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An App to fight dengue using Google Maps

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Singapore: As mobile innovation and Dengue attacks across the world grow, researchers at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore thought of devising a unique method to curb the spread of the lethal fever.

Researchers at the Centre of Social Media Innovations for Communities (COSMIC) at NTU have developed Mo-Buzz, a web-based application that uses Google Maps and social media to identify dengue outbreaks. It would also provide a resource to stop the spread of dengue fever.

Explaining the working, researchers said in a news report, that the app combines historical weather data and dengue outbreaks and the application adds information on breeding sites and mosquito bites from social media users via smartphones. Using Google Maps, the reports are tagged geographically and appear in real-time.

They further explained that the information gives authorities an early surveillance warning, helping them to curb dengue fever spread, and allowing the concentrated target of sites. The app uses computations and community information to spot potential dengue outbreaks weeks in advance. When dengue hotspots are identified, users can receive the information and are encouraged to share reports with their community via text, Twitter and Facebook, to reduce the potential risk of infection.

COSMIC's principal researcher, Associate Professor May Lwin said, "This new capability represents a significant shift in how the spread of dengue and other infectious diseases can and will be monitored in the future."

Professor Lwin added, "What we're hoping to do with a dynamic system like Mo-Buzz is to create active channels of communication between citizens and health authorities during the dengue season. The main advantage is that it helps everyone take preventive action well ahead of time, which is what is important for preventing dengue and saving lives."