

IBM Watson helps deliver fast and trusted information on COVID-19 for the UN SDSN Youth Philippines' interactive dashboard

Manila, Philippines, 13 July 2020: IBM (NYSE: IBM) today announced that it is collaborating with United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (UN SDSN) Youth Philippines' to deliver fast and trusted COVID-19 information to the Filipinos by using IBM Watson Assistant, a conversational AI solution designed and trained to understand natural language and interact with users to provide responses to COVID-19 questions. Since deployment, the average daily conversations the virtual agent using IBM Watson Assistant is having has increased by 1050% as compared to the previous QA platform UN SDSN Youth Philippines was using.

In April this year, SDSN Youth became part of the UN COVID-19 Response Task Force. With a vision to bring normalcy and empower the citizens, SDSN Youth is fast tracking initiatives to help the country control and manage COVID-19. Since the outbreak, citizens are continuously looking for accurate updates and information. In order to maximise citizen outreach, UN SDSN Youth¹ in the Philippines has created the Philippine Interactive Dashboard (<https://covid19.sdsnyouthph.org/>), a consolidated and comprehensive one-stop shop for all relevant information on COVID-19. Designed specifically for the Filipinos, especially the youth, the dashboard aims to efficiently learn more about COVID-19 from reputable sources, and presents data in an appealing format. It has been averaging around 200,000 site visits a month as of June 2020.

The virtual agent can answer citizens' questions, asking for clarification or redirecting the user to specific information on the dashboard or to other websites of related government departments and official bodies. The virtual agent is deployed in a web browser and it is built in a way that it safeguards the privacy of the users.

The virtual agent is using IBM Watson Assistant, hosted on the IBM public cloud, and state-of-art enterprise AI search capabilities with Watson Discovery to understand and respond to common questions about COVID-19. It leverages trusted information sources, including guidance from the World Health Organization, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), and SDSN Youth's Philippine Interactive Dashboard.

Using these sources, it understands and responds to common questions including pre-trained COVID-19 symptoms and testing information, public service information, and additional intents organizations can select from the IBM's content catalog. Watson Assistant continuously learns and gets better the more it is trained and used.

According to Aileen Judan-Jiao, IBM Philippines President and Country General Manager, "In these

unprecedented times, access to accurate information plays a critical role in allaying fears, dispelling myths and building trust among citizens. I am excited to see today's Filipino youth proactively playing a part in making a difference in today's different normal brought about by this pandemic. This bears testimony to our commitment to lend IBM's technology, resources, and people, to support Filipinos with easy access to trusted, relevant information from reliable sources. IBM is the innovation partner to businesses, governments and citizens across the world, and is committed to marshalling its resources, technology and expertise towards initiatives that help to manage COVID-19 outbreak."

Judan-Jiao added, "We are currently offering Watson Assistant to local government agencies, businesses, hospitals or other healthcare organizations while assisting with the initial set up, which can typically be done in just a few days. Organizations can customize the solution to address questions specific to their city or region or integrate IBM Watson Assistant to its existing back-end ERP systems."

Julio Macrohon, Overall Project Lead and Board Secretary of UN SDSN Youth Philippines' Leadership Council said, "IBM Watson Assistant has been very helpful in answering the most common COVID-19 questions, especially those coming from the youth. Having the Watson Discovery to search through other reputable sources has also further increased the wealth of information we can share with our users. All in all, this partnership has allowed SDSN Youth to streamline its operations and maximize the time and effort of our volunteers, thus enabling us to better achieve our mission of fighting against both the pandemic and infodemic."

With COVID-19 affecting more countries, areas and territories globally, IBM is helping government agencies, healthcare organizations, academic institutions, businesses and NGOs throughout the world use AI to put critical data and information into the hands of their citizens. Aside from the Philippines, IBM Watson Assistant is also currently at work in the COVID-19 initiatives of more than 25 countries and counting, including Thailand, the Czech Republic, and the USA. COVID-19 has changed what normal means for customers, citizens, businesses, government agencies and healthcare organizations alike. In similar times of uncertainty, IBM has and will continue to leverage its technology and expertise for social good.

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<https://asean.newsroom.ibm.com/2020-07-13-IBM-Watson-helps-deliver-fast-and-trusted-information-on-COVID-19-for-the-UN-SDSN-Youth-Philippines-interactive-dashboard>