



Press Release

ICDL's new 'IT Security' certification programme to arm computer users against today's digital dangers

Cybercrime a growing threat for active Internet corridors in the Middle East

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Recent high profile cyber incidents in the region have highlighted the increasingly complex, sophisticated and organized nature of cybercrime. According to a Symantec *Internet Threat Report* 65% of adults globally have fallen prey to cybercrime; the incurred costs of these cyber attacks amount to nearly \$114 billion annually as highlighted by another *Cybercrime report* published by Norton. More than two-thirds of adults who spend time online have been a victim of cybercrime in their lifetime. Cybercriminals attack by the second, resulting in more than one million victims globally every day; that is two citizens every minute in the UAE alone, second only to Saudi Arabia.

These facts underline a growing threat in a region experiencing a rapid surge in technology use by individuals. As of December 31, 2011, the Middle East has posted the second highest regional increase in Internet usage for the period 2000 to 2011 at a rate of 2,244.8 per cent. The GCC

region posts the highest Internet growth in the Arab World with around 4 million Internet users that account for a 10 per cent Internet penetration rate.

Individuals at home and in the workplace with low to medium computer experience are especially susceptible to Internet fraud and attacks as they consider themselves adequately protected by their software and hardware, unaware that criminal elements have the advanced skills and persistence to break into their systems.

In response to the growing need for an adapted security awareness programme that addresses these risks at the individuals' level, ICDL GCC Foundation introduced the new "IT Security" module. This Security focused programme provides the learner with an essential understanding of how to use a computer in a safe and secure manner, protecting personal data and that of other users. With "IT Security", ICDL will intensify and support government efforts to educate the general public on the best practices of cyber safety.

The new module also provides flexibility and a wider range of options for achieving the ICDL certification. Candidates will now have the choice to take IT Security as an additional module to the ICDL package or replace any of the 7 required modules with this new unit to gain the ICDL Certificate. Individuals can also choose to take IT Security as a standalone certification.

By providing a more flexible approach to certification, ICDL GCC Foundation is responding to market demand; people either want or need to be certified in a broader range of activities from which they can choose.

ICDL-accredited centers will be offering the new ICDL Module 12 - IT Security to impart essential skills on the secure daily use of ICT, such as the use of techniques and applications to protect network connections; data and information management; proper Internet etiquette or 'netiquette,' responsible use of Social Media, and Parental Control. Participants will gain a solid understanding of the key concepts related to the importance of secure information and data, physical security, privacy and identity theft.

The module's content categories include Security Concepts, Malware, Network Security, Secure Web Use, Communications, and Secure Data Management.

"The dangers of the Internet must not be taken lightly. As the saying goes, a pound of prevention is better than an ounce of cure. Left untended, security gaps in the home or office network could

lead to disastrous results such as identity theft or even physical attacks. The occurrence of cyber-crimes in our region has proliferated due to the lack of awareness, and the lack of educated prevention by the user. The ICDL IT Security module arms computer users with the prerequisite skills to create robust defenses to their offline and online environments, providing them with a valuable asset amidst the surge in Internet activity being experienced throughout the Gulf region,” said Jamil Ezzo, Director General of the ICDL GCC Foundation.

ICDL is the world’s most recognized ICT certification widely known and respected for its ethos of not-for-profit and vendor neutrality. Like the program’s 12 other existing modules, ICDL Module 12 - IT Security has been designed to provide real-world examples that make practical skills relevant and deliver content that references relevant studies and statistics. It addresses the need to keep pace with technology advancements and raises awareness on the basics of protecting and preserving data, identity and privacy.

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