KHALED EL HAMEDI

Digital Literacy through Certiport IC³ Certification Comes to More than 30,000 Libyans

Certiport IC³ digital literacy certification helps catapult country into the Digital Age and prepares Libyans for workplace success

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Khaled El Hamedi recognizes the necessity of digital literacy skills for success in today's technological world. His efforts to bridge the Digital Divide in his native Libya have led to the building of 70 Certiport training centers throughout the country and the certification of 30,000 individuals in Certiport Internet Computing Core Certification (IC³®) since 2004.

El Hamedi, chairman of ENG Holding in Libya, has an educational background in computer science engineering and an enduring belief in the benefits of computing and IT skills. He first began promoting IC³ training in 2003 after witnessing his country's struggle to enter the Digital Age due to more than 25 years of sanctions and embargos. In 2004, following the removal of the U.S. trade embargo, it became increasingly apparent that Libya needed to reinvest in the country's infrastructure and re-skill its citizenry for 21st Century jobs. El Hamedi recognized IC³ as a crucial bridge for developing current and relevant digital literacy for employment.

"For any country to thrive in this modern digital era it's essential that there is a basic understanding of computing in the general population," he said. "We in Libya have suffered from the effects of embargo and we are behind in the development of digital literacy. It's so important that we bring these skills and credentials to my country in order to fill this void and be updated in our technology."

Introducing new technologies and techniques to build employability skills was no easy task, said El Hamedi. Most Libyan organizations were accustomed to the idea of sending employees abroad for training, so he worked to convince them that IC³ offered a global standard in digital literacy that could be obtained without leaving Libya.

"Nobody is an exception to having digital literacy skills introduced to them," he said. "Our goal was to involve as many of the population as possible in this program."

Confident in Certiport's expertise and IC³ as a valuable program, El Hamedi contacted government ministries to offer digital literacy training and certification programs custom-made to fit their employees. Working through the branch of ENG Holding that oversees the IT training, he set up training centers, organized training programs and provided technical support for digital literacy learners.

Each ministry had its own training approach depending on the IT skills of their employees, said El Hamedi. Incorporating IC³ into the individualized training programs helped program participants obtain computing skills in a steady, practical way. The organization of IC³, made up of just three component exams, is easy for students to understand and beneficial for those with little

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or no prior skills, he said. It also provides a springboard for students who continue with additional IT training.

The first major success came in 2004 when 2,000 members of Libya's police force obtained certification. Since that time more than 20,000 members of various government ministries, government organizations and members of the private sector have obtained IC³ certification in Libya. With the growing use of computers and the internet across all areas of employment, the influence of the IT training is being noticed.

The new skills employees obtain by going through IC³ training and certification not only change the way employees work, but the way they live in general, said El Hamedi. "Some people came to us knowing nothing about computers. They didn't know anything. After a few weeks or months they can do everything on the internet. They have email, can send email, have their own Web site, can explore Web sites and get information. It's an exciting feeling."

With the growth of companies and entrepreneurship in Libya, El Hamedi now plans to bring IC³ certification to more members of the private sector, but his plans do not stop there.

"My dream is to bring this program to the entire country and even to all of Africa. But for now I would be happy to bring our program to as many people as possible and for them to benefit from these newly acquired and important skills," El Hamedi said.

ABOUT CERTIPORT
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