UC SANTA BARBARA

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Tracking the Spread

While sheltering at home this spring quarter, one enterprising undergraduate is using the skills he's learning at UC Santa Barbara to make sense of the pandemic sweeping the globe. Second-year computer science major Eran Naveh has put together a website that tracks cases of COVID-19 in the U.S., allowing users to compare how the disease is impacting different states.

"Like many people, I have been bombarded by news and updates about the coronavirus and early on found myself interested in its spread," Naveh said. Around the same time, he received an email from the New York Times that announced the paper would be providing COVID-19 data free to use. Naveh began investigating how he could use that data to make better sense of the pandemic, especially regarding its effect on his home town in the Bay Area.

The result: the US COVID-19 Tracker, which offers a simple, straightforward way of visualizing and comparing data on the novel coronavirus from around the country. It also allows users to gauge growth by plotting new cases and deaths per day. What's more, Naveh included a section that enables users to create their own data table by customizing drop-down menus for different fields.

"I think it is valuable to be able to see numerous states or counties on the same plot," he said, "especially now that so many areas in the U.S. have reached advanced stages of disease spread."

Most of the site’s visits so far have come from California, though Naveh has also seen visitors from India, Israel and Thailand, among others.

Naveh originally started this project out of personal interest, but soon recognized the value it could provide to others. It went live online April 7. “I plan on reaching out to friends in other disciplines and working with them on calculating more advanced data insights and possibly projections,” he said, adding that he hopes to have a version optimized for mobile use ready in the near future.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.