

Thousands of visitors attend Qitcom 2012

Qitcom 2012 drew to a close yesterday, marking the conclusion of the second edition of the information and communication technology conference and exhibition, which this year featured more than 170 exhibitors.

The large number of participants and attendees represented significant growth compared to the first year of the show, and highlighted the importance that the local authorities are placing on the development of technology and ICT in Qatar as it continues its move towards a knowledge-based economy.

Marketing and communications manager of Qitcom 2012, Noor al-Khaja, said: "This year's edition of Qitcom saw more than 15,000 recurring visitors and 6,950 unique visitors which marks a 75% increase, in addition to over 2,593 unique delegates."

Yesterday, the keynote speech for the final day of the conference was delivered by renowned physicist, author and television presenter, Dr Michio Kaku, who provided the audience with an interesting insight into the future of technology and its impact on our lives.

"When you go to a movie and say 'I want to see Casablanca except remove the face of Humphrey Bogart and put mine!' - in the future, you will be the hero in all movies," he said, adding "even television will be revolutionised."

"We, physicists, figured out how to make 3D television with-

out glasses. The glass will be intelligent in the future, you will be able to talk to the window and ask it to change colour or scene to the Eiffel Tower or Taj Mahal. This is possible today but it is very expensive. By 2020, it will be very cheap, since the computer chip will cost a penny," he argued.

Kaku also discussed the impact of technology in the healthcare sector, explaining that a chip has been manufactured which can be inserted into the human body where it can detect and destroy cancer cells.

"It takes 20 years for a pancreatic cancer cell to develop in the body - Steve Jobs didn't have to die if he diagnosed his cancer with those molecules," he added.

This year's event featured both international corporations and local companies showcasing their latest innovations, with the conference comprising 14 sessions and more than 117 international, regional and local panellists.

ICT market development manager for IctQATAR and Qitcom organising committee chairman, Ali al-Khulafii, said: "Qitcom was launched with the vision to further Qatar's stature as a regional and world leader in the development of Arabic digital content, enabling local and regional ICT stakeholders and innovators to meet with international Leaders and also help foster and inspire new IT companies."

"We have successfully built on the successes of our inaugural

edition to provide an even grander, more comprehensive and strategic exhibition and conference and we fully intend to continue our progress in the coming years, making Qitcom the preeminent ICT industry event in the region," he added.

Senior vice president of Booz Allen Hamilton and cyber-security expert, Roger Cressey said: "I am very impressed that IctQATAR is doing it. There is a leadership and a vision that are quite remarkable. QCERT is doing an excellent job educating people on cyber-security."

The closing day of the conference also saw the winners of the Vodafone Indie Fikra Appathon competition announced, with team 'Stalkers' emerging victorious with their health application, Onigiri.

The programme helps young people learn about diabetes through looking after a diabetic pet, while the other three successful teams created a football inspired comic, a fantasy football game and an application for collecting information on shopping offers.

CEO of Vodafone-Qatar, Richard Daly said: "There is a lot of great entrepreneurial talent in Qatar - and especially in mobile app development - and the Appathon is designed to nurture, celebrate and reward that talent. We asked teams to do something quite challenging - we really pushed them and we were impressed with the outcome."



The winners of the Vodafone Qatar Indie Fikra Appathon 2012 with Vodafone CEO, Richard Daly and other officials.

Best four apps win contest

Vodafone Qatar and Qitcom have announced names of four winners of their mobile app developer competition Indie Fikra: Appathon 2012.

Team "Stalkers" won the first position with their mHealth app called Onigiri, which is designed to teach children with or at risk for diabetes how to live a healthy lifestyle through their caring for a diabetic digital pet.

The second place was awarded to team "Noble" for their interactive magazine and comic called *Abtal 22*, which aimed at exciting kids about football and the 2022 World Cup.

Third place went to team "Cereal Killers" and their app ASF - Al Sadd Fantasy - a fantasy football game, while the fourth place was won by team "AppliQations" for their app Shofferz - an app for aggregating and displaying shopping offers from around Qatar.

The winners were handed trophies by Vodafone's chief executive officer Richard Daly to mark their achievements at a ceremony held at Vodafone's booth during Qitcom.

Speaking on the occasion, Daly said: "Indie Fikra - I have an idea. Vodafone and Qitcom

have a shared vision - a shared idea - to see more Arabic content created and perhaps more importantly, to see more content created in and for Qatar. That's why we partnered with Qitcom to bring this unique event to life."

He acknowledged that there were a lot of great entrepreneurial talents in Qatar, especially in mobile app development saying "and the Appathon is designed to nurture, celebrate and reward that talent. We asked teams to do something quite challenging - we really pushed them and we were impressed with the outcome."

The first event of its kind in the Middle East, Indie Fikra: Appathon 2012 brought together mobile app developer talent from all over Qatar to compete for over QR50,000 in prizes and inclusion in IctQATAR's much sought-after start-up incubation programme Dajjala.

Teams had just 48 hours to code and create a working demo for a new mobile app in order to be eligible to win.

A panel of judges - comprising Daly, Vodafone Group Developer Marketing head Hemanth Madan, Yahoo! Middle East Business Development director Christos Masters,

IctQATAR senior specialist Yazen Alsafi, Vodafone CMO John Saad and Vodafone Interactive head Khalifa Saleh Haroon - viewed pitches and demonstrations from the teams before selecting the best four apps from the competition.

The apps were judged based on the following criteria: if the app was created in Arabic, the creativity of the app, the functionality of the app and the overall potential for the app to be successful.

Members of the teams are: First (Onigiri) - Ren Aysa, Rana Khalil, Fahad Islam and Hammad Abbas.

Second - Abtal 22 (Heroes of 22) - Khaled Elsafty, Hany Elsafty, Shaik Mujahed and Zameer.

Third (ASF - Al Sadd Fantasy) - Rami al-Rihawi and Aribant Agarwal

Fourth (Shofferz) - Rishav Bhowmick and Zaid Haque

"We were thrilled with the results from Indie Fikra: Appathon 2012. The quality and creativity of the work presented was very high. There is such a talented and entrepreneurial community of developers in Qatar today and we hope to work again with them in future with more activities like Indie Fikra: Appathon 2012," Haroon said.

"Application development is one of many areas in the ICT industry in which aspiring entrepreneurs can carve out a unique and profitable niche. There is a talented and growing development community in Qatar and it was fantastic to be able to showcase their imaginative skills at Qitcom 2012. I give my sincere congratulations to all the winners," Qitcom organising committee chairman Ali al-Khulafii said.

More information about Indie Fikra: Appathon 2012 can be had at www.vodafone.com.qa/appathon.



A view of the audience at Dr Kaku's address yesterday.

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