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UCT alumni build ‘Coronapp’ platform

In an effort to quell panic and provide South Africans with reliable and accurate information about the coronavirus (COVID-19), two University of Cape Town (UCT) alumni have built [Coronapp](#), a centralised online platform for information about the disease.

Tamir Shklaz and Wisani Shilumani are the brains behind Coronapp. Shklaz recently graduated from UCT with a degree in electrical and computer engineering. Since graduating, Shklaz has been working full-time on his start-up, [Quillo](#), which he began working on during his third year at UCT. Quillo is a digital marketplace for second-hand textbooks and other items needed at university.

“I am incredibly passionate about empowering people through the use of technology and education,” said Shklaz.

Shilumani graduated from UCT in 2017 with a degree in mechanical engineering. He started developing apps and websites as a side passion while he was studying, the most notable of which is [WeSit](#), an on-demand babysitting platform. Shilumani is currently working full-time at Allan Gray, doing what he loves most: software development.

The target audience for the app is all concerned South African citizens who are seeking reliable and up-to-date information about the COVID-19 outbreak. It "is a centralised repository for relevant and accurate information regarding COVID-19 in South Africa. Its purpose is to make reliable information highly accessible to South Africans to help people and prevent panic.

“We saw a great deal of misinformation about the outbreak and the nature of the virus circulating on social media. The fake news around the outbreak not only created a great deal of uncertainty but was incredibly dangerous; there were trends such as gargling bleach or supposed home remedies that could cure the virus,” they said.

Coronapp not only informs people about the basics of the virus but encourages those who can afford to stay at home to practise social distancing to lessen the load on the South African healthcare system. At the time the platform was created, there wasn't a centralised platform where individuals could get reliable and up-to-date information. Coming from software development backgrounds, the two knew a well-built platform could help South Africans protect themselves and their families from the outbreak.

It took them one weekend to build the app. They worked around the clock from morning until late at night throughout the weekend. However, development is an ongoing process of adding features that are most helpful to people using it. The Twitter section only shows tweets from the National Department of Health. This ensures only accurate information is displayed in real-time as the government releases more reports.

The [other news sources](#) come from a variety of places. They share only high quality, understandable and actionable information that could help answer the following questions: What is coronavirus? How can I protect myself and others? What is social distancing and how do I implement it? What are some of the myths around the coronavirus? What are the most up-to-date actions of the South African government in response to the virus?

The platform has already helped thousands of South Africans. However, with the help of a large partner, the creators believe the platform can make a significant difference in the fight against the outbreak. They are currently searching for institutional partners, government non-profits or large companies to help raise funding for further development of the platform and to spread awareness.



Coronapp was built in just one weekend and is mobile friendly

Photo: Supplied

Download high resolution photos: [Photo 1](#), [Photo 2](#)

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