

News Release



Nortel Networks Kidz Online
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State Department funds Empowerment Channel for Middle East Women

Reston, VA –Nortel Networks Kidz Online (NNKOL) announced today they have developed a cooperative agreement to create an interactive television channel directed to girls and young women throughout the Middle East. The agreement brings together with NNKOL subject and linguistic experts from the Columbian College of George Washington University, the training organization World Links Arab Region and the United States Department of State through its Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI).

The *Shaqa'iq Channel* will use peer-to-peer communication to showcase how other women succeed in fully participating in the 21st century society. Production of the *Shaqa'iq Channel* will be in cooperation with the Jordan Education Initiative, a public-private partnership model for effective and advanced learning deployment being implemented by the World Economic Forum and the Government of Jordan, and it will be initially delivered in Jordan, Qatar, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates. The *Shaqa'iq Channel* will introduce Arabic speaking girls, young women, and the male influencers in their lives, to the potential they have as vital members of the 21st century society by showcasing the role technology has in empowering individuals.

Pre-production work for the *Shaqa'iq Channel* has already begun, with the first finished episodes scheduled for distribution in the Fall of 2004. The interactive channel will premiere as a web-based service with further distribution via carriage agreements with in-region television service providers. The *Shaqa'iq Channel* will provide an online forum for girls and young women to connect with and share issues and ideas to further propel the ideals and values of their culture as they enrich their personal experiences.

The Columbian College of George Washington University houses both the undergraduate and the graduate schools of arts and sciences. The Columbian College provides multiple interdepartmental programs including those in linguistics, women's studies and international cultural affairs. Staff and graduate student experts in these areas will work to support the construct of the programming for the *Shaqa'iq Channel*.

World Links Arab Region's (WLAR) mission is to improve educational outcomes, economic opportunities and mutual global understanding for youth in developing countries, through the use of technology and the Internet. World Links connects youth in a global learning network, allowing them to share their knowledge, perspectives, hopes and dreams with their peers. WLAR will provide in-region coordination and production assistance to create episodes for the *Shaqa'iq Channel*.

NNKOL is a non-profit digital educational service. NNKOL strives to help students and teachers increase their knowledge of the rapidly changing world of technology and how to integrate into their ongoing new literacy experiences. Nortel Networks is the signature sponsor of Kidz Online and provides the optical network hardware and ongoing support that enables millions of students and teachers to remotely access the programs and services of the organization. Learn more at www.nnkol.org.

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