

## **Works Like a CHARM: Opening Borders During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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Once the quarantine ends, the globalized world will be bursting at the seams, trying to re-open borders. Re-opening borders, however, will be threatened by increased fear of foreign nationals' presence within the national and personal space that can affect health security within a state. Since just one rotten apple with a virus can spoil the bunch and wreak havoc in a state, the stakes are high. We argue that a central problem here is the lack of trust. Consequently we want to suggest a system that will establish trust as individuals cross national borders.

There is a need to re-establish boundaries, borders and trust, in the personal, national and global spheres. The pressure to keep the economy running is imminent, looming over political leaders, pressuring them to unleash the floodgates of the national quarantine.

However, when an individual has no financial standing or support and risks losing her job; when the immediate possibility of eviction or hunger is more threatening than the notion of being infected by COVID-19, it is more appealing for an individual to seek personal gain than to act for the sake of the collective. This strong incentive to cheat leads to a strong sense of insecurity in the public space for individuals, where they cannot control the behavior (or health) of others. A central component of this challenge lies in the lack of ability to trust others to act responsibly. This is especially true in the context of cross-border interactions. Consequently,

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there is a need to create a globally endorsed trust mechanism to recreate a sense of security within the individual's personal space.

So how do we, citizens of the world, trust close contact interactions with other human beings of other nations? We suggest forming a global mechanism of trust in the form of an online certificate of health, which we call a Clean Health Aggregated Record Multi-pass (CHARM). This online certificate will have a record of COVID-19 testing for an individual. Possession of this certificate will be necessary in order to gain entrance to a state, much like the norm of using passports. For validation, a user will have to test negative for COVID-19 in the period adjacent to entrance into another state, in accordance with health guidelines agreed upon by an international convention of medical professionals. The CHARM will be an effective solution even after a vaccine is developed because states will be able to control the transmission of disease into their borders. We believe this mechanism will enable national borders to re-open and allow people to travel world-wide once again.

The goal of the CHARM is to establish trust between states in light of the global health risk, and allow the global community to reemerge and reconnect. For effective results, national governments will have to cooperate with worldwide standards and regulations, private companies will run medical tests and individuals will be accountable for maintaining their records. The CHARM would allow for trust across three levels: an individual, a receiving state and an international organization. The receiving state will have to approve each testing organization and regulate its own borders. While this solution was designed for the international community, we recommend a similar system for domestic application, especially in states with large territories.

In order for CHARM to be effective, there are four necessary conditions:

*Concession of Medical Privacy* - Each individual would disclose their virus-test results to a foreign state to be granted entrance. This concession is a small one and will protect the global community from experiencing a resurgence of the COVID-19.

*Personal Accountability* - Individuals would be those solely responsible for their CHARM in the same manner they are responsible for acquiring a passport. This would relieve reliance on a governmental bureaucratic system or the need of collective social action. We believe giving an individual the responsibility will instill more trust than a foreign state could acquire because the consequences to the individual will be direct whereas a foreign state might not be exposed to them.

*National Regulation* - A state receiving visitors will have to decide which organizations it approves to provide CHARM and what the necessary qualifications and procedural adjustments it will require to approve entrance.

*Governments concede authority to International Organizations* - A new need for global coordination will arise to support the CHARM, give it validity and common structure. International organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the private medical companies will need to work side-by-side to establish a norm of use for this border pass. Governments will have to hand over national information and relinquish some control in the name of standardization.

We believe this solution is viable for three main reasons. First, certifications of access similar to the CHARM exist in other fields and are socially acceptable (driver's license, medical license, Bar exam, scuba-diving license). Second, CHARM will create the feeling of trust between individuals, states, and the global community. This will lead to a feeling of social security within

the personal space. Third, Non-governmental mechanisms that oversee the process will have a reputational and financial incentive to succeed and an even larger one to avoid failure.

The CHARMing re-globalization can provide a sense of security that was never needed before. It will protect global health security in the future because the threat will be back, but next time, we will be ready for it.