



Press Release

Abu Dhabi first to roll out ICDL's e-Citizen program in the Middle East

e-Citizen aims to prepare the public to use e-Services and other online services in their daily lives

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ICDL GCC Foundation, the governing body and certification authority of the International Computer Driving License (ICDL) program in the Gulf, recently announced the start of the implementation of the "e-Citizen" program in the Middle East with the first batch of candidates in Abu Dhabi. The e-Citizen program, which aims to prepare the public to use e-Services and other online services in their daily lives, is being implemented in Abu Dhabi in collaboration with the UAE Academy, an affiliate of Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which is working on the design and the development of distinct and practical educational programs.

The ECDL Foundation, the developer of the e-Citizen computer skills program, has been launching the program worldwide to enhance the essential digital skills of people from the public and private sectors so that they can more efficiently utilize the online services offered in their countries via the Internet. The initial pilot program will be offered to 2,500 candidates from selected social groups in Abu Dhabi, particularly women, retirees and job seekers. ICDL GCC Foundation is currently working with the relevant society and governmental organisations throughout the country and the region on similar initiatives to promote the e-Citizen program.

“In today’s challenging economic times, organizations as well as individuals must exert every effort to become more efficient and productive by applying information communications technology in their day-to-day transactions. We have introduced the e-Citizen digital awareness program as an initiative to boost computer and Internet literacy among the general public and maximize the utilization of the so many services already available online,” said Jamil Ezzo, Director General, ICDL GCC Foundation.

The e-Citizen program empowers individuals with the skills to use computers and the many publicly available online services. The UAE Academy will provide relevant training in accordance to the e-Citizen syllabus in three parts: Part One, the Foundation Skills Block, will focus on basic requirements for use of computers and the Internet; Part Two, the Information Search Block, will teach Internet surfing and researching skills; while Part Three, the e-Participation Block, teaches the utilization of online services using locally available online services in areas such as news, e-government, employment, travel and the purchase of products and services over the Internet.

Training on the e-Citizen program will be available on a dedicated website (<http://www.icdlgcc.org/ecitizen/en/uae/index.htm> and <http://www.icdlgcc.org/ecitizen/ar/uae/index.htm>), while participants will also be given printed guidebooks. The program will be delivered either in Arabic or English and will last from 20 to 30 hours depending on the individual's background. Moreover, ICDL has developed the websites to suit the local services available in the UAE and to satisfy the needs of UAE users. Trainees will undergo a prescribed single-set on line test that lasts 45 minutes and covers the three parts of the program; those who pass will be awarded an international certificate and a smart card definition, which contains record of a private code. ICDL GCC intends successful e-Citizens to be employed at both the national and regional levels.

“Public service delivery has improved radically with the introduction of various e-government services. As the leader in e-governance readiness in the Arab world, the UAE has the responsibility of further improving public access to online services; the e-Citizen project will play a major role in the UAE and our region's quest for widespread digital literacy and increased public participation in governance,” concluded Dr. Abdullah Abonamah, Vice President of Academic Programs, UAE Academy.

The ICDL GCC Foundation and UAE Academy will jointly seek funding and support from stakeholders in a digitally aware society, such as Abu Dhabi e-Government, Etihad Airlines, Etisalat, banks, Abu Dhabi Emiratization Council, and other businesses offering online services to assist in accommodating a bigger number of participants in Abu Dhabi.

“Millions of people throughout the region are still unable to join the information society available in their countries, and take advantage of the substantial investments that the region has made in the

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development of e-Government projects and infrastructure because most of these people lack basic computer and Internet skills. The e-Citizen program will bridge this gap and provide all members of the community with the opportunity to enhance their ability to utilise the Internet for various transactions at the social, economic or governmental levels,” concluded Ezzo.

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