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Kevin Lavery, WKAR (2010-02-17)

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EAST LANSING, MI (WKAR) -

Researchers at Michigan State University say a new federal grant will help them better understand the nature of evolution.



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The \$25-million National Science Foundation grant will create a new center that will explore evolutionary processes. MSU will study both natural evolution, and so-called "digital organisms;" self-replicating computer programs that mutate and evolve. Center director Erik Goodman says that work can enhance things like automotive and medical manufacturing:

"The more we learn about biological evolution and digital evolution, the better we're going to be able to solve real-world engineering problems," he explains. "That's important to Michigan."

MSU will be the lead agency. Universities in North Carolina, Idaho, Texas and Washington state will be partners in the project.

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