ICDL calls for the need to raise public awareness on Intellectual Property Rights

The Foundation steps up measures to ensure the use of original software and courseware in its accredited centres

25 October 2005

ICDL GCC Foundation, the governing body of the International Computer Driving License (ICDL) programme in the Gulf States, has reinforced its commitment to the protection of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) by creating public awareness on the harms caused by software piracy to national economies and computers. Furthermore, the Foundation had intensified its efforts to ensure the use of original software and training material in all its ICDL-accredited training and testing centres throughout the Gulf region.

"ICDL GCC Foundation is a strong advocate of the use of proprietary and licensed software. We strongly believe that IPR protection is a fundamental building block of an integral IT society." said Jamil Ezzo, Director General of ICDL GCC Foundation. "Protecting Intellectual Property acts as a catalyst for innovation from within the region and around the world, as it ensures return on investment to developers, which would in turn encourage them to further reinvest and innovate," he continued

"The ICDL programme is designed not to only educate the public on the use of common computer applications, but also on the netiquettes of digital society. Our syllabus teaches candidates to take a responsible role towards the environment by recycling paper and toner cartridges; to use the computer and Internet at work for work purposes; and most importantly the significance of complying with copyright and intellectual property rights laws. The ICDL programme highlights to candidates the threats posed by computer viruses as well as the detrimental effects of software piracy on national economies." added Ezzo.

To further its drive to safeguard the integrity of copyright and IPR laws, the Foundation has resolved to step up monitoring of its 750 ICDL-accredited centres spread throughout the GCC region to ensure that they use only proprietary software, teaching and testing aids in the programmes imparted to candidates.

Several Gulf countries have made significant progress in their campaign against software piracy, though overall piracy rate for the Middle East region stands at a relatively high 58 per cent. The UAE, for example, has achieved remarkable success in its anti-piracy drive and the country now records a significantly low piracy rate of 34 per cent, and is among the list of 20 nations with the lowest piracy rates in the world.

"IT users in the region are becoming more aware about the importance of protecting IPR, and there is a growing realization among them that they too have a stake in promoting a safe and legal digital environment. We believe organizations and individuals alike have a responsibility to ensure the protection of IPR and copyright laws. ICDL GCC Foundation is working with governments and organizations to promote the use of original software as an essential responsibility, and is focused on contributing to the cause of a piracy-free Arab world in every possible way," Ezzo said.

"Evidence of original software license and the selection of a courseware provider are among the first steps we require from a centre before granting accreditation. ICDL GCC Foundation consistently monitors the quality of training and testing provided by all accredited centres as well as the authenticity of the software and courseware being used. We are resolved to take strict action against those centres which fail to adhere to stipulated quality standards or which are found to use pirated software in the ICDL training and testing they offer," Ezzo concluded.