excelsior Pass will almost certainly fail, because a legacy governor and a legacy tech outfit are not sophisticated enough to produce a working totalitarian product for their COVID Safety Regime.

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