

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?"

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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, e-services, 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. "