

Software Education Contributes to Government's Response to Coronavirus

blog.keia.org/2020/03/software-education-response-coronavirus/

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What Happened

- Private citizens are building websites and applications to share information about the coronavirus – one of these websites, “Corona Map,” accumulated more than 14 million views in just one month.
- Many of these websites are programmed by university students, and occasionally even some middle school students.
- President Moon Jae-in complimented the student programmer who developed the “Corona Map” and noted that the administration should adopt more efficient information-sharing systems.

Implications: Public investment in software education over the past few years may have contributed to the robustness of ongoing efforts to disseminate information about the coronavirus. Student programmers – many of whom were motivated to study software programming in concert with public education initiatives to prepare the future workforce for the 4th industrial revolution – are building websites that display updates on the viral infection from the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. These websites bolster the Moon administration’s aim to contain the epidemic by ensuring greater public awareness of the situation. In addition, the government believes that greater information dissemination will limit the spread of unverified information that could lead to panic.

Context: The previous Park administration had been strongly criticized for placing an embargo on information regarding the spread of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome outbreak in 2014-15. Concerned that there might be widespread panic, the government even issued a warning that people disseminating unverified information would be prosecuted. Nonetheless, a handful of private websites were built that tracked the spread of the disease. This prompted the government to follow suit.

That same year, unrelatedly, the government announced that software and coding education would be added to the standard education curriculum. This prompted a parallel growth in a private market for software and programming education.

Korea View was edited by Yong Kwon with the help of Gordon Henning, Soojin Hwang, Hyungim Jang, and Ingyeong Park.

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