

# e-learning the ropes

Several schools across the UAE are to reap the benefits of e-learning



**C**omputers have dramatically improved the world we live in. Now e-learning is doing the same for schools. ITWorx, the global experts on the Microsoft Learning Gateway for schools and higher education, have masterminded several e-learning projects in the UK with phenomenal results.

In the Gulf region, a success story exists in IctQATAR's (Qatar's Supreme Council of Information and Communication Technology) e-Learning initiative. IctQATAR Knowledge Net provides teachers with

smart IT tools and students with access to learning resources at any time, anywhere. The program is being rolled out to 37 additional schools following the success of the first phase of the project in 2007, in which 12 independent schools took part.

The Knowledge Net portal, which is based on the Microsoft Learning Gateway, allows students to receive and submit assignments, share information with each other, and research projects from anywhere with an Internet connection. Teachers can send and receive homework assignments,

provide feedback to students and parents, and upload study material.

To better understand the concept, imagine this scenario: A chemistry teacher is standing at the front of the class conducting an experiment. Rows of students are scribbling away as she explains what she's doing, except they're not using pens and paper. The class is working on tablet PCs, writing notes with a stylus in their own handwriting, which is automatically converted into lines of neat type. The pupils can even draw diagrams which will be saved to their computers.

When the experiment is finished, the professor simply reaches for her video camera, connects it to her own PC, and a video clip of the experiment is shared automatically with the entire class so they can watch it again in case they missed anything in their notes. The clip is also sent to the school's portal, so that anyone who was absent that day can still see what they missed.

E-learning is not a fad. It's not a gimmick, and it's not about using computers for the sake of it. E-learning is about changing the way students learn and teachers teach. Pilot schemes have already met with huge success.

It might sound like science fiction, but it's not as farfetched as you might think. E-learning is already a reality, and one that's set to propel education into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. ITWorx is also working on the "GEMS Learning Gateway," which will allow students at 27 GEMS schools across the UAE to reap the benefits of e-learning.