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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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U.S. voting tech company sues Fox News for \$1.6 billion over election-fraud claims

WILMINGTON, Del. (Reuters) - Dominion Voting Systems Corp said it filed a \$1.6 billion defamation lawsuit against Fox News on Friday, accusing it of trying to boost its ratings by falsely claiming the company rigged the 2020 U.S. presidential election against Donald Trump.

Fox hosts and guests gave life to a false claim that Dominion committed election fraud to help elect President Joe Biden, "taking a small flame and turning it into a raging fire," Dominion lawyer Stephen Shackelford told reporters.

The lawsuit follows similar cases against Trump campaign lawyer Sidney Powell and the Republican former president's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, according to Shackelford.

Dominion, which describes itself as the leading supplier of U.S. election technology, said it filed the lawsuit in Delaware state court.



Trump lost the November 2020 election to Biden, a Democrat, but continued to make false claims of widespread voter fraud, which Dominion said was amplified by Fox.

His supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 as Congress moved to certify the election results, leaving five dead.

The repeated claims that the election was marred by fraud sunk in with Republican voters, though, and Republican lawmakers now cite those false beliefs among voters as justifying new restrictions on voting.

On Thursday, Georgia's Republican governor signed into law restrictions that activists said was focused on reducing the influence of Black voters who helped Democrats win the White House and attain narrow control of the U.S. Senate.

In its lawsuit, Dominion said Fox News tried to draw viewers loyal to Trump by amplifying those false claims, including assertions that Dominion's systems changed votes despite efforts by the voting systems company to set the record straight.

News channel sign is seen on a television vehicle outside the News Corporation building in New York City, in New York, U.S. November 8, 2017. REUTERS/Shannon Stapleton/ "Fox News Media is proud of our 2020 election coverage, which stands in the highest tradition of American journalism, and will vigorously defend against this baseless lawsuit in court," said a statement from the company, which is owned by Fox Corp.

The lawsuit alleges top Fox personalities hosted guests such as Powell to spread lies about Dominion and then repeated and amplified those false claims.

Shackelford said Dominion may sue individuals. "I don't think this is going to be the last lawsuit," he said.

The company projects the "radioactive falsehoods" spread by Fox will cost it \$600 million over the next eight years, according to the lawsuit. Further damage was done to the value of the business, according to the lawsuit.

Dominion's lawsuit adds to the growing list of defamation cases stemming from the election.

Eric Coomer, a senior Dominion employee, sued Trump's re-election campaign and the owners of pro-Trump news outlets One America News Network and Newsmax Media in December. Last month, Dominion asked social media outlets to preserve posts from the networks as well as from Fox News, Trump and others.

Smartmatic, which makes voting machines, made similar claims in a defamation lawsuit that alleged Lou Dobbs and two other Fox News hosts falsely accused the company of helping to rig the election against Trump. The day after Smartmatic sued on Feb. 4, Fox canceled the weekday program "Lou Dobbs Tonight."

Fox News filed a motion to dismiss the Smartmatic lawsuit.

In apparent response to the growing number of defamation cases, conservative U.S. news outlets have begun to rely on prepared disclaimers or additional prerecorded programming to repudiate pro-Trump conspiracy theories spouted by guests and hosts.

Suez ship rescuers weigh time and tide with risk of tip or tear

AMSTERDAM (Reuters) - The Dutch emergency response team hired to free the vast ship blocking the Suez canal has pulled off some dramatic recoveries, including lifting Russia's Kursk nuclear submarine from the Barents Sea floor, but says this is one of the trickiest. Weighing 200,000 tonnes without cargo, the Ever Given is the heaviest vessel that Smit Salvage, a subsidiary of the Dutch marine services company Boskalis contracted in the rescue, has faced in its nearly 180-year history.

With real-time emergency response crews across the globe, Smit Salvage has helped recover or salvage dozens of wrecks and free stranded cargo ships, ferries and tankers.

While lives are not at stake this time, the vast economic interests in one of the world's busiest shipping lanes make the urgency of the situation critical.

FILE PHOTO: FILE PHOTO: A Fox

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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

03/27/2021

To Create A Chronicle Of World Culture Southern News Group Teams Up With Amazon In Publishing Project



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Everybody in their lifetime all has memorable events that include your family activities, your memories, your family photos and your family's roots. Through all your life there are up and down stories. This is a very important record for your family's next generation to remember and to be reviewed by family members and friends.

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has teamed up with Amazon to create a personalized historical chronicle about your family in either Chinese, English or Spanish and we will help you publish a book about your family's history to be handed down to future generations to tell your story.

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Editor's Choice



Farmers play cricket on a deserted highway road during a 12-hour strike, as part of protests against farm laws, at the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border in Ghaziabad, India. REUTERS/Adnan Abidi



Francisco, 34, an asylum seeking migrant from Honduras, cradles his nine month old daughter Megan from the early morning cold and wind, as they await for transport to a processing centre after crossing the Rio Grande river into the United States from Mexico on a raft in La Joya, Texas. REUTERS/Adrees Latif



Medical staff members carry a patient suffering from the coronavirus on a stretcher after arriving on a plane at Vannes airport during a transfer operation from Lille to Vannes hospital, France. REUTERS/Stephane Mahe



Reporters ask questions as U.S. President Joe Biden holds his first formal news conference in the East Room of the White House in Washington. REUTERS/Leah Millis

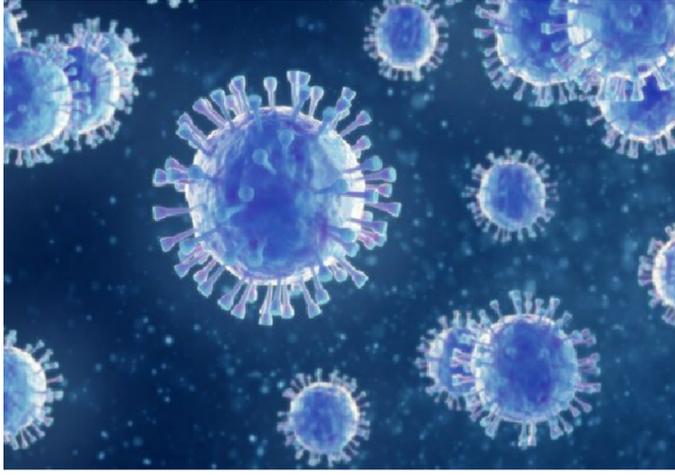


Health care workers place flowers on top a coffin to representing dead colleagues during a protest against Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro and his handling of the coronavirus



A house is left missing a roof after a tornado passed through the Eagle Point subdivision in Hoover, Alabama. REUTERS/Marvin Gentry

U.K. COVID Variant Doubles Every Ten Days In The U.S.



Key Point

COVID-19 Mutations Demand Immediate Action

WebMD's Chief Medical Officer, John Whyte, MD, speaks with Ashish K. Jha, MD, Dean, School of Public Health, Brown University, about immediate actions needed to confront the COVID-19 mutations.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Feb. 8, 2021 -- The coronavirus variant first detected in the United Kingdom is rapidly becoming the dominant strain in several countries and is doubling every 10 days in the United States, according to new data. The findings by Nicole L. Washington, PhD, associate director of research at the genomics company Helix, and colleagues were posted Sunday on the preprint server medRxiv. The paper hasn't been peer-reviewed in a scientific journal. The researchers also found that the transmission rate in the United States of the variant, labeled B.1.1.7, is 30% to 40% higher than that of more common lineages. The findings lend credence to modelling predictions the CDC released in January. The agency said at the time that the new strain could cause more than half of new infections in this country by March, even as the U.S. races to deploy vaccines. In the new study, while clinical outcomes

initially were thought to be similar to those of other coronavirus variants, early reports suggest that infection with the B.1.1.7 variant may increase death risk by about 30%. A coauthor of the current work, Kristian Andersen, told The New York Times, "Nothing in this paper is surprising, but people need to see it."



Andersen, a virologist at the Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, CA, said, "We should probably prepare for this being the predominant lineage in most places in the United States by March."

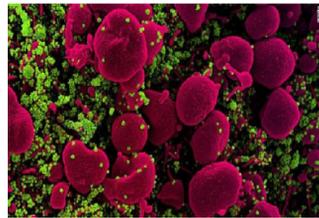
"Our study shows that the US is on a similar trajectory as other countries where B.1.1.7 rapidly became the dominant SARS-CoV-2 variant, requiring immediate and decisive action to minimize COVID-19 morbidity and mortality," the researchers write.

The authors point out that the B.1.1.7 variant became the dominant SARS-CoV-2 strain in the United Kingdom within a couple of months of its detection.

"Since then, the variant has been increasingly observed across many European countries, including Portugal and Ireland, which, like the UK, observed devastating waves of COVID-19 after B.1.1.7 became dominant," the authors write.

The B.1.1.7 variant has likely been spreading between US states since at least December 2020, they write.

As of Sunday, there were 690 confirmed cases of the B.1.1.7 variant in the US in 33 states, according to the CDC. But, the true number of cases is certainly higher. Normal coronavirus tests do not detect if an infection comes from one of the variants. Only genomic sequencing can do that, and the U.S. has only recently begun to ramp up that type of testing.



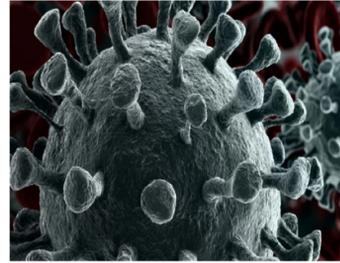
Washington and colleagues examined more than 500,000 coronavirus test samples from cases across the United States that were tested at San Mateo, CA-based Helix facilities since July 2020.

In the study, they findings of the variant varied across states. By the last week in January, the researchers estimated the proportion of B.1.1.7 in the U.S. population to be about 2.1% of all COVID-19 cases, though they found it made up about 2% of all COVID-19 cases in Cal-

ifornia and about 4.5% of cases in Florida. The authors acknowledge that their data is less robust outside of those two states.

While those percentages are still low, "our estimates show that its growth rate is at least 35-45% increased and doubling every week and a half," the authors write.

"Because laboratories in the US are only sequencing a small subset of SARS-CoV-2 samples, the true sequence diversity of SARS-CoV-2 in this country is still unknown," they note.



Michael Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota, said the U.S. is facing a "Category 5" storm with the spread of the B.1.1.7 variant as well as the variants first identified in South Africa and Brazil.

"We are going to see something like we have not seen yet in this country," Osterholm said recently on NBC's Meet the Press. (Courtesy webmd.com)

Related

U.S. Reports Record Number Of Variant Coronavirus Cases

The U.S. on Sunday reported an all-time high of 306 cases of coronavirus variants, with the majority concentrated in Florida, Michigan and Texas, USA Today reported. The new cases included 104 new infections in Florida, for a total of 605 in that state; 85 in Michigan, for a total of 421; and 41 in Texas, for a total of 102. Although various new strains are known to be circulating in the U.S., the majority of the new and existing variant cases are the B.1.1.7. strain that originated in the United Kingdom. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has said the British strain may become the most common in the country over the next month.



Overall coronavirus cases declined in February after reaching an all-time high in January, but there are signs the decline is slowing or reversing. The majority of states on Sunday reported rising case counts for the past week for the first time in more than a month.

Both the variants and the trends come as the U.S. continues administration of the coronavirus vaccine. Over the weekend, Johnson & Johnson began distribution of its shot after it received emergency-use authorization and became the third available vaccine.

The White House has said Johnson & Johnson will have its shots at distribution sites as early as Tuesday and distribute millions of the single-shot vaccine across the country during the next week along with the existing Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. CDC data indicates just under 50 million Americans have received at least one dosage of the vaccine.



Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious diseases expert, has said the vaccines will be largely effective against emerging mutations.

"When you get a variant that diminishes the capability of the vaccine, when you get a good vaccine ... you cannot necessarily get the get the best possible response, but it's still within the cushion of effectiveness," Fauci said on CNN's "State of the Union" Sunday. (Courtesy thehill.com)

What Is A 'Vaccine Passport'? Will You Need One The Next Time You Travel?



In the future, a vaccine passport—or an e-vaccination certificate—could be required.

Key Points

- A "vaccine passport" or "e-vaccination certification of compliance for border crossing regulations" could be required to enable seamless border-crossing.
- Any framework that comes into place will need to be approved by a normative body – such as the WHO – to ensure that its use is ethical and fair.
- European Commission proposes a Digital Green Certificate for the EU.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

For some countries, access to vaccines is increasingly a reality, and millions of vaccines have been purchased and administered, with the hope that in time the world's populations could become COVID-19 immune.

The expectation is that with a vaccine, some aspects of life will return to normal – especially when it comes to travel – which has been particularly hard-hit. This is where a "vaccine passport" or "e-vaccination certification of compliance for border crossing regulations" might become a required travel document, to enable seamless border-crossing and the harmonization of varying national laws.

The European Commission, for example, is proposing a Digital Green Certificate to facilitate safe free movement inside the EU during the pandemic. The Digital Green Certificate will be proof that a person has been vaccinated against COVID-19, re-

ceived a negative test result or recovered from the disease. It will be available free of charge in digital or paper format and will include a QR code to ensure the security and authenticity of the certificate.



There are important questions to be asked, however, around whether vaccinations prevent transmission, the difference between evidence of inoculation and evidence of immunity, and the rights of those people who may be unable to have the vaccine for health or other reasons.

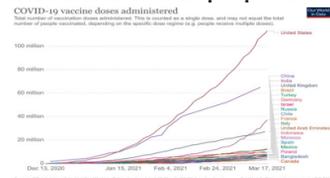
With this in mind, the World Health

Organization (WHO) is looking into the use of technology in the COVID-19 response, and how it can work with member states toward an e-vaccination certificate. At the present time, it is WHO's position that "national authorities and conveyance operators should not introduce requirements of proof of COVID-19 vaccination for international travel as a condition for departure or entry, given that there are still critical unknowns regarding the efficacy of vaccination in reducing transmission".

Importantly, the framework will need to be harmonized, when it comes to standards and the use cases for the certificate, by a normative body like the WHO to ensure that it upholds ethical and equitable principles.

There are also separate initiatives among the private sector, such as the Vaccine Credentials Initiative, which are feeding into this work by offering authentication tools.

Is the idea of a vaccine passport new?



The concept of a passport to allow for cross border travel is something that we've been working on with the Common Trust Network for many months. The focus has been first on diagnostics. That's where we worked with an organization called "The Commons Project" to develop the "Common Trust Framework". This is a set of registries of trusted data sources, a registry of labs accredited to run tests and a registry of up-to-date border crossing regulations.

The set of registries can be used to generate certificates of compliance to prevailing border-crossing regulations as defined by governments. There are different tools to generate the certificates, and the diversity of their authentication solutions and the way they protect data privacy is quite remarkable.

We at the Forum have no preference

when it comes to who is running the certification algorithm, we simply want to promote a unique set of registries to avoid unnecessary replication efforts. This is where we support the Common Trust Framework.



For instance, the Common Pass is one authentication solution – but there are others, for example developed by Abbott, AOK, SICPA (Certus), IBM and others.

How does the system work and how could it be applied to vaccines?

The Common Trust Network, supported by the Forum, is combining the set of registries that are going to enrol all participating labs. Separately from that, it provides an up-to-date database of all prevailing border entry rules (which fluctuate and differ from country to country). Combining these two datasets provides a QR code that border entry authorities can trust. It doesn't reveal any personal health data – it tells you about compliance of results versus border entry requirements for a particular country. So, if your border control rules say that you need to take a test of a certain nature within 72 hours prior to arrival, the tool will confirm whether the traveller has taken that corresponding test in a trusted laboratory, and the test was indeed performed less than three days prior to landing.

The purpose is to create a common good that many authentication providers can use and to provide anyone, in a very agnostic fashion, with access to those registries.



Photo by Daniel Schludi on Unsplash
What is the WHO's role?

There is currently an effort at the WHO to create standards that would process data on the types of vaccinations, how these are channelled into health and healthcare systems registries, the use cases – beyond the management of vaccination campaigns – include border control but also possibly in the future access to stadia or large events. By establishing, in a truly ethical fashion, harmonized standards, we can avoid a scenario whereby you create two classes of citizens – those who have been vaccinated and those who have not.

So rather than building a set of rules that would be left to the interpretation of member states or private-sector operators like cruises, airlines or conveners of gatherings, we support the WHO's effort to create a standard for member states for requesting vaccinations and how it would permit the various kinds of use cases.



It is important that we rely on the normative body (the WHO) to create the vaccine credential requirements. The Forum is involved in the WHO taskforce to reflect on those standards and think about how they would be used.

What about the private sector and separate initiatives?

When registry frameworks are being developed for authentication tools providers, they should at a minimum feed as experiments into the standardization efforts being driven by the WHO, knowing that the final guidance from the only normative body with an official UN mandate may in turn force those providers to revise their own frameworks. We certainly support this type of interaction, as public- and private-sector collaboration is key to overcoming the global challenge posed by COVID-19. (Courtesy weforum.org)