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Flood Center researcher awarded artificial intelligence grant from Microsoft



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Assistant Professor Ibrahim Demir of the Iowa Flood Center at the University of Iowa has been awarded a grant from Microsoft as part of the software giant's newest initiative: **AI for Earth**.



Demir will use the award to develop Flood AI, an artificial intelligence (AI) system that serves as a virtual flood expert similar to Siri. Flood AI is accessible through many smart devices, including smartphones, and chat applications such as Skype. Users can ask Flood AI any flood or weather-related question and get a quick answer.



"It's like talking to a friend who happens to be a flood expert," says Demir, who leads the **Demir Hydroinformatics Lab**.

AI for Earth aims at empowering people and organizations to solve global environmental challenges by increasing access to AI tools and educational opportunities while accelerating innovation. Via the Azure for Research AI for Earth award program, Microsoft provides selected researchers and organizations access to its cloud and AI computing resources to accelerate, improve, and expand work on climate change, agriculture, biodiversity, and/or water challenges.

Demir is among the first recipients of AI for Earth, which launched in July 2017 after a competitive and selective grant process. Microsoft intends to invest \$50 million in the program over the next five years.

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