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Predict and Prevent

Rapid ecological and social changes are increasing the risk of emerging threats, from infectious diseases to drought and other environmental disasters. This initiative will use information and technology to empower communities to predict and prevent emerging threats before they become local, regional, or global crises.

Google.org's initial focus will be on emerging infectious diseases, which are on the rise worldwide. Climate change, urbanization, and rising international travel and trade all contribute to this threat. Moreover, humans and animals are coming into closer contact because of environmental degradation and increased demand for animal products. Nearly three out of four new diseases in the last three decades have spread from animals to humans. While everyone faces increasing risk from emerging infectious diseases, the world's poor – who have minimal or no access to health care and may live with and depend on animals for their livelihood – are exceptionally vulnerable and stand to suffer the most.
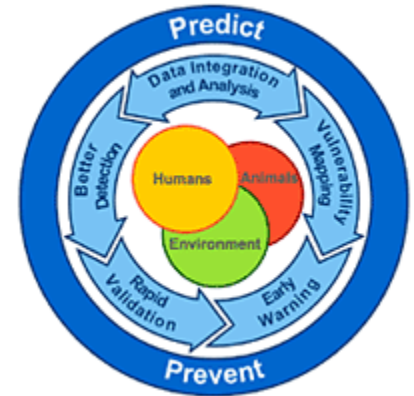
This initiative supports two inter-related pathways from prediction to prevention. The first is vulnerability mapping and identification of "hot spots." The second, creating systems to better detect threats to provide early warning and enable a rapid response.

Identify Hot Spots

Understanding the complex drivers that lead to emerging threats can help communities anticipate surprises and reduce vulnerability. Google.org is initially focusing on:

- Sharing knowledge across human, animal, and environmental health sectors
- Improving data collection, sharing, and analysis for enhanced vulnerability mapping and modeling
- Contributing to enhanced resilience of communities to withstand threats and adapt to changes

Enable Rapid Response

In low-income, rural communities, people often share their living quarters with several different species of animals. As most emerging infectious diseases in the developing world are zoonoses, i.e., they spread from animals to humans, the result is a dual burden to the poor. Zoonoses lead to human disease and death, but also to the loss of animals which represent essential food, savings and productive capacity for the poor. Furthermore, when human infection strikes, health care facilities for accurate diagnosis and treatment are remote or nonexistent.

Video: Introduction to Google.org's new initiative, Predict and Prevent. Its goal is to identify "hot spots" and enable rapid response to emerging

threats, such as infectious disease and climate risk.

Timely, accurate, and accessible information can help prevent localized health crises from becoming regional or global threats. Google.org is focusing on:

- Using innovative methods to quickly find threats wherever they occur
- Confirming outbreaks and identifying their cause
- Alerting key stakeholders, from villagers to global health authorities

See Google.org's Grants & Investments page for a list of current partners. For a closer look, please read our initiative brief or Larry Brilliant's speech from the March 2008 International Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases.

While we are not accepting unsolicited proposals at this time, if you are working in the following specific issue areas and are interested in a partnership, please contact us.

- Collection of specimens at the human/animal interface to identify and map hot spots
- Innovative, event-based surveillance at the community level in the developing world
- Integrated vulnerability mapping to the drivers of emerging infectious diseases

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