ECDL FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

WELCOME TO THE FIRST 2013 EDITION OF THE ECDL FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER.

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ECDL / ICDL IN ACTION AROUND THE WORLD

PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVE EQUIPS UNDERPRIVILEGED STUDENTS WITH DIGITAL SKILLS FOR EMPLOYMENT - MALAYSIA

With the intention of providing underprivileged youths in Malaysia with better employment opportunities through greater access to ICT and improved digital skills, F&N Beverages Marketing Sdn Bhd (F&N) initiated the 'F&N IT Corner' programme in 2010.

This 'F&N IT Corner' programme is in line with the F&N's corporate sustainability programmes in support of educational excellence. It aims not only to provide computers and computing hardware to those who would not otherwise have access to it, but also to certify the digital skills of the programme's students to the international ICDL standard.

F&N has invested RM175,000 (€44,000 approx.) in the initiative to date, enabling the establishment of three separate 'F&N IT Corner' centres. This investment has equipped the three centres with the necessary computing hardware – PCs, printers, projectors, broadband internet access, in addition to funding the delivery of the ICDL programme.

According to F&N's Corporate Affairs Manager:

"This has been a fruitful investment for F&N as we are able to help these students gain a firmer footing in the workforce and hopefully set the pace for better things ahead."

FIRST ICDL TEST CENTRE IN SOMALILAND TO PROVIDE MUCH-NEEDED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO LOCAL COMMUNITY

The ICDL Africa team are delighted to announce the establishment of its first Accredited Test Centre in Somaliland (Somalia) - the Doburo Training Centre.

After the collapse of the national government and the outbreak of the Somali Civil War (in 1991), the local government in the north (of Somalia) proclaimed the 'Republic of Somaliland', which they regard as the successor of the former British Somaliland protectorate. Somaliland's self-proclaimed independence remains unrecognised by any country or international organisation, with international recognition only as an autonomous region of Somalia.

Doburo Training Centre, based in the city of Borama, is an initiative of Awdal Development Organisation (ADO). Funded primarily by the Somaliland diaspora in other parts of the world, ADO is an NGO that works actively to advance the economic development of the region, funding health and education projects, with a special emphasis on the latter. Working together with other NGOs, ADO only supports projects that are initiated, planned and developed locally. Despite considerable local challenges, Doburo Centre will deliver digital skills to young adults within the community, with the aim of providing them with greater access to the knowledge economy and with greater employment opportunities. According to Hasan Giire, the founder and Chairman of ADO, the centre is: *"A place of hope and knowledge for the local people of Borama. With the help of our friends, we will try to connect Somaliland to the rest of the world."*
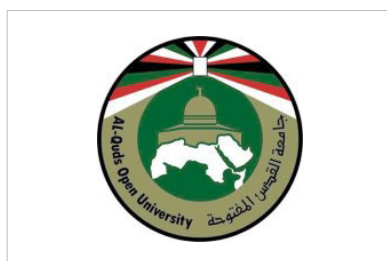
ICDL PILOT SCHEME TO ENHANCE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, QUITO – COLOMBIA

ICDL Colombia and CONQUITO (Agencia Metropolitana de Promoción Económica, the Quito Metropolitan Agency for Economic Development) recently carried out a successful pilot project to train and certify 200 civil servants from Ecuador and 60 from Colombia working in the organisation with the introductory digital skills programme, ICDL Start.

CONQUITO's principal aim is to assist the city of Quito's inhabitants to be more commercially successful, and to facilitate their greater participation in national and international commerce. To more efficiently achieve these aims, it chose to implement the ICDL Start programme to improve the digital skills of its staff.

The positive results returned by this pilot scheme will help raise the ICDL profile nationally and assist in its promotion to entrepreneurs and businesses interested in adopting an international digital skills certification to enhance productivity.

CONQUITO is a non-profit public–private agency, aiming to promote sustainable socioeconomic development of the Metropolitan District of Quito. It works the areas of employment, innovation and infrastructure, with a special focus on public-private cooperation.

ICDL TO PROVIDE ESSENTIAL ICT SKILLS TO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS - PALESTINE

AQAS, the ICDL National Operator in Palestine, has signed a strategic partnership agreement with Quds Open University (QOU), Palestine. QOU has already established four ICDL Accredited Test Centres over the past year, and through this agreement, it will play a central role in assisting AQAS to market the programme further in Palestine.

To this end, an ICDL seminar was hosted by QOU on 10 January 2013, and was attended by representatives from number of government Ministries and other government bodies - including the Ministry of Education and the Service Bureau - in addition to representatives of private sector organisations.

At the seminar, AQAS Chairman, Dr Ahmad Al Haija, presented ICDL certificates to the first batch of ICDL graduates in Bethlehem, and met with the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Minister of Communication and Information Technology of Palestine to discuss the possibility of adopting ICDL at higher education institutions and government organisations throughout Palestine.

ICDL CERTIFICATION BECOMES A UNIVERSITY GRADUATION REQUIREMENT - LEBANON

Beirut Arab University (BAU) in Lebanon has endorsed the ICDL certification as a mandatory requirement for all their students before graduation. BAU is a private institution for higher education that has established itself to be a nationally and internationally recognised and respected university. With more than 300 higher education programmes, BAU provides a rich and rewarding educational environment to some 15,000 students per year, both in Lebanon and abroad.

ECDL ROMANIA CO-ORGANISES IN UNUSUAL JOB FAIR - RAHOVA PRISON, ROMANIA

This unusual job fair took place on 12 December 2012 in Rahova, a neighbourhood in southwest Bucharest, Romania. There was nothing unusual about the exhibitors, who included companies interested in attracting additional recruits to their teams. The delegates of the Rahova job fair differed from the majority of similar events around the world: they consisted entirely of inmates detained in a local prison, which was hosting the fair. The inmates took this opportunity to explore possible non-crime related career options.

The event was held as part of the strategic project: 'ICT training according to the European Standards in Romanian Education System'. The project is co-organised by ECDL Romania. During the course of the project, more than 2,000 prisoners and 1,700 members of Romanian penitentiary system's personnel will be enrolled in the ECDL programme. The project's completion date has been set for 30 September 2013.

> **Internet user penetration rates in developing countries have tripled over the past five years.**
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> Source – 'Measuring the Information Society 2012', The International Telecommunication Union

FOR DISCUSSION

'BIG DATA' AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR THE USER

The New Year is a time for predictions, and the technology media in particular enjoy crystal-ball gazing. Commentators cross their fingers and speak authoritatively of the next 'big thing' - the emergent technology that will define the coming year. A cursory review of online technology publications reveals a flood of these, and it's interesting to see if there is any common ground in the view expressed.

There is – unsurprisingly - a lack of consensus, but Gartner, Forbes, and the Wall Street Journal all pinpoint 'Big Data' as a trend, amongst others, to watch for 2013. 'Big Data' and how it is handled is a step on from traditional approaches to data storage and data mining. Huge amounts of data are

potentially now coming in from a range of different sources in real time and analysis and judgement on this data needs to happen instantaneously. This seems like an infrastructure challenge for the IT industry – maybe IT users need not be concerned?

They should be - because the data is frequently directly associated with increased activity on faster networks, through an ever-increasing number of devices. The creators of the data in many instances may be users. The target of the dynamically managed and analysed responses to this data will also be users – as, for example, a potential purchaser of a good or service. That is to say, if you inputted a search term such as 'fishing trips', you would receive targeted advertising for fishing goods and services in your location. This is nothing new – but 'Big Data' will make this more focused. And, as we incorporate a greater number of devices into our lives that are increasingly integrated in terms of our data, it will also become more pervasive.

As ICT users, we need not just to be able to carry out functional skills, for example effectively using a browser: we need also to be able to be able to control the technology environment in which we operate. This requires an understanding and awareness of the how our own behaviour can be used by technology services to tailor the information or options with which you are presented. This can be a good or bad thing – but we need to be equipped with sufficient understanding and awareness of the use of 'Big Data' so that we can decide which it is.

ECDL FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES

ECDL FOUNDATION AND MINISTRY OF ICT TO GREATLY IMPROVE NATIONAL DIGITAL SKILL LEVELS - ALGERIA

According to the terms of a recently-signed Memorandum of Understanding with ECDL Foundation, the Algerian Ministry of Post & ICT is taking the lead for this ICDL project at the national level.

The project is planned to run for, at least, the next 5 years, and to certify a significant number of candidates each year. An ICDL National Project Manager was appointed by the Ministry to manage the project at the national level, and a Project Manager was appointed in each Wilaya (State) in Algeria to handle the daily implementation and the quality assurance aspects. The project is expected to be launched in February 2013.

In December 2012, The Minister of Post & ICT, HE Moussa BENHAMADI, officially received ECDL Foundation CEO, Damien O'Sullivan, and expressed the urgent need of IT literacy development on a national scale. The Minister added that ICDL in Algeria should become a national standard for all citizens for social inclusion, and for all employees in the public sector. ICDL is already a part of 'e-Algerie' initiative.

UPDATE ON ICT USER E-COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK PROJECT

This CEN ICT Skills workshop project, funded by the European Commission and led by ECDL Foundation, has been running since December 2011. The project aims to develop a reference framework for ICT user competences. The draft final report of the project has recently been made available for a 60-day public comment period via the CEN website.

The project builds on the work of an earlier project investigating the requirements of such an ICT user framework. These activities are directly contributing to the implementation of the EU e-skills strategy as defined in the European Commission's Communication on 'e-Skills for the 21st Century: Fostering Competitiveness, Growth and Jobs'.

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND REPORTS

TEACHING OF ICT SKILLS IN SCHOOL IS LAGGING IN EUROPE – EUROPEAN COMMISSION STUDY

This study reveals that almost all countries have implemented national strategies to foster ICT skills; however, ICT skills are rarely integrated into subjects such as mathematics, science and languages.

MEASURING THE INFORMATION SOCIETY 2012 - THE INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)

The ITU is part of the United Nations. This report (published October 2012) measures the world's connectivity in relation to mobile and fixed technologies and assesses the state of the global digital divide.