

A New Community for MENA 'Apps' market



AppsArabia is a newly established hub and investment fund, which promotes and supports mobile app development throughout the Middle East and North Africa. It is funded by twofour54 ibtikar and based on the twofour54 campus in Abu Dhabi.

The Abu Dhabi-based content creation community, twofour54 is, since the outset, dedicated to provide funding and support to start-up and early stage Arabic content initiatives.

"iPhone OS is the world's most advanced mobile platform and, with more than 4 billion apps already downloaded from the App Store, it presents a huge opportunity for developers in the Middle East," commented Tony Orsten, CEO, twofour54. "Mobile adoption in the region is soaring and 'AppsArabia' will empower Arab entrepreneurs to create apps that address the growing demand for local content."

At the same time the company announced that its training academy, twofour54 tadreeb, has been appointed a Pro-Apps Apple Authorised Training Centre (AATC). The certification and training courses will follow Apple's official pro applications curriculum and offer a range of training options on Apple's professional photography, audio and film-industry software products including Aperture, Final Cut Studio, Final Cut Server and Logic Studio. The courses will be delivered by Apple Certified Trainers who maintain Apple's highest quality standards.

"We recognise the need to provide world-class training to existing and aspiring media professionals in the region, which is why we have obtained Apple training accreditation," added Wayne Borg, COO of twofour54. "Becoming an Apple Authorised Training Centre further enhances twofour54's reputation as a centre of excellence for content creation in the Middle East and enables us to offer the highest-quality training experience to help the region reach its full potential."

AppsArabia is led by David Ashford who said: "We're passionate about the development of apps and our aim is to support the growth of a sustainable app development industry in the United Arab Emirates and throughout the MENA region."

The global market for app development is valued at \$6.2 billion in 2010 and is expected to grow to \$22.1 billion in 2013 (source: Gartner, 2010).

AppsArabia helps people to develop apps within the MENA region using the Software Development Kits (SDKs) of all the major mobile and online platforms, e.g. Android (Google), Apple, Blackberry, Facebook, OpenSocial and Ovi (Nokia).

They do so by providing the needed mentoring and support to anyone involved in app development within the MENA region. They also market apps on behalf of Apps Arabia members by publishing, promoting and cross-selling their mobile offerings. Apps Arabia is operating its 'community' web site to bring people together and provide a forum for everyone involved in app development.

The First Mobile App Development Contest from QUWIC

With the support of co-sponsors Qtel Group and Al Jazeera Network, Qatar University Wireless Innovations Center (QUWIC) has recently announced plans to launch the first ever annual regional mobile application development contest, which will cover multiple phone platforms. Full details of this initiative, including rules for entry, will be made available in September, but the organisers are keen to connect with potential entrants as early as possible.

With a mission put forth to promote the MENA region as a centre of excellence for app development, it is no surprise to see Apps Arabia involved in this notable and applauded initiative. AppsArabia invests in the best app ideas from throughout the MENA region, helps get them to market and assists in promoting them to maximise revenues for their creators.

AppsArabia is an exciting new initiative that creates unprecedented opportunities for everyone involved in the development of apps in The Middle East & North Africa. It is more than ready to invest in killer ideas, taking developer and creatives' passion to market and through to commercial success. Everyone is invited to share and develop ideas, from entrepreneurs to techies, everyone can collaborate and help each other; whereas, corporates and agencies can find talent.

There is a growing demand for apps within the MENA region and AppsArabia has made its mission to support a local supply to meet this demand.

AppsArabia proclaimed aim is "to establish a sustainable local market for app development by supporting entrepreneurs, designers and developers who now offer a serious alternative to outsourcing beyond MENA."

The competition is designed to encourage greater regional involvement in application development, and to provide a platform for local developers. QUWIC has been heavily involved in mobile applications development since its foundation in 2009, particularly in the field of Arabic language applications.

This contest supports the wider objective of QUWIC to position Qatar as a regional hub for research and development in telecom and wireless applications and services. It also aims to discover and encourage young talent from the region to play an active role in this important and emerging space.

"We are very proud to be the organizers of this event" said Dr. Adnan Abu-Dayya, Executive Director, QUWIC. "Mobile applications are one of the fastest growing areas of the telecommunications industry and the Middle East represents a major growth market. Our aim is to become a major contributor to developing culturally relevant applications in Arabic that will improve the quality of life in our communities."

The mobile applications market is forecast to reach \$17.5 billion by 2012. Additionally, mobile apps downloads across all types of handsets are projected to increase from over 7 billion downloads in 2009 to almost 50 billion in 2012, up 92% year over year.

Commenting on the initiative, Dr. Nasser Marafih, CEO the Qtel Group, said: "Collaborative innovation is indispensable and today's market imposes it. As part of our strategy to encourage local and regional innovation and content development, the Qtel Group is pleased to be the exclusive telecom supporter of this contest. By engaging with students and developers, we are working towards promoting the growth of a community of connected constituents and real time, anywhere communications in the Middle East and North Africa region."

The contest will be open to students and professional individual developers in the region, with further details on categories and timings to be revealed in September. More information can be found on the web page: www.qwic.com/contest

Wadah Khanfar, Director General of Al Jazeera Network stated: "Al Jazeera is pleased to be part of this initiative, which centres on youth in the Arab world. It will help to stimulate innovation and creativity in the region and will also serve as a great catalyst to discover talented mobile developers. Having more local and culturally-specific applications is an important endeavour and I see this initiative as contributing to advancing development in this important field."

QUWIC is already active in developing Mobile Tele-Health, Educational and Informational Applications that utilize emerging wireless technologies and products to create regionally relevant applications for a number of customer-driven uses.

"We are very excited about this contest and I would like to thank our sponsors, the Qtel Group and Al Jazeera Network for their trust and support. We are looking forward to the results of the contest and I am confident that we will be proud of the quality of talents that we will discover," concluded Dr. Abu Dayya.