



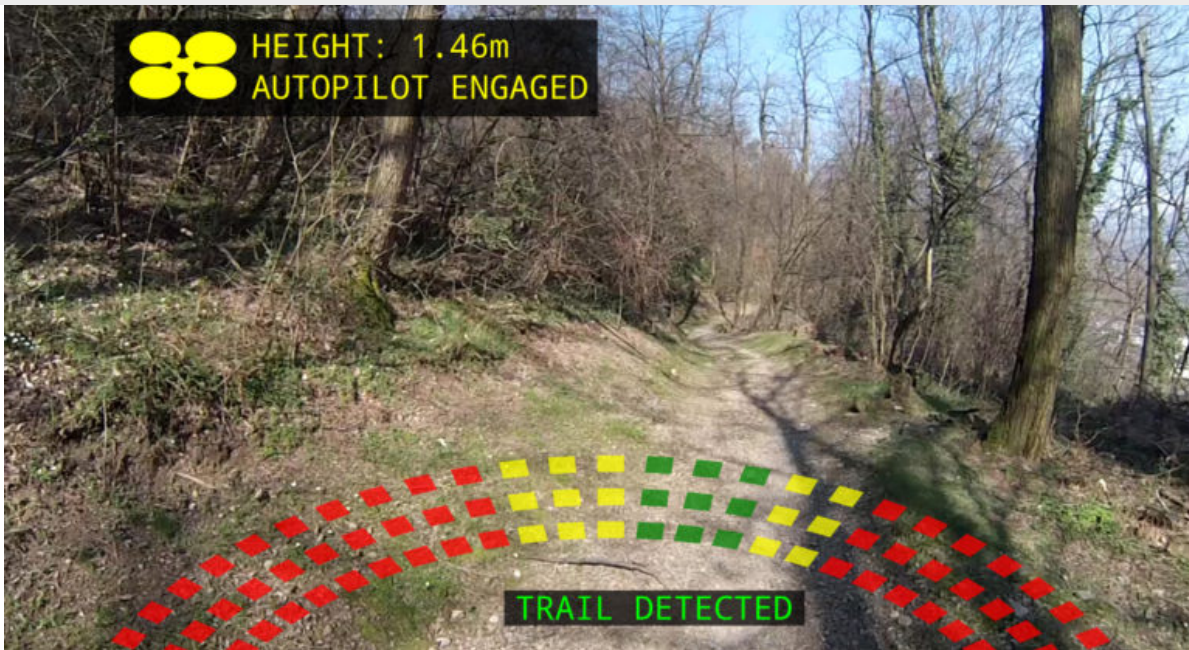
## DRONES BETTER THAN HUMAN RESCUERS AT FOLLOWING MOUNTAIN PATHWAYS

 TRAVEL & TOURISM

**The Deep Neural Network software helps quadcopter drones identify trails and paths, and lead them to lost or injured hikers.**

Every year in Switzerland, emergency centers respond to around 1,000 call outs for lost and injured hikers. It can often take hours and significant manpower to locate lost mountaineers, but new software for quadcopter drones is making the hunt quicker and easier, and has the potential to help find human survivors in disaster zones around the world.

The drone uses a computer algorithm called a [Deep Neural Network](#). The program was developed by researchers at the University of Zurich and the Dalle Molle Institute for Artificial Intelligence. The drone uses the algorithm to learn trails and paths through a pair of small cameras, interpreting the images and recognizing man-made pathways. Even when working on a previously unseen trail, it was able to guess the correct direction in 85 percent of the cases. The drones' speed and accuracy make them more effective than human trackers.



The researchers hope that eventually multiple small drones could be combined with human search and rescue missions, to cover more terrain and find people faster. The drones can cover terrain quickly and check hazardous areas to minimize risk to human workers, and its AI can identify paths and avoid crashing without any human involvement.

However, the developers say the technology is still in its early stages, with new software R&D required to make the drones able to identify human targets and relay this back to rescue teams.

We've already seen [ambulance drones](#) helping citizens give lifesaving procedures before professionals arrive. How else can drones and robots help rescue workers save more lives?

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