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On New Year's Eve, the software company BlueDot pushed out a notification to its customers about a mysterious illness that appeared in Wuhan, China.

The start-up, which grew out of Dr. **Kamran Khan**'s research at the University of Toronto, combines natural language processing and machine learning to gather insights on the emergence and spread of infectious diseases around the globe. BlueDot was the first to warn the world of a potentially dangerous new illness – now known as COVID-19 – ringing the alarm before the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention did on Jan. 6 and before the World Health Organization followed suit three days later.

What's more, BlueDot's big data analytics platform was able to predict the next 11 cities where the novel coronavirus would hit.

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