

ICDL calls on region's governments to step up public awareness on IT security



Dissemination and training crucial to addressing growing & pervasive cyber-threats across the GCC

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ICDL GCC Foundation, an advocate of digital skills and cyber safety for-all; and the sole operator of ICDL in the GCC and Iraq, is strongly urging the region's governments to push for greater vigilance against cyber-crime.

The Foundation points out how, early this year, a global cyber crime ring was able to steal USD45 million from two Gulf-based banks. This incident has sparked serious concerns on the region's ability to combat cyber crimes and maintain acceptable levels of IT security. Since the GCC has one of the highest Internet growth rate in the World and has been adopting the latest technologies, ITC solutions and embracing social networking at a rapid rate through smartphones, PCs and tablets, it has also been drawing increasing global interest among hackers and other criminal elements.

A major hurdle preventing more effective measures against IT threats is the lack of awareness not only among the public but even among corporate and government entities that are supposed to be the most vigilant against attacks. ICDL GCC warns that ongoing efforts among GCC states to establish 'Smart Governments' that rely heavily on IT to operate and deliver public services can open doors to possible cyber attacks. The Foundation recommends more IT security awareness and training efforts among government entities to more easily detect, resolve and prevent cyber threats.

"Cyber threats are becoming more innovative and increasingly daring by the day. Depending totally on IT security products to protect our livelihood is simply not enough. Hence, it is imperative for governments across the Gulf to raise awareness on the importance of cyber safety at all sectors and all levels. We need to act together as governments, organizations and individuals before the situation becomes too overwhelming. As they say, an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure," said Jamil Ezzo, Director General of ICDL GCC Foundation.

ICDL GCC has been spearheading regional initiatives to place IT security and cyber-safety at the top of government agendas across the region since 2012, which have been adopted by many government entities, security agencies and educational institutions in the region. It has been

supporting wide scale implementations of awareness programmes including skills validation through training and certification programmes specifically on IT Security, Cyber Safety and the effective, safe, responsible and mindful ways to use Social Media. The Foundation continues to collaborate closely with concerned authorities and other experts to further raise the level of IT security awareness among the general public.

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About ICDL:

The International Computer Driving License (ICDL) is a global computer literacy initiative developed to provide knowledge about Information Technology (IT) and enhance competence of using personal computers and common computer applications for all the citizens of the world. The ICDL GCC Foundation is the sole body to implement and disseminate the program across the GCC States and Iraq with the support of leading educational institutions and accredited bodies. The Foundation mission is to enable proficient use of Information and Communications Technology that empowers individuals, organizations and society, through the development, promotion and delivery of quality certification programmes around the world.

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