# ICDL calls on GCC women to advance their computer skills

Jamil Ezzo: "IT literate women play a vital role in the region's advancement towards a digital society"

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ICDL GCC Foundation, the governing body and the certification authority of the International Computer Driving License (ICDL) programme in the Gulf region, has called on Arab women to advance their computer skills, in the wake of the growing use of computers in education systems and at workplaces.



Women have traditionally assumed the responsibility of raising the family, and as children find an increasing need to use the Internet and computers, mothers should keep up with technology to be able to guide and teach their youngsters, to efficiently use their computers to maximise children benefit from this essential tool.

There are many concerns being raised nowadays about the impact of the Internet and computers on children. The Internet is a diversified environment and proper guidance should be provided for young users to efficiently use this resource. Millions of children in the Middle East region are actively using computers in their learning process. The computer today is used extensively in the education system, students have to use PCs to do homework, conduct research, and gather information about their interests. Computers broaden the minds of generations and increase the logical thinking of children. They are also considered one of the best communication tools. E-mailing, and video conferencing have today become an integral part of the education system and in the corporate world. Years of research clearly show that children who have educated and IT savvy parents are more likely to succeed in school and later in university, as their parents would be more actively involved in their education process.

Jamil Ezzo, Director General, ICDL GCC Foundation, said, "Further participation of women in the digital society is necessary for achieving socio-economic development in our region. Women are an integral part of our society as they have been the pillars of the family at the micro level of society. It is unfortunate that there is still a large percentage of women who have not realized their potential and developed their skills to become part of the digital society. The increased IT literacy among women will contribute significantly to improving productivity in the workplace, influence the proper use of Internet by children, and increase the household income which will all positively impact the entire society."

Women in advanced countries are actively using personal computers to make a difference in the way they perform daily tasks in their personal and professional lives. Arab Women should approach technology and familiarise themselves with the benefits they can get through adopting them. Computers have become an essential part of every household and many advantages can be obtained through using them effectively. Many Governments across the GCC have taken up initiatives to

encourage their citizens to use computers by providing them various facilities such as easy monthly instalments and reduced prices.

As partners of their male counterparts, women must be aware about the benefits of the latest online services that ease their lives. Paying bills and inquiring about fess are nowadays conducted through e-Government services. Shopping can also be done online through the diverse online shopping websites. Continuing education has also become easier with the latest e-Learning solutions provided by many schools and universities in the various languages including Arabic.

"Of the total ICDL certifications earned in the GCC region last year, 26 per cent were women, which marks a 4 per cent increase compared to 2004. As the global standard for IT literacy, we call on women in the region to give greater importance to empowering themselves with IT skills. ICDL GCC Foundation is committed to further IT literacy among all members of society. We will continue our efforts and will continue to work closely with the various authorities in the region to raise awareness about the importance of advancing computer skills among women," concluded Ezzo.