



Overview

Country or Region: Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Industry: Education

Customer Profile

200 girls from 25 high schools in Dubai learn about careers in technology at the first DigiGirlz Day in the Gulf Region.

Microsoft Digital Literacy Inspires High School Girls at DigiGirlz Dubai

"DigiGirlz is an effort to show high school girls what the technology industry is all about, what careers are available to them, and to let them see how exciting it is to create something that can truly impact a large number of people."

Dr. Zaki Khoury, Education and Citizenship Lead, Microsoft Gulf

The Gulf Region's first ever DigiGirlz Day introduced more than 200 high school girls to technology career opportunities in hopes of reducing the UAE gender gap in IT. The Dubai DigiGirlz Day was developed by Microsoft in partnership with the UAE Ministry of Education and the Center for Women and Technology for the Arab Region (CWTAR), and was held at the campus of Dubai Women's College (DWC). The girls participated in technology workshops and panels, met with Microsoft employees, learned about new technologies, and had the opportunity to take the Microsoft® Digital Literacy Certificate Test on site.

Business Situation

The UAE Ministry of Education and the Centre for Woman and Technology for the Arab Region hope to engage with and inspire young women to consider careers in technology.

Solution

Girls participate in workshops and panels, speak with women in technology, and test their own skills with the Microsoft Digital Literacy Certificate Test.

Benefits

- Testing their Technology Skills
- Learning Technologies in Hands-On Workshops
- Exploring Cutting Edge Technologies in the Marketplace
- Hearing from Women in Technology

Girls learn about innovative technologies from women practitioners at DigiGirlz Dubai



Testing their Technology Skills

DigiGirlz provided ten proctored Microsoft Digital Literacy Certificate Testing Stations where the girls were able to put their knowledge to the test. The test consisted of 30 questions that cover essential computing skills from the Microsoft Digital Literacy Curriculum. Those who obtained a passing score received a Digital Literacy Certificate from Microsoft. As a surprise, the girl with the highest score won a pink Dell Notebook. About 50 girls took the Certificate Test, but only a small number earned their certificate. “Not many of them did well. This basically showed us that there exists a great opportunity to further integrate Microsoft Digital Literacy with DigiGirlz going forward,” states program manager Sekna Khanafer. Khanafer plans to include Microsoft Digital Literacy Certificate Testing Stations at five other DigiGirlz Days planned across the Middle East region, as the need for these essential skills is so evident.

Learning Technologies in Hands-On Workshops

Each girl participated in one of five product workshops: Microsoft Research AutoCollage, Windows Movie Maker, Windows Live™, PopFly™, blogging, and Microsoft Expression® Web. They were given an overview of the technology and then worked in teams with Microsoft volunteers to create an artistic piece with the technology. “We aim to empower students to build successful careers for themselves and educate them on technology...to inspire more females in the region to join a science and technology career force,” Asserts Dr. Behjat Al Yousef, Chair of the Centre for Women and Technology for the Arab World

Exploring Cutting Edge Technologies in the Marketplace

The Marketplace displayed a number of new technologies and gave the girls an

opportunity to speak one-on-one with Microsoft product managers and with women from the Microsoft Diversity Team. The girls had the opportunity to test drive new products, including Windows® 7, Worldwide Telescope, HP TouchSmart, and Microsoft Dynamics®. “The event has inspired me to explore a career in computers. There are students who don’t use computers, and they should be encouraged to do so,” says Afra Al Majid, 13, Al Alfia School for Girls student.

Hearing from Women in Technology

The girls then participated in a panel discussion lead by working women in IT. The session focused on the personal experiences of the panelists and served to demolish the stereotypes of women in IT. “We try to give them a broad view of the technology and the product we create, and want these girls to know that IT is not just for boys or geeks,” explains Dr. Zaki Khoury, Education and Citizenship Lead, Microsoft Gulf

Conclusion

The Dubai DigiGirlz Day is an excellent example of bringing together students, educators, industry, and practitioners around the common goal of inspiring the next generation of women workers to participate in science and technology careers. Based on its success in Dubai, five additional DigiGirlz Days are planned in other Arab countries over the next three years.

For More Information

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For more information about Dubai DigiGirlz Day products and services, visit the Web site at: www.microsoft.com/about/diversity/programs/digigirlz/default.aspx

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