

ITWorx Furthers Qatar's Education Reform with the Upgraded "Knowledge Net" e-Learning Portal Using MLG 2007 Framework



Country

State of Qatar

Industry

Education, Government

Customer

ictQATAR

Executive Summary

ITWorx delivered an extensive upgrade of ictQATAR's 'Knowledge Net' (K-Net) e-learning platform. Having previously delivered phase I of the portal on MLG 2005, in phase II, ITWorx migrated K-Net to the new MLG 2007. The project included K-Net redesign, customisation, and localisation, including an enhanced navigation and user interface experience for 37 Qatari Independent Schools and 37,000 users. The solution integrated with PeopleSoft, SEC's School Management Information System, and ITWorx educational products: Education Catalyst™, ExamExpert™, and AttendanceExpert™. ITWorx also provided comprehensive support and training services.

The Customer

ictQATAR, the Supreme Council of Information and Communications Technology, is the leading policy-maker and regulatory body for information and communication technology in Qatar. Established in 1994, ictQATAR is responsible for the roll-out of many large-scale technology projects with the vision of transforming Qatar into a true knowledge-based and progressive society.

The Challenge

In 2006, ictQATAR, along with the Qatari Supreme Education Council (SEC), was determined to implement its e-education strategy. One of the objectives was to propel the country's Independent Schools into a new era of K-12 education through the adoption of cutting-edge e-learning techniques.

In 2007, ITWorx, a strategic Microsoft Education Partner, was selected as the service provider for the e-learning solution implementation. Together with Microsoft Gulf, ITWorx successfully delivered the 'Knowledge Net' (K-Net) education portal. Based on MLG 2005, the portal served 12 Independent Schools and was centrally hosted at Qtel, ictQATAR's data centre.

In 2008, and in accordance with its e-education strategies and plans, ictQATAR sought to broaden the e-learning capacity of K-Net. ictQATAR needed to leverage the enhanced functionalities made available by MLG 2007, migrate the e-learning environment to the new platform, and include an additional 25 schools as well as thousands of new users. Once again, ITWorx, who partnered with EduNova, a leading UK-based education consultancy, was entrusted with the job.

“

Building on the foundation laid by Phase I of Knowledge Net (K-Net), we have rolled-out Phase II with new portal features to improve user experience and enhance technology's support of student achievement. Additional training helped teachers integrate K-Net into their teaching practices to maximize the portal's benefits and ensure students deepen their technology skills so they can realize their goals. K-NET has proven to be beneficial for students, parents, and teachers alike.

”

Dr. Ghadah Omar Al-Fakieh
e-Education Manager,
ictQatar

Technologies and Software

- Microsoft Learning Gateway (MLG) 2007
- Microsoft Windows Server 2003
- Microsoft SQL Server 2005
- Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007
- Windows SharePoint Services 3.0
- Microsoft Exchange 2007
- Microsoft Office Communication Server 2007
- Microsoft System Center Operations Manager 2007 (SCOM)
- Microsoft ISA 2006
- Microsoft.Net 3.0
- Microsoft Forefront Security for SharePoint Server
- Microsoft Forefront Security for Exchange Server 2007
- ITWorx Education Catalyst
- ITWorx ExamExpert
- ITWorx AttendanceExpert

The Solution

ITWorx migrated the MLG 2005-based K-Net environment, including the initial 12 schools and their data, into the new MLG 2007 platform. Using [ITWorx Education Catalyst™](#) provisioning suite, ITWorx deployed 37 schools and provisioned 37,000 users in record time.

The K-Net user interface (UI) was redesigned to include rich enhancements. Users could freely switch between English and Arabic languages. Different UI designs were also developed for each user group and each student age group to create more targeted learning experiences. The whole look-and-feel was further tailored to reinforce Qatar-specific culture.

For ease of navigation, students and teachers were enabled to directly log-on to their personalised “MySite” page instead of the school site’s landing page. MySite pages were customised to display user-related content. For example, the student “MySite” page included new assignments, Outlook emails, news from school site, exam alerts, notifications, etc. Personalised pages became the central location where users can navigate to the school site and any other linked sites.

With emphasis on parental involvement, ITWorx created parent dashboards. Using a single account, a parent could access a personalised dashboard dedicated to displaying their children’s information in real-time, cross-school and cross-class. The parent dashboard showed children’s scheduled assessments, assignments, grade-book, attendance, and timetable. Parents could communicate with teachers through instant messages, email, and discussion boards.

ITWorx also expanded the scope of integration between K-Net and PeopleSoft, SEC’s School Management Information System (MIS). Back in the MLG 2005 deployment, integration had been limited to report generation. In the MLG 2007 deployment, ITWorx created a two-way seamless integration. User and class data updates are sent from PeopleSoft to K-Net, while K-Net updates PeopleSoft with attendance information.

Upgrades included ITWorx e-assessment product, ExamExpert™ Version 3. Version 2 of the product was part of the Phase I deployment. All recorded exam and results data were migrated to the MLG 2007 platform. ITWorx also integrated its attendance product, AttendanceExpert™. Further integration included the ‘Online School Edition’, which offers K-Net users an online version of Encyclopaedia Britannica and an online translation service from WorldLingo.

The project concluded with conducting skill-based training for 1,850 teachers and users on the system and its new functionalities. In focused Train-the-Trainer sessions, Champion Teachers obtained advanced training. EduNova trained and counselled teachers on new education techniques made available by K-Net.

To ensure a fully-functional, up-and-running system, ITWorx provides prompt technical support services and incident-based support sessions for K-Net. In emergency cases, ITWorx provides third-line support.

ITWorx created the bilingual K-Net public portal, www.knet.edu.qa. The portal is a tool for ictQATAR and the SEC to regularly communicate news and showcase achievements and accomplishments of schools, teachers, and students to the public.

The Benefits

Rich skill sets for K-12 students

The second phase of the K-Net education portal helps more K-12 students engage in richer e-learning techniques. Using the MLG 2007 framework, ITWorx implemented ictQATAR’s student-centric requirements to personalise learning, including best practices for navigating personal pages, assignments, assessments, and others. With technology know-how and online peer collaboration skills, students are well prepared for tomorrow’s university life and the e-mandates of their future workplace.

Advanced instrumentation for teachers and parents

K-Net stresses parental involvement in education. Parents can view their children’s activities and academic progress in real-time, cross-school and cross-class. In addition, parents can communicate with teachers through instant messages, email, and discussion boards. Teachers are equipped with new MLG 2007 functionalities that help them better manage their curriculum and coach students. For example, in the event that a teacher is also a parent, using a single account, the teacher can access their academic-related tasks across more than one school as well as their children’s information from their personalised page.

Better data management with School MIS integration

With two-way integration between K-Net and SEC’s PeopleSoft, information accuracy is guaranteed. PeopleSoft updates K-Net with user data and classes’ information. K-Net updates PeopleSoft with attendance information. Updates and information transfers are scheduled overnight to optimise server and infrastructure usage. To speed up transfers, ITWorx established a dedicated line between the SEC and the data centre where PeopleSoft is hosted.

Global Offices

North America

Connecticut, USA
Tel +1.860.6767.878

Middle East & Africa

Cairo, Egypt
Tel +202.2673.6111

Riyadh, KSA
Tel +9661.2886.558

For more information about our premises worldwide please logon to www.itworx.com

contactus@itworx.com