



THINKIT

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Smart technology initiatives to support

Mobile Computing..

p 02



Get your website up & running

In 24-Hours

p 04

Read in this Issue

- 05 E-mail migration and upgrade
- **06** A step forward in faculty performance evaluation
- 07 e-Recruitment solution
- 08 eServices New Milestones
- 09 UITS Upcoming Projects
- 10 IT Services Growth at UAEU
- 12 Multifunction at the heart of your Office
- 14 Ankabut spins faster webs for academics @ UAEU
- 15 Top Trends at GITEX 2012

Smart technology initiatives to support mobile computing



obile Technology is evolving rapidly and continues to drive much of the futuristic thinking for academic institutions. New generation devices, smart phones and tablet computers, have revolutionized communication and transformed the way information is delivered, accessed and made available at our fingertips. In its endeavour to be at the forefront of educational excellence, UAEU is strongly committed to a teaching and learning process that actively engages students and teachers.

Back in spring 2012, and in line with the vision of His Highness Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the three federal institutions of higher education in the United Arab Emirates jointly embarked on an ambitious project to introduce the use of iPads for UAE students in higher education. The integration of iPad in academic institutions can enhance productivity beyond the basic social networking & communication tools by mobilizing a series of academic and business applications.

Preparing UAEU for iPad implementation was an extensive process. The integration of smart phones and tablet devices like iPad into the UAEU enterprise infrastructure prompted a number of challenges for University IT ser-

vices to overcome within a limited time period. The major challenges were:

- empowering this new technology to deliver contents to students.
- ensuring access to academic data over mobile devices without jeopardizing security and compliance.
- mobilising, managing and distributing academic applications, messaging and collaboration tools that are already available on campus.
- developing a multi-client environment that accommodates all types of computing and mobile devices available in the market.
- creating an interactive smart classroom environment to fully utilize the functionality of mobile devices.
- building and maintaining the infrastructure that supports future technology advancement.

The initial objective of the project was to equip UAEU foundation students and faculty members in UGRU with iPad devices and relevant academic materials, Later, based on learned experiences and feedback from the initial stage, the project would be expanded to cover the remaining colleges and administrative units.

UITS conducted preliminary research, consultations, planning and coordination with our internal UAEU partners, sister institutions, Apple Inc. and other technology partners around the globe. It took 6 months of planning and implementation to develop a state of the art infrastructure that goes hand in hand with a long term strategy to support a gamut of mobile device adoption. As a result, Summer 2012 saw the implementation of the following tasks to fulfill infrastructure requirements:

- Upgraded the whole UGRU wireless network infrastructure to provide strong and reliable connection to any type of mobile devices.
- Developed two different wireless networks for faculty and students based on their operational activities.
- Enhanced the intranet network bandwidth speed to support the electronic content delivery.
- Implemented Airplay technology in all of the required classrooms within UGRU for faculty members to project their iPad screen on the smart board over the Air.
- Implemented AirPrint technology within UGRU for faculty members to print the required contents over the Air.
- Implemented a solution so that students and faculty members can access their shared drive using their iPad
- Developed a dedicated portal for students and faculty

- members to distribute paid and free academic applications on iPad.
- Developed a dedicated portal for faculty members to share interactive custom-developed iPad contents.
- Developed a dedicated technical support site to facilitate iPad users' queries and requests.

In August 2012, the infrastructure implementation phase was successfully completed and was ready to host thousands of mobile devices and relevant services. In September 2012, UAE Vice-President His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum launched the iPad initiative, and currently more than 4000 students and faculty members within UAEU are exchanging academic contents, accessing grades, courses and shared drives, exploring the internet, discovering new interactive ways that make teaching and learning both engaging and fun.

UAEU infrastructure is successfully hosting almost 6,000 multi devices within UGRU and ready to accommodate many more. This success would not have been possible without the contributions of our professionals from administration, academics, IT and external institutions. In the near future, this initiative will be extended to other colleges and administrative units, and work is already underway to develop and streamline more academic applications and infrastructure plans.

By: Muhammad Aamir Idris



2 | Nov 2012 . THINK IT . UITS NEWSLETTER THINK IT . UITS NEWSLETTER . Nov 2012 | 3



Get your website Up & Running In 24-Hours

In March 2011, UITS and WPU (Web Publishing Unit) began their search for a web content management system (WCMS) to replace Luminis. Three Different systems were proposed for comparison: JADU, OmniUpdate and SharePoint. After a series of presentations and demos the selection was placed on OmniUpdate.

What is OmniUpdate?

OmniUpdate is a web content management system that allows editing of websites anytime and anywhere using a Web Browser. Omni is user-friendly; content authors don't need to know HTML, and they don't need any special software. Also, one important advantage it has the support for Arabic content, which was not possible with the old system.

Web pages are created in OmniUpdate by using templates, which are based on the UAEU branding guidelines. There are many layouts to choose from: entrance page, one-column, two-column, and three-column layouts.

The transition from the old to the new CMS was accomplished smoothly and seamlessly during the spring semester of 2012. During this transition, the main website of UAEU and another 6 websites for colleges were migrated to the new system:

- College of Humanities and Social Sciences
- College of Business and Economics
- College of Information Technology
- College of Food Systems
- College of Education
- UGRU



Two new websites, Student Affairs and MarhabaAlsaa3, are in the migration process and will be maintained by the new CMS. UITS is offering other colleges and departments to host and publish their website content using the new CMS as a free service.



If you would like to start working with "UITS – Web Services Team" on creating a new website, please browse to UITS PMO website and submit a New Project Request Form.

http://www.uaeu.ac.ae/uits/pmo/getting_started.shtml

To get training on how to use OmniUpdate, please contact Web Publishing Unit (Mr. Mohamed Al Saeed)

E-mail migration and upgrade

for a better alignment of UAEU messaging environment to its business goals ...



E-mail is evolving constantly and the need to keep up with the latest technologies is vital for any business. To meet the needs of a continually shifting University business landscape, today's messaging environment must be available, flexible, and cost-effective. E-mail is one of the most critical applications in the University's IT infrastructure and the University is increasingly relying on messaging tools for individual and institutional effectiveness. As a result, UITS faces constant challenges as it continually seeks to manage the conflicting demands of availability, agility, and cost.

As part of the UITS continuous efforts to bring an enhanced communication & collaboration technology to the University community, UITS had migrated & upgraded the University's email messaging solution

from Exchange 2007 to the latest version of Exchange 2010 platform. The new email solution will help the university to better align its messaging environment to its business goals. It will also assist in maintaining a cost-effective messaging environment by maximizing the utilization of computing power through conservative resource requirement sizing and taking advantage of other physical server consolidation opportunities.

The installation and configuration of the new enhanced email environment was completed in spring 2012. Then throughout the summer, UITS migrated all UAEU staff, faculty, and students mailboxes to the new email. To avoid any interruption for UAEU community, most of the work was conducted over weekends and late nights. This massive upgrade and migration processes was accom-

plished seamlessly and the University community routine work was not affected.

The Exchange 2010 robust set of features will help UITS to reduce management costs as well as eliminate many routine and repetitive tasks done by the IT Administrator. An added bonus is that it will allow IT administrators to concentrate on challenges of strategic importance to UITS and the University.

Lower IT costs with a flexible and reliable messaging platform, better risk management with protection and compliance capabilities, increased productivity through anywhere access to University communications, and enhanced communication security are some of the core benefits that Exchange 2010 brings to the University community.

Below are some of the benefits that the new email messaging will bring to the University community:

- Larger Mailboxes for students
- Fully Compatible with Multiple Browsers (IE, Firefox, Safari, Chrome, etc...)
- Web-enabled Calendar Sharing
- Reduced risk of malware and spam
- Self-service features for common tasks
- Enhanced Security and Reliability
- Greater mobility and flexible access
- Simplified high availability and disaster recovery
- SMS & eFax Integration

By: Mahdi Ismail

4 | Nov 2012 . THINK IT . UITS NEWSLETTER . Nov 2012 | 5

By: Yasser Aziz

A step forward in

faculty performance evaluation

In our endeavour to create a paper-less environment, the Provost Office and UITS have recently developed an automated system for Faculty Performance Evaluation; a two-year process that involves faculty members, department chairs, assessors, deans, administrators and academic affairs representatives.

The system is aligned with the new proposed policy "Faculty Performance Review". It is designed to enhance the evaluation process and provide extensive documentation of the faculty plan, comments and evaluations of department chairs and deans along with the detailed reports by the review committee on faculty contributions in the three areas of teaching, research and university and community services. The system, which accepts both Arabic and English submissions, is highly flexible and can accommodate all the requirements of the evaluation process.

Who can Benefit?

Faculty members will no longer need to write drafts for the work plans at the beginning of the two-year evaluation cycle. Through the Faculty Evaluation System, they will be able to edit their plans and submit them for review and corrections on a web space that is accessible 24/7.

Department chairs, deans and other administrators at various levels can monitor the submitted plans and evaluate them accordingly using a friendly web interface.

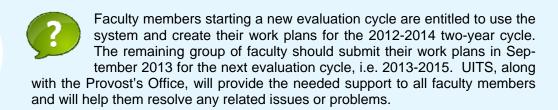


The listing of colleges, departments, and current and archived evaluations makes the navigation inside the application much easier and faster. The system provides an excellent environment for archiving and retrieving information. In addition, faculty members will have access to their records and can generate reports at any point of time.

Technology behind it

The system was developed using Java technology, Oracle database and Web Ajax with a smartly developed interactive interface. The system involves easy filtering and search features along with online help. The application is hosted on two-load balanced web servers to ensure availability and avoid any possibility of service interruption

Support



e-Recruitment solution



It will save the University 2.2 million AED

for both licenses and support fees for the next ten years



It supports the green IT initiatives

In an increasingly competitive world, one of the University's key aims is to maintain its status as a leading higher education employer by continuously attracting, recruiting and retaining high quality staff and faculty members. Thus, a greater emphasis on the UAEU brand ought to be a key marketing tool that will help engage potential applicants and establishing a reputation that UAEU is a great place to work. With this in mind, the UITS is developing in-house new online recruitment system designed to improve the University's image as a prospective employer and utilize technology to streamline the recruitment process for both applicants and the University hiring departments.

The new online e-Recruitment solution will fully integrate with the University's Enterprise Systems such as Banner and Active Directory. It will not only provide a solution that will satisfy the University community needs, but it also offer considerable cost saving by increasing efficiency and reducing administrative costs.

Additionally, it is expected that the new e-Recruitment solution will replace the current third party solution which neither provides the desired functionality nor integrates with the University's Enterprise Systems. This solution is projected to save the University 2.2 million AED in both licenses and support fees over the next ten years.

The e-Recruitment Project is currently in the User Acceptance Testing phase and expected to go live on December 20th 2012.

Some of the additional expected benefits of developing e -Recruitment in-house are:

- Reduction of the time to hire
- Reduction of the cost per hire
- Reformation of the University's brand image
- Ability to recruit more effectively from the global market
- Streamline the recruitment procedures and minimize the time spent in administration
- Enable the recruitment team to spend their time on issues that will add value to the university
- Improved communication and service delivery to internal/external customers
- The management of information will become easier, more accessible and focused
- Use of less paper thus supporting the University's Environmental Policy and UITS green IT initiatives

THINK IT . UITS NEWSLETTER . Nov 2012 | 7

• Integrated with University's Enterprise Systems

By: Buthaina Bu-Humaid

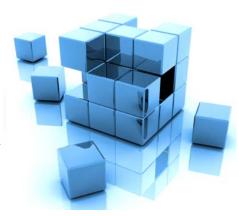
By: Mahdi Ismail

6 | Nov 2012 . THINK IT . UITS NEWSLETTER

eServices

New milestones

The automation of any business process should aim to achieve at least two key objectives: improve efficiency and internal control processes and reduce cost and effort With this in view, Summer 2012 saw the implementation of a number of applications and systems which were part of UITS active project list.



Personal & Dependent Tracking System

UAEU faculty & staff can now update their personal and dependents' information via Personal & Dependent Tracking System in eServices. Accurate up-to-date information is imperative as the status of UAEU employees' dependents may affect employees' entitlements, With this in mind, this automated system was developed to capture, verify and update employees' personal and dependent details in the HR System in a more efficient and effective way.

National Teaching Assistants Vacation Ticket & Expense Reimbursement Systems

As part of the benefits that national TAs are entitled to while studying abroad, two automated systems have recently been launched to process TAs' applications for vacation tickets and reimbursement of expenses respectively. The first system, National TAs Vacation Ticket, allows TAs to submit their vacation tickets request online, processes tickets payment directly in UAEU Banner Finance System for the ticket value to be deposited in the TAs' accounts.

The second system, National TAs Expense Reimbursement, allows UAE Embassies to request reimbursement of the National Teaching Assistants (TAs) expenses online through UAEU Banner System. The reimbursement is directly processed in the Finance System and paid to embassies' accounts.

Both systems are handy tools that provide users easy access and the Finance Department a better way to manage requests.

Student Housing Transfer Request System

With Student Housing Transfer Request system, the process of requesting room transfer has become much more simple and straightforward. As this is an automated system, it allows students who wish to transfer to a different room/ building/ hostel to apply online, track their application via notifications and get approval if they meet the conditions set by housing administration. This new automated paperless application stands to benefit both students and administration by speeding up the processing of room transfer requests and saving time and resources.

Al Ain Gate Permit System

Al Ain Gate Permit system is yet another application that aims to save time, effort and resources. It makes the process of applying for a transportation permit much quicker. A student who wishes to get a permit makes a request by filling in her guardian's details and uploading supporting documents online. Thus, administrators can verify information, review supporting documents and process submitted requests all online.

By: Mariam Ketbi & Abdullahi Qani



Textbook Selection, Procurement & Distribution System

Thanks to the cooperation between VPUE office and UITS Department, a new system is planned to automate and streamline the process of text-books selection, procurement, and distribution. This system will help to integrate all the processes that are currently handled via separate tools/systems in one system. The aim is to facilitate textbook selection, procurement and ordering by faculty members, cut down on the stock of discarded textbooks and reduce overall costs of the process by having a central inventory.

New Catering Software

A new application is being developed to help Food Services Department to manage and monitor the process of distributing meals to students in university cafeterias. The new system will help in automating the process of distributing meals, recording transactions in a central location, and producing reports. This will al-

low Food Services Department to evaluate current services, make more accurate projections of costs, and provide students with better services in the future.

The application has clients installed in each cafeteria, these clients are attached to barcode scanners that read student ids and transmit information to the central database. The central database is integrated with the Banner system, which in turn provides a web interface, allowing the Food Services management to monitor and control the process of meals distribution and produce instant reports.

College Transfer

A new Custom College Transfer Application is planned for implementation as a replacement for the current baseline College Transfer System. It aims to facilitate students' college transfer requests in simple steps. Students file a request through eServices, which is then forwarded to the Registration Depart-

ment & the relevant colleges. Once a request is reviewed and approved, the student information will be automatically updated with the new college. This system has the advantage of allowing students to track their applications status, and speed up their request processing time.

Online Student Financial Aid Fund & Equipment Request

Currently, Financial Aid is processed manually: eligible students submit a written/typed application form and provide supporting documents. To do away with paperwork and maximize efficiency, a new online application is imminent. Once finalized, the new system will allow students to submit and track their application via eServices, and should a student get approved for financial assistance, it will also automate payments by direct transfer to the student's bank account.

By: Mariam Ketbi & Yasser Aziz

8 | Nov 2012 . THINK IT . UITS NEWSLETTER THINK IT . UITS NEWSLETTER . Nov 2012 | 9

IT Services Growth at UAEU

Over the last ten years, UAE University (UAEU) has made huge strides, particularly in the ever evolving field of IT infrastructure and services. To shed light on this journey of growth at UAE University, We asked Afraa Al Shamsi (CIO), an important player who has been at the heart of it from the beginning, "As one of the few people who have witnessed and experienced the advancement of IT Services at UAEU, tell us about where we were, where we are today and where we are heading to?"

sk expert" ...

Afraa Al Shamsi: "Information is growing at an exponential rate and in a variety of formats, especially the digital media. The present age is known as "the era of Information & communication Technology". it is well recognized that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) can play a massive part in the structural growth of a country. Whether you are a businessman, educator, employee, innovator, scientist or in any other field of life, it has become impossible to maintain your position without the use of ICT. These technologies have become commonplace entities in all aspects of life.

Until recently, this part of the world was seen as no more than a stretch of sand but thanks to its sharp vision, the UAE is now appreciated from a different angle. It has witnessed tremendous growth in all fields in such a short time span, and one critical aspect of this change must be attributed to ICT, which has flourished multiple folds. Currently, the whole of UAE is digitally connected with the rest of the world and its ICT infrastructure is considered one of the most advanced in the Arab World.

The introduction of ICT at UAEU started back in 1976, and since then UAEU has never looked back. It has achieved significant developments in the areas of teaching and learning technologies, eservices, mobile computing, collaboration and sharing, research, professional development and

infrastructure. From day one, ICT infrastructure development has been one of the strategic objectives of UAEU management. Most of you will be surprised to know that the first internet connectivity within UAE and the Gulf region was implemented in UAE University back in the 80s, and then later on under a contractual agreement the same line was leased to ISP.

At present, UAEU IT infrastructure covers 20 live managed sites like Jimi, FMHS, Abu Dhabi, Fala-jHaza, ISI and etc. We are also connected to the UAE Research Network Ankabut which has enabled us to be part of other research networks around the globe. By the way, to date we are the only institution that has IPv6 connectivity with Ankabut and this will be further expanded internally in the near future. Distance education, complex learning -management systems and the opportunity to collaborate with research partners from around the world are just some of the transformational benefits that UAE University is reaping.

We are already planning and moving ahead with the deployment of learning technologies that encourage and support interaction. We will continue to be at the forefront of Information Technology advancement to offer new solutions to the UAEU community through process improvement, automation and effective decision making mechanisms. "



In a snap 2011 - 2012

- 68,456 number of users in learning management system.
- An average of 240 million of monthly internet hits.
- 77,000 + number of managed central directory users .
- 10,000+ number of computers.

- 710,892,755,771 KByte
 Total internet Traffic (in) via Etisalat .
- 4,278,350,590 Kbyte Total UAE Research Network Ankabut Traffic (in).
- 375 Managed Network Rooms
- 980 Managed Network devices

Learn More about

IT services growth at UAEU over last academic year, Now available online, UITS Annual Report 2011 - 2012 : http://www.uaeu.ac.ae/uits/publications/index.shtml

10 | Nov 2012 . THINK IT . UITS NEWSLETTER THINK IT . UITS NEWSLETTER Nov 2012 | 11

Multifunction At the heart of your office



the constantly evolving world of technology, organizations need to keep up with innovations or risk losing the competitive battle. Being at the core of current innovations, multifunction can make your work processes much smoother, particularly if you need to manage quite a good deal of paper.

This is where a modern photocopy machine plays a central part in your effort to improve efficiency. A photocopier is designed as a central office system to combine printing, copying and scanning. It can also be used for network document storage, network scanning either to email or folders, stapling, hole punching and booklet production, which is very handy if you need to produce a memo for the whole class. Below is an outline of the various tasks a photocopier can do for you.



Combine printing, copying and scanning in one stand-alone machine can improve the office efficiency ...



• Scan to a Network-Connected Computer

You can scan documents directly from the machine to a folder configured in your PC through the network. The photocopier machine and your PC should be connected to the network.

Scan to a USB Memory Device

You can directly save the scanned document or picture to a USB memory device.

• Scan-to-Email

You can scan the documents to your email and send them directly to others.

• Scanned Documents File Types

The scanned documents can be stores as PDF Formats or picture formats. Also, the PDF formats can be stored as one file with multiple sheets, or you can scan each sheet in a single PDF.



Time,
speed and
productivity are
three important
factors for a
business to
consider, and
can be achieved
by investing in
top quality
photocopier

machines.



Printing

• Double side printing (Duplex)

You can print on both sides of a sheet, saving thus on paper.

Size Adjustment Printing (Scaling)

You can change the size of documents you want to print. With this feature you can make them larger or smaller on the printed paper: print small documents larger or large documents smaller.

Printing Files from a USB Memory Device

You can print directly from the USB device. This feature is available only in photocopiers that have a USB port.

Secure Printing

With a secure printing feature, you can protect your personal documents, especially when using a printing device in an office or a public place.



Adjusting Darkness

If your original documents contain dark images, you can adjust the darkness level to make a copy easier to read.

Adjusting Size

You can reduce or enlarge the size of a copied document. You can use this feature, when you need to copy a small document larger or a large document smaller.

• Copying Multiple Pages per Side

Using this feature reduces the size of the original images and prints 2 or 4 pages onto one sheet of paper. You can make a voluminous work into a portable summary. Reduce your document's size and paper usage with this feature.

Copying on Both Sides of Paper

You can set the machine to print copies on both sides of paper.

#



The photocopier has different document finishing capabilities:

Stapling

Copies are automatically collated into sets arranged in page order and stapled.

Hole punch

The machine punches two or three holes into the copies.

Z-Fold

The machine automatically Z-folds 11"x17"/A3 copies into LTR/A4 copies, respectively.

Job Separator

For separating print, copy, and report output.

By: Jamila Al Ameri & Sumaya Al Shamsi

12 | Nov 2012 . THINK IT . UITS NEWSLETTER THINK IT . UITS NEWSLETTER . Nov 2012 | 13







Ankabut "Spider" spins faster webs for academics @ UAEU

nder the Patronage of His Excellency Sheikh Nahyan Bin Mubarak Al-Nahyan, Chancellor of UAEU and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, United Arab Emirates University hosted Ankabut Users' Meeting on September 18 and 19, 2012. The Ankabut Users' Meeting has exceeded by far all expectations, with almost 400 attendees on both days which is a new record registered only through UAEU.

The Ankabut users' meeting was attended by Vice Chancellor of UAEU, Dr. Mugheer Al-Khaili, Director General of Abu Dhabi Education Council and Dr. Arif Al-Hammadi, Executive Vice President of Khalifa University.

The sessions of the event focused on "Discovering Ankabut" with H. David Lambert, President and CEO of Internet2 and Dr. Salem Alagtash, Managing Director of the Arab States Research and Education Network (ASREN) as key speakers at this event.

The sessions also featured a session on "Preparing state of the art ICT infrastructure to support modern mobile devices, the planning and implementation experience on deploying iPad-based learning for foundation courses", by our very own Sharath Hedge, Manager of IT Support Services and Muhammad Imran, Manager of Email Services.

What people said ...

Ankabut always organizes great events. I love using internet2 as an educational network and the Ankabut Users' Meeting was essential to help us take full advantage of internet2 in the web community", Raed Shehada, Web Design Specialist, UITS.

I believe such events are very informative for those directly involved in such implementations. These kinds of events bring everyone to a common platform to sit and discuss the issues and challenges faced. Researchers should be directly involved in these events in order to extend networking and social contacts with other colleagues in the rest of world", Umair Gul Memon, Network Administrator, UITS.

Top Trends at GITEX 2012

GITEX is the unrivalled destination of the ICT sector in the region. This year, GITEX attracted about 3,500 companies form 77 counties around the world, about 1,000 launches, and over 130,000 industry professionals. There were 12 dedicated technology sectors that showcased their latest technologies and innovations. Here is a quick overview of the top trends at the exhibition.

Cloud Computing

Cloud computing is the buzz word in the ICT sector at the moment and it featured heavily at GITEX. Cloud computing is the technology that delivers computing resources - both hardware and software - as services over the internet like software, storage and security. One of the highlights at GITEX this was Cloud Confex, the largest integrated Cloud Exhibition and Conference in the region.

IT Security

Online threats and attacks have risen dramatically recently, and so has the innovations in the field of IT security to counteract the risks. GITEX 2012 showcased the latest techniques and tools in IT security infrastructure solutions. For example, Symantec conducted many seminars that examined the ever evolving threats and introduced some ways to mitigate them.

Smartphone Drive

Once again the revolution in telecommunications sector underscores the importance of the smartphone, and GITEX 2012 was the battle ground for competing companies. In their bid to win a share of the growing market, companies used the GITEX platform to launch new products. Intel, for instance, introduced a new smartphone and Lenovo is in the process of developing its own.







By: Shamma Al Muhairi

Instagram, your cherished memories in pictures



Outside the photo frame and beyond the camera's shutter and shots, photo sharing trends up the way you keep photos forever and relive those unforgettable moments of your life with family, friends and the world. All this can be achieved in a fun and simple way with Instagram!

What is Instagram

Instagram (http://instagram.com) is a free photo-sharing application and social network that was released in October 2010. Instagram enables users to take a photo, apply a digital filter to it, and then share it with other users who are connected to Instagram. It expands to share photos in other social networking services like Twitter, Facebook and Tumbler.

To avail of this service, you need to create a free account with a username and password. Mobile versions for iOS and Android are also available to carry out your memory album in your pocket.

Instagram as a Social Network

On Instagram, you can search for friends by name or find friends that are already connected on other social networks like Facebook or Twitter. You can start following them and viewing their photos, and you can be followed back by those users (or other users) as well. When you decide to follow a user, that user's Instagram photos will appear in your feed. You can press "Like" on any photo to let them know that you admire their creative and artistic talent, or you can leave a comment.

Instagram is a great tool that enables you to relive and share your cherished memories...Forever!

Reference: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instagram

By: Aysha Al Meqbali

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