

NTU researcher wins \$100,000 grant for virtual weather map

A LOCAL researcher has become one of only 11 winners worldwide of a prestigious grant from software giant Microsoft totalling nearly \$100,000, for his work in developing a virtual weather map.

Nanyang Technological University (NTU) researcher Lim Hock Beng won the Mi-

crosoft SensorMap research grant for a map he created using data from school weather stations around the island.

Dr Lim, who leads a research programme on sensor networks at the Intelligent Systems Centre, set up by ST Engineering at NTU, used Google Earth technology to create a central data

depository connecting the school weather stations together.

NTU was one of the 11 winners of the grant, for which Microsoft received 60 applications from 13 countries.

The grant money will be used to develop a similar map that uses Microsoft Virtual Earth software.

Dr Lim believes that his map could be used to study dengue hot spots and the urban heat island effect, in which concrete buildings absorb heat during the day and cause spikes in temperature.

The prototype map now uses data from six school weather stations and Dr Lim is in

the process of developing a full-scale model connecting all the weather stations in Singapore.

He is seeking partners for the project.

Dr Lim's work was an indirect beneficiary of a \$1 million project set up last year by Senoko Power to install 178 weather stations in schools

across Singapore.

The stations record weather data like rainfall, temperature and wind velocity.

Senoko also initiated a competition called the National Weather Study Project to spread environmental awareness.

In the contest, each of the 178 schools had to submit

weather-based research projects.

The secondary school prize was won by Tanjong Katong Girls' School for its study on sea levels.

Chongfu Primary took the primary school prize for a study that found that school attendance dropped during hotter weather.