ICDL calls on government, academic & private sectors to raise awareness on internet safety at 4ᵗʰ Annual Recognition Event

IT Security & Social Media among key strategic priorities in 2014

November, 2013

ICDL GCC Foundation, the governing body and certification authority responsible for advocating digital skills and promoting the globally recognized ICDL certification programs across the GCC and Iraq, has announced its 2014 vision for digital awareness and internet safety and its emphasis on IT Security and Social Media as two of its key strategic priorities for the coming year.

The announcement came at the ICDL GCC Foundation's 2013 Annual Recognition Event held at the Hilton Jumeirah Hotel, Dubai to acknowledge entities supporting ICDL's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. ICDL certifications were granted to 4,400 youth from the GCC during the regional summer camps held in July and August 2013 as part of the Foundation's CSR efforts.

Held for the fourth consecutive year, the annual recognition event celebrated the partners of the CSR initiative, which was launched by ICDL GCC Foundation in collaboration with more than 42 organizations from various industries. It was attended by high-profile officials from government bodies, educational entities, universities, schools, and training centres. Representatives of participating sponsors from various sectors such as banking, aviation, IT, entertainment, and media from across the GCC attended as well.

During the ceremony, Mr. Ibrahim Elbadawi, e-governance and social media expert, discussed the use and importance of social media in learning. Elbadawi is a key contributor to digital projects in the region, including the launch of the GCC's first-ever government data portal and the establishment of social media policies for the UAE Federal Government.

The occasion was an ideal platform for authorized entities of the Foundation to share best practices and achievements in implementing IT literacy programs based on ICDL initiatives. Winners of the annual ICDL regional awards for best practices were also announced during the ceremony. They were chosen from among 16 candidates from six GCC nations, following a poll carried out by the ICDL jury panel. The Abu Dhabi Systems & Information Centre (ADSIC) received top honors, while Sultan Qaboos University and Bahrain Institute of Banking Studies tied for second place.

Jamil Ezzo, Director General of the ICDL, expressed his appreciation and gratitude to all the participants and supporters of the ICDL summer camps. He also congratulated the winners of the 2013 ICDL Best Practices award.

During the function, ICDL also provided a broad overview of its vision for 2014. The organization revealed its priority of raising awareness on internet safety, cyber security, and the use of social media for disseminating information. The focus will be on educating students, teachers and parents through the adoption of the latest global methods and partnerships with organizations, government and educational agencies, and authorized training centers.

"The entire region is rapidly adopting modern technologies, with GCC countries demonstrating the highest rate of Internet use in the Arab World. Usage of social networking and social media sites has been rising steadily as well, especially among the youth. Therefore, teachers and parents play very important roles in providing advice and guidance to them. ICDL GCC Foundation aims to enhance the skills of teachers, parents and students in promoting the safe use of social networking and IT in general, in line with our vision for 2014. We call on all partners to continue their efforts to help us achieve our strategic goals," said Ezzo.