

Association for Information Systems AIS Electronic Library (AISeL)

All Sprouts Content

Sprouts

12-7-2010

Determining the Best Plan to Launch the Saudi Virtual University

Abdulrahman Mirza

King Saud University, amirza@ksu.edu.sa

Hesham Altwaijry

King Saud University, twaijry@ksu.edu.sa

Follow this and additional works at: http://aisel.aisnet.org/sprouts_all

Recommended Citation

Mirza, Abdulrahman and Altwaijry, Hesham, "Determining the Best Plan to Launch the Saudi Virtual University" (2010). *All Sprouts Content*. 389.

http://aisel.aisnet.org/sprouts_all/389

This material is brought to you by the Sprouts at AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). It has been accepted for inclusion in All Sprouts Content by an authorized administrator of AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). For more information, please contact elibrary@aisnet.org.

Determining the Best Plan to Launch the Saudi Virtual University

Abdulrahman Mirza
King Saud University, Saudi Arabia
Hesham Altwaijry
King Saud University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

This paper presents a project for the development of a virtual university in Saudi Arabia, associated challenges, and, remaining questions that need answering to ensure successful implementation and adoption of the university.

Keywords: virtual university, e-learning, internet penetration, challenges, Saudi Arabia

Permanent URL: <http://sprouts.aisnet.org/10-97>

Copyright: [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

Reference: Mirza, A., Altwaijry, H. (2010). "Determining the Best Plan to Launch the Saudi Virtual University," Proceedings > Proceedings of IFIP 8.2/Organizations and Society in Information Systems (OASIS) . *Sprouts: Working Papers on Information Systems*, 10(97). <http://sprouts.aisnet.org/10-97>

With a high annual population growth of 1.85% the demand for higher education in Saudi Arabia is on a constant rise. Just over the past decade, the number of universities has increased from 7 to 28. The start of the 2008/2009 academic year has seen 68% of the 295,000 high school graduates of that year enroll in Saudi universities. Additionally, an estimated 70,000 students are on scholarship sponsored by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) in countries around the World including the USA, UK, Canada, and Australia. This tremendous growth in demand for higher education has led the Minister of Higher Education to initiate an ambitious project for establishing a public nonprofit virtual university.

The Saudi Virtual University (SVU) is to be established with the intent of providing world class education to aspiring students using the latest information and communication technologies. This project was started with a vision grounded on a fundamental need: To provide the highest quality learning, carefully adapting e-learning resources to fit the culture and context of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The expected launch of the university is planned for the fall of 2011.

In spite of the ambitious goals of the SVU, several challenges exist that may hinder the general adoption of virtual learning within the country:

1. The MOHE has recently introduced rules and regulation that govern distance learning. These rules need to be adhered to thus imposing limitations on what can be implemented by the virtual university.
2. While Internet penetration rate in the country has seen a tremendous growth, increasing from 200,000 users in 2000 to almost 10 Million users in 2010 (38% penetration rate) as reported by internetworldstats.com, a recent national study conducted by the Saudi Communications and Information Technology Commission in 2008 of nearly 10,000 citizens has found that only 48% knew what e-learning is about, and only 4% had ever used the Internet for learning purposes.
3. An e-government symposium held at the end of September 2010 has revealed that many of the intended projects started in 2006 with the planned launching date in 2010 have failed to materialize, with only 20% of those projects being achieved.

In addition, before the university can be established, the project needs to address the following issues:

1. What is the appropriate model for the university? Should it start as a start-alone project, or as a consortium of public universities?
2. Developing and deciding what academic programs to implement and how to roll them out.
3. Deciding on what international universities should be approached, to enter strategic partnerships with them?
4. What are the target student demographics?
5. What is the needed ICT infrastructure for the virtual university?

These and other challenges and questions represent major risk factors for the SVU. We seek to develop a robust plan to guarantee the successful implementation and adoption of this project.

Editors:

Michel Avital, University of Amsterdam
Kevin Crowston, Syracuse University

Advisory Board:

Kalle Lyytinen, Case Western Reserve University
Roger Clarke, Australian National University
Sue Conger, University of Dallas
Marco De Marco, Università Cattolica di Milano
Guy Fitzgerald, Brunel University
Rudy Hirschheim, Louisiana State University
Blake Ives, University of Houston
Sirkka Jarvenpaa, University of Texas at Austin
John King, University of Michigan
Rik Maes, University of Amsterdam
Dan Robey, Georgia State University
Frantz Rowe, University of Nantes
Detmar Straub, Georgia State University
Richard T. Watson, University of Georgia
Ron Weber, Monash University
Kwok Kee Wei, City University of Hong Kong

Sponsors:

Association for Information Systems (AIS)
AIM
itAIS
Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia
American University, USA
Case Western Reserve University, USA
City University of Hong Kong, China
Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
Hanken School of Economics, Finland
Helsinki School of Economics, Finland
Indiana University, USA
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium
Lancaster University, UK
Leeds Metropolitan University, UK
National University of Ireland Galway, Ireland
New York University, USA
Pennsylvania State University, USA
Pepperdine University, USA
Syracuse University, USA
University of Amsterdam, Netherlands
University of Dallas, USA
University of Georgia, USA
University of Groningen, Netherlands
University of Limerick, Ireland
University of Oslo, Norway
University of San Francisco, USA
University of Washington, USA
Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
Viktoria Institute, Sweden

Editorial Board:

Margunn Aanestad, University of Oslo
Steven Alter, University of San Francisco
Egon Berghout, University of Groningen
Bo-Christer Bjork, Hanken School of Economics
Tony Bryant, Leeds Metropolitan University
Erran Carmel, American University
Kieran Conboy, National U. of Ireland Galway
Jan Damsgaard, Copenhagen Business School
Robert Davison, City University of Hong Kong
Guido Dedene, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Alan Dennis, Indiana University
Brian Fitzgerald, University of Limerick
Ole Hanseth, University of Oslo
Ola Henfridsson, Viktoria Institute
Sid Huff, Victoria University of Wellington
Ard Huizing, University of Amsterdam
Lucas Introna, Lancaster University
Panos Ipeirotis, New York University
Robert Mason, University of Washington
John Mooney, Pepperdine University
Steve Sawyer, Pennsylvania State University
Virpi Tuunainen, Helsinki School of Economics
Francesco Virili, Università degli Studi di Cassino

Managing Editor:

Bas Smit, University of Amsterdam

Office:

Sprouts
University of Amsterdam
Roetersstraat 11, Room E 2.74
1018 WB Amsterdam, Netherlands
Email: admin@sprouts.aisnet.org