ICDL call on government, academic and private sectors to support a new turning point in digital awareness

IT Security and Social Media are main ICDL topics in in 2013

Dubai, UAE (08, November 2012) **-** ICDL GCC Foundation, the governing body and certification authority responsible for advocating digital skills and promoting the worldwide recognized ICDL certification programs across the GCC and Iraq, today announced its vision for digital awareness, with IT Security and Social Media being key pillars over the next 12 months. The announcement came during the annual recognition event ceremony held today at the Amwaj Rotana Hotel in Dubai to acknowledge key stakeholders and partners for supporting ICDL's 2012 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, which empowered more than 6,000 youth from the Gulf region with essential computer skills.

The flagship annual event, which was held for the third consecutive year, recognized the collaborative CSR efforts driven by ICDL GCC Foundation which included 42 participating organizations from various

sectors. The ceremony was attended by officials representing government regulatory bodies, educational authorities, universities, schools, training centers as well as sponsors from the banking, airlines, IT, entertainment, media and other sectors from across the GCC region.

The recognition event was also an opportunity for ICDL's network of accredited partners to share their Best Practices and Achievements in relation to their implementation of computer awareness programs based on the ICDL programme, with the chance to be nominated to win ICDL's regional Best Practice Award for 2012. During the event, the two winners were announced, which were chosen from among 16 nominations received from the six GCC countries. This was done according to a deliberate voting, done by an ICDL formed committee, whereas the first prize was decided in favor of the UAE Ministry of Labor, while the second award was granted to Sharjah University "Continued Education Center".

Jamil Ezzo, Director General of ICDL GCC commented, "We would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to all the participants and supporters of ICDL Summer Camps, and we take the opportunity to congratulate the winners of ICDL's Best Practices Award 2012. We look forward to another successful Summer Camp in 2013."

ICDL GCC also used the platform of the event to communicate its vision for 2013, concluding that it will highlight the critical topics of IT Security and Social Media in its digital awareness undertaking. It aims to continue focusing on spreading digital awareness among students, teachers and parents across the region by providing the latest internationally recognized syllabus as well as expanding its partnerships with governments, educational institutions and accredited training centers.

Ezzo also stated "The entire region is experiencing a surge in technology adoption and the GCC boasts the highest internet growth rate amongst Arab States. The use of social networking sites and social media are also rising rapidly particularly amongst the younger generation and as such, teachers and parents have an important guiding role to play. For that purpose, we want to support educators, parents and students, to become familiar with the use of social networking sites and IT in general in a safe manner. 2013 will be a year where IT Security and Social Media will be key priorities for us and we look forward to the continued support from all our valued partners for driving this ahead."

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The International Computer Driving License (ICDL) concept is a global computer literacy initiative developed to raise the level of knowledge about Information Technology (IT) and increase the level of competence in 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 ICDL GCC 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 throughout the world.