# When things go wrong – conducting research during a pandemic

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# Intended study

- YouthMetre project → shape EU youth strategy
- Digital participation/collaboration mapping platform
- Workshop series in schools in Italy with 200-300 students
- March – April 2020
- Objectives (developed in fall 2019):
  - Field survey to test the tools' usability with these students
  - Evaluate the relationship between user context and map design usability

# Intended study

- Material:
  - 84 different maps
  - Combination of different map-reading tasks, base map styles, information densities, time pressure components
  - All maps were centered on Abruzzi region, Italy
- Between-subjects design
- Online survey in Italian, integrated in the participation platform

**Data** 12.04.2021    **Regione** Tutte

## Attuali positivi
# 524.417
Incremento
## -8.588
Dati   Andamento

## Dimessi / Guariti
# 3.140.565
Incremento
## 18.010
Dati   Andamento

## Deceduti
# 114.612
Incremento
## 358
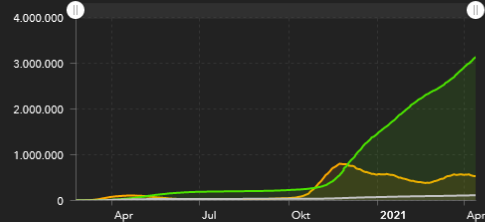Dati   Andamento

## Totale casi
# 3.779.594
Incremento
## 9.789
Dati   Andamento

### Altri dati e informazioni
- Aggiornamento dati sanitari [storico]
- Infografica epidemiologica ISS
- Sorveglianza settimanale Regioni
- Aggiornamento nazionale ISS

### Andamento nazionale



### Nuovi positivi



Positivi   Variazione

Regioni - attuali positivi    Province - casi totali



Esri, HERE

### Regioni - totale casi, attuali e incremento

Lombardia: **767.910** (72.687) (997)

Veneto: **395.794** (31.687) (587)

Campania: **358.426** (91.166) (1.386)

Emilia-Romagna: **352.131** (66.433) (1.151)

Piemonte: **327.212** (27.661) (636)

Lazio: **302.775** (52.068) (1.057)

Puglia: **211.345** (51.576) (815)

Toscana: **209.923** (27.631) (715)

Sicilia: **187.597** (23.709) (1.110)

Friuli Venezia Giulia: **101.491** (10.987) (82)

Liguria: **94.238** (7.733) (306)

Regioni   Province

### Note
**12/4/2021**
La Regione Abruzzo comunica che dal totale dei positivi è stato sottratto 1 caso dei giorni scorsi in quanto duplicato. La Regione Emilia Romagna comunica che sono stati eliminati 8 casi già comunicati come casi confermati, di cui 3 casi positivi a test antigenico ma non confermati da tampone molecolare e 5 casi comunicati nei giorni precedenti, in quanto giudicati non casi COVID-19.

# Problems and how I tackled them

| | |
|---|---|
| • Decrease in communication with other researchers and project partners | 😵 |
| • Can I actually conduct the study? | ✓ Yes, delay of a few months |
| • Participant recruitment? | ✓ Participant recruitment through University newsletters, student email lists, and social media |
| • Change study design? Change research questions? | ✓ Switched from field survey to online survey <br> ✓ Translated the survey to German <br> ✓ Kept everything else as it was designed |

# Consequences of pivot

- Online survey:
  - Lack of control
  - No further explanations possible in case of questions
  - Flexibility for participants to complete the survey

- Participant recruitment:
  - Rather random
  - Involvement of different types of participants
  - Difficulty of finding participants (lack of incentives?)
  - High drop-off rate (survey too long?)
  - Only ca. 100 participants completed the survey

# Pandemic-related problems vs "things can always go wrong"

- Pandemic-related problems:
  - High levels of uncertainty
  - Decreased communication
- Things can always go wrong:
  - Easy shift to other distribution methods if everything is online
  - Adjust the study design
  - Reflect on the changes and solutions in the related publications/ documentations
  - Expect that things can go wrong → **risk management**

# Questions that still persist…

- What would have been potential alternative ways to respond to the changes?
  - Change study design?
  - Change research questions?
  - Decrease complexities? → "be okay with less"?
  - How do you do this when under (time) pressure?
- How do you deal with changes in plans?
  - Risk management?
  - Risk mitigation?