

ICDL Calls for Injection of Digital Literacy Initiatives in the Healthcare Sector



ICDL GCC Foundation, the governing body of the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) digital literacy program for the Gulf States, is urging the healthcare industry in the region to embrace new initiatives that will provide staff with technology and essential related skills to better manage

healthcare tasks. The Foundation maintains that a modern healthcare system supported by health information technology and computer skilled staff would increase efficiency, improve the quality of care, and help reduce medical errors.

"Although the healthcare industry was one of the early adopters of technology, other industries such as banking, retail and shipping have surpassed in transforming the way they do business through the adoption of information technology. Today, the healthcare industry still lags behind and its growing cost remains to be an increasing burden on government-financed healthcare system and employer-based health insurance, placing the local economies at a competitive disadvantage. Our call on the healthcare sector to adopt digital literacy for its employees is not only based on economic grounds but also for humanitarian reasons to save precious lives." said *Jamil Ezzo*, Director General, ICDL GCC Foundation.

The ICDL program is available region-wide with a syllabus consisting of 7 modules designed to cover the key concepts of computing, its practical applications and their use in the workplace and society, providing a solid base of computer skills to enable people to confidently use computers. An additional 8th module has been expounded by the ECDL Foundation to cater for best IT practices within the health sector administration environment, with part of this health module open to customization, according to the special environment and requirements of specific healthcare organizations. ■

دعت مؤسسة ICDL GCC العاملين في قطاع العناية بالصحة في بلدان مجلس التعاون الخليجي إلى تجهيز منشاتهم بالتقنيات الرقمية الحديثة وتدريب فرق العمل على إستخدامها لتحسين إدارة المهمات في هذه المنشآت. وتؤكد ICDL على أن نظام حديث للعناية بالصحة مدعوم بتكنولوجيا المعلوماتية سيزيد من فعالية ونوعية الخدمات الصحية، وسيساهم في التقليل من الأخطاء الطبية.

REFER TO RIN 73 ON PAGE 74

Robots to Aid Child Care Experiences in Hospital Setting and Beyond

A hospitalization is a serious physical and mental occurrence, especially for children. It brings them in situations which are completely different from what they are used to at home. In a hospital, children's experiences are more limited due to the closed and protective environment. These situations and limitations lead to many difficulties and special needs, which the ANTY project will try to improve by creating a special friend visiting the children.

The Robotics & Multibody Mechanics research group (R&MM) and Electronics and Informatics department (ETRO) at the University of Brussels (VUB), together with the ANTY Foundation, have started up the ANTY project to address the above challenges. They are creating a robot called "Probo" which will be used as a tele-interface to inter-



act with the children on three different levels: entertainment, communication

and medical treatments.

The R&MM research group will take care of the mechanical part of the robot, whereas ETRO will focus on the aspects of vision, hearing and speech. The development and construction of a first prototype has started and is hoped to be available towards 2008. The prototype will support the further growth of the project. Alongside the technical research possibilities, the prototype will be used to examine the opportunities for using ANTY in medical, social and psychological research. This research will provide relevant feedback to optimize the prototype towards a useful "social" robot.

The main technical research areas are: vision, speech, A.I. and mechanical design focusing on intrinsic safety. Concerning the research in the medical areas, the possibilities in Robot Assisted Therapy will be explored. And the research in social and psychological areas will focus on child-robot interaction and emotional communication. ■

تقوم مجموعة Robotics & Multibody Mechanics وقسم الإلكترونيات والمعلوماتية في جامعة بروكسل (VUB)، بالتعاون مع مؤسسة ANTY، بتنفيذ مشروع ANTY لبناء رجل آلي ملقب بـ Probo يقوم بالترفيه عن الأطفال في المستشفيات وبمعالجتهم طبياً. يهدف المشروع إلى تحسين حالة الأطفال النفسية في بيئة حزينه تحد من تحركاتهم وتزيد من احتياجاتهم، ذلك بطريقة مسلية وفعالة تتمثل بتفاعلهم مع الرجل الآلي Probo.

REFER TO RIN 74 ON PAGE 74