



Dashlabs.ai automates lab diagnostics in clinics with AI

By Aubrey Rose A. Inosante
Reporter

STARTUP Dashlabs.ai is automating the diagnostic lab process of local clinics using artificial intelligence (AI), resulting in quicker and more accurate results, its top official said.

"These laboratories and clinics used to take seven to 14 days to process 500 to 1,000 patients," Weston Coleman Lim, chief executive officer (CEO) at Dashlabs.ai, told *BusinessWorld* in a videocall on Sept. 13.

"After one year of using Dashlabs to help them facilitate the same bulk operations, it now only takes them 24 to 48 hours," he added.

The CEO said medical technologists benefit from the software because it does away with manual transcriptions, which is time-consuming and prone to errors.

"Due to the volume of patients, it's easy to make a mistake," he said. "You might miss a triglyceride reading or a cholesterol reading, and you think that's normal."

An abnormal result is displayed in red text using the Dashlabs.ai software.

The software includes tests like hematology, clinical chemistry, blood count, and uric acid. Radiologists can also remotely retrieve a patient's X-ray and electrocardiogram results.

"The third party AI model tells us that if it's abnormal, there's a risk that a person has lung cancer or tuberculosis," Mr. Lim said. "We help radiologists screen through X-rays to spot life-threatening diseases. Our role is to help doctors spot these issues."

Dashlabs.ai, which was founded in 2020, works with more than 200 clinics nationwide, including those in Cebu, Davao, Metro Manila, and some parts of Luzon.

"We work with all kinds of clinics and healthcare partners from sophisticated ones that do work for major business process outsourcing companies for their annual physical exams," he added.

"During the pandemic, that was the first time the country felt that we were held back by manual processes," Mr. Lim said.

"We had the machines to handle the volume, but we could not manage information properly," he added, noting that Dashlabs used to mainly serve

airports for travelers and overseas Filipino workers.

Mr. Lim said they realized that there was a bottleneck in the annual physical and preemployment exams of many companies, so they entered this market.

Miguel Carlo S. Gemotra, cofounder and chief commercial officer at Dashlabs.ai, said the company plans to launch this year a free-tier plan for laboratories that are starting out.

Dashlabs.ai offers clinics a monthly base subscription plan at P2,500. This includes features such as patient registration and "cashier," where payments are linked to a patient and patient records are saved in a database.

The software can also flag abnormal results and generate results in portable document format (PDF). The clinics can then e-mail patients and medical professionals their results. The software can also produce QR (quick response)-coded results.

Some optional add-ons are accounting and ledger, machine integration, and queueing modules, which cost P2,500 to P5,000.

Dashlabs.ai has served 10 million patients nationwide.

From trash to treasure: Cura Furn makes upcycled furniture

By Edg Adrian A. Eva

CAVITE CITY-BASED Cura Furn is using upcycled pieces to make furniture to help businesses reduce their carbon footprint.

"I hope there would be more businesses... that would really push upcycled pieces," Giuliana B. Anastacio, owner and creative head of Cura Furn, said in a video interview.

In Western countries like the US, the threat of "fast furniture" — mass-produced, relatively inexpensive, and easily discarded furniture — is on the rise, the *New York Times* reported. The threat of fast furniture, similar to "fast fashion," could increase waste.

Americans generate at least 12 million tons of furniture waste yearly, a 450% increase from 1960, most of it ending up in landfills, according to a 2018 report from the US Environmental Protection Agency.

The Philippines lacks data on furniture waste, but the country generated 16.63 million metric tons of solid waste in 2020, state auditors said in a 2023 report on the country's Solid Waste Management Program.

It is expected to reach 19.76 million metric tons by 2030 and 24.5 million metric tons by 2045 despite the enactment of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

In her fieldwork, Ms. Anastacio has seen the large amount of furniture regularly thrown away by businesses and residents, including pieces that are still in good condition.

"Some people would rather dispose of it rather than keep it," she said. "I was surprised to know how many furniture pieces

are being disposed of every day, every week, and every month."

Through Cura Furn, Ms. Anastacio is advancing her sustainability advocacy by transforming discarded furniture into new creations.

One of the company's major projects involved upcycling hundreds of swivel chairs and stools bought from closed restaurants and business establishments.

They transformed these pieces and sold them all at a reasonable price.

"Imagine 300 or 400 units that could fill a six-wheeler truck," Ms. Anastacio said in Filipino. "These could have ended up in landfills, but we found homes for them."

Cura Furn also provides upcycling services, including restoration and redesign, for furniture with a sentimental value.

Their services cover dining sets, buffet tables, hatch cabinets, stools, chairs, sofa sets and more.

But some consumers are reluctant to buy upcycled furniture because they can buy inexpensive pieces made by multinational companies.

"We always say that, for now, upcycling furniture may be a bit more expensive, but it's more than the price," she said. "It's giving life to these discarded pieces."

Ms. Anastacio hopes that more Filipino homes and businesses would adopt upcycling practices, which would help lower the cost of upcycled products and make them more accessible to more consumers.

This would also encourage major furniture companies to shift away from mass production and adopt upcycling, she added.



Regulator: Strong beneficial ownership policies needed to prevent corporate misuse

STRONG beneficial ownership policies are essential to prevent the misuse of corporate structures for illegal activities, according to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

"As businesses increasingly operate across borders, understanding and implementing robust beneficial ownership policies frameworks will become essential for compliance and risk management," the SEC said in an e-mailed statement.

According to the SEC, the Philippines has made "significant progress" in implementing beneficial ownership policies.

These include requiring the declaration of beneficial ownership in the general information sheets of corporations, barring

the issuance of bearer shares to enhance transparency, and launching an amnesty program last year to improve compliance.

The commission added that it has domestic and international efforts to promote best practices in beneficial ownership transparency.

The SEC has signed data-sharing agreements with law enforcement agencies such as the Government Procurement and Policy Board, the Bureau of Internal Revenue, and other law enforcement agencies.

Provisions for beneficial ownership transparency have also been included in the newly enacted Republic Act 12009 or the New Government Procurement Act signed in July 2024.

"The SEC remains committed to supporting these efforts, recognizing that regional cooperation is crucial to achieving sustainable progress in the fight against the misuse of corporations for crimes," it said.

The SEC said this as it sent representatives to the Regional Peer Exchange on Advancing Anti-Corruption Efforts through Beneficial Ownership Transparency in Jakarta, Indonesia on Aug. 12-15.

The event was organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and Open Ownership. It gathered representatives from Southeast Asia to discuss the role of beneficial ownership transparency in

encouraging financial integrity and fighting corruption.

The SEC said the peer exchange highlighted the increasing importance of beneficial ownership transparency as a tool for businesses and governments, as well as the growing need to identify the individuals who ultimately own or control companies to prevent the misuse of corporate structures for illicit activities.

"The discussions underscored the need for Southeast Asian nations to recognize beneficial ownership transparency as a growing practice and its importance in fostering a culture of transparency and accountability in business operations," the SEC said.

— Revin Mikhael D. Ochave

Petron raises nearly P17B from share offering

PETRON Corp. has completed its follow-on offering and was able to raise P16.8 billion in preferred shares, the Ang-led company announced on Tuesday.

In a stock exchange disclosure, the oil company said it had sold P8.5 billion worth of Series 4D shares and P8.33 billion worth of Series 4E shares.

The shares were offered from Sept. 5 to Sept. 13, consisting of 13 million preferred shares and an oversubscription option of up to four million additional shares, at a share price of P1,000 each.

Petron previously said that the proceeds from the latest offering would be used to redeem the company's Series 3A preferred shares, refinance maturing obligations, and fund general corporate purposes, including the purchase of crude oil inventory.

The shares are set to be listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange on Sept. 23.

This offering represents the second tranche of Petron's shelf registration for up to 50 million preferred shares. In the first tranche, the company offered up to 22.5 million preferred shares.

Petron tapped BDO Capital & Investment Corp. as the sole issue manager. Bank of Commerce, BDO Capital, Chinabank Capital Corp., Philippine Commercial Capital, Inc., PNB Capital and Investment Corp., and SB Capital Investment Corp. have been designated as joint lead underwriters and joint bookrunners.

Meanwhile, East West Banking Corp., First Metro Investment Corp., and RCBC Capital Corp. were tapped as the selling agents for the offer.

— Sheldeen Joy Talavera

Meralco mobility arm partners with Uratex for EV adoption

MOVEM Electric, Inc., the sustainable mobility arm of Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), has partnered with foam and mattress maker Uratex Group of Companies to support the latter's logistics operations.

Movem handed over to Uratex an electric light delivery truck and a 60-kilowatt direct current fast charger for its manufacturing plant in Plaridel, Bulacan, the company said in a statement on Tuesday.

This move is intended to support Uratex's plan to boost its adoption and deployment of electric vehicles (EVs) with a convenient and accessible charging solution to its drivers and operations," the company said.

"Our vision of driving the Philippines' journey towards an emissions-free transportation sector is only made possible through working with like-minded partners such as Uratex," said Raymond B. Ravelo, president of Movem, and first vice-president and chief sustainability officer of Meralco.



"Together, we will continue to promote key initiatives in vehicle electrification, helping protect and preserve our planet, and ultimately powering good lives for all," he added.

Uratex Managing Director Peachy C. Medina said that the company has been gradually converting its internal fleet to electrical as part of its commitment to achieve its zero emissions goal.

"Movem assisted us from our initial inquiry, choosing the right

model fit for our purpose, delivery, installation, and trained our drivers and maintenance personnel," she said.

Meralco said it has supported Uratex to meet the latter's requirements to switch to renewable energy sources under the government's Green Energy Option Program.

The power distributor established Movem last year as its new subsidiary that will focus on the development and deploy-

ment of various electric transportation solutions.

Meralco's controlling stakeholder, Beacon Electric Asset Holdings, Inc., is partly owned by PLDT Inc.

Hastings Holdings, Inc., a unit of PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary MediaQuest Holdings, Inc., has an interest in *BusinessWorld* through the Philippine Star Group, which it controls. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

Eastern Communications plans further expansion in Visayas

TELECOMMUNICATIONS company and information and communications technology (ICT) solutions provider Eastern Telecommunications Philippines, Inc. (Eastern Communications) is further expanding its footprint and services across the country.

This follows Eastern Communications' announcement that it is expanding its services to Roxas City, Capiz in the Visayas through its "Via Eastern" initiative, which provides enterprises with digital tools and solutions.

"We are proud to support Roxas City's vision of becoming a center for business and technology through our ICT solutions by offering business-grade connectivity and digital tools

that address the unique needs of the local business landscape," Eastern Communications Vice-President and Head of Sales Michael S. Castañeda said in a statement on Tuesday.

"As Eastern Communications marks its presence in the area, it plans to extend its services to other cities across Capiz in the future," the company said.

For the year, the telecommunications provider has allocated P1.15 billion for its capital expenditure (capex) budget to fund its expansion plans.

It said that most of its capex would be used to strengthen the company's network while also growing its enterprise product offerings. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**