

# E-learning envisions career-long training

## 280-plus gather for e-Learning Forum

DHAHRAN — Records were broken yet again at Training and Career Development's (T&CD) 2007 Corporate e-Learning Forum on Feb. 28.

That's when more than 280 e-learning experts and e-learners from all business lines and admin areas came to the Research and Development Center's Technical Exchange Center in Dhahran to hear about the latest developments.

Opening the forum, Hamed T. Al-Saadoun, vice president of Employee Relations and Training (ER&T), welcomed keynote speaker Dr. Curtis J. Bonk, Saudi Aramco attendee, and guests from King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM), Dammam College of Technology, Jubail Technical Institute and Dammam Community College.

Al-Saadoun set out his vision for the future of employee development at Saudi Aramco: an HR environment in which an individual's training requirements can be identified and managed from the time of joining Saudi Aramco to departure.

That vision, Al-Saadoun said, will require a new e-learning system that will interface with all other HR systems, allowing employee development to be based on organization, job, position and individual needs.

Bonk — an internationally known speaker, researcher and author of many professional papers and books on e-learning — is a professor of educational psychology and instructional systems technology at Indiana



**Tariq A. Al-Amer talks about the growth of e-learning at Saudi Aramco.**

University in the United States. "The vision at Saudi Aramco," he said, "is perfect for 21st century learning. Employees are in the midst of a transformation where they are taking more responsibility for their own learning. E-learning is a key facet of this transformation."

Taking Thomas Friedman's book "The World is Flat" as his starting point, Bonk outlined how the world of learning is becoming flatter. He cited the major forces that are driving that process, including the availability of quality online and blended learning environments; virtual collaboration software; online massive gaming, simulations and virtual worlds; learning mobility and portability; and personalized learning tools.

The daylong forum also featured six presentations by e-learning practitioners in Saudi Aramco and a final session by Bonk on "Best Practices in e-Learning Curriculum Design



**Dr. Saeed Al-Amoudi discusses transforming lecturers into e-learning developers.**

and Delivery." Bonk's afternoon presentation left forum participants fascinated by the wealth of resources that are now freely available on the Web.

Kenneth N. Huffman and Tariq A. Al-Amer of Corporate Integrated Learning Services (CILS) told how completions of e-learning courses have multiplied six-fold in four years from 20,592 in 2003 to 130,613 in 2006 while active users of e-learning courses have more than doubled in the same period. Huffman noted that a majority of the 2,500 plus courses in the CILS system are tied to job needs or business objectives.

Dr. Saeed Al-Amoudi of KFUPM discussed how a tailored program is transforming lecturers into e-learning developers. Dr. David W. Tschanz and Jaqueline A. Mullen of the Saudi Aramco Medical Services Organization (SAMSO) Web team showed how thousands of hours had been saved by



**Hamed T. Al-Saadoun thanks Dr. Curtis J. Bonk for his role in the Corporate e-Learning Forum.**  
(Photos by Ahmed Salam)

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— Dr. Curtis J. Bonk

putting hazard communication compliance sessions online. In an environment such as SAMSO, where many health-care providers work through the night, the 24/7 aspect of e-learning can reap great benefits, Tschanz said.

Among the high points of the presentations was an explanation by Jesse J. Bechard of Southern Area Gas Operations of how an e-learning newsletter has galvanized the work force in those gas plants to make use of e-learning opportunities.

Aisha W. Kay and Sabah H. Bogasmi of the Career Development Department talked about the wealth of self-development resources available in Saudi Aramco and how e-learning is

helping employees take charge of their self development.

Dr. Michael L. Reakes of the Job Skills Curriculum e-Dev Team outlined how an authoring tool, Articulate Presenter, can be used by any line organization to rapidly produce engaging e-learning modules that are customized to the specific circumstances of an organization. T&CD has started a quarterly class on using Articulate Presenter in an effort to encourage its use companywide.

A video of Bonk's keynote speech and best practices session, and all other presentations from this year's forum will soon be available at the CILS Web site: <http://e-learning.aramco.com.sa>.



**Abdulwahhab M. Al-Alwan cuts a ribbon, photo at right, to open the Health Promotion/Disease Prevention Campaign for Yanbu' area employees. To his left is Central and Western Region Training director Mutlaq A. Subaey, and behind them is Dr. Mohammad M. Gamal from Yanbu' Clinic. Above, visitors gather information on a wide range of health and safety topics.**

(Photos by Ahmed Abdulwahed Trading Co.)



## Yanbu' employees treated to health, safety information

YANBU' — Yanbu' Gas Plant, in coordination with Preventive Medicine, sponsored a Health Promotion/Disease Prevention Campaign Feb. 26-27 for all Yanbu' area employees, with about 400 attending.

The campaign covered tips on the benefits of exercise, body mass index, preventing obesity, healthy

eating, diabetes, smoking cessation and a quiz on reducing risk factors.

The campaign was inaugurated by Abdulwahhab M. Al-Alwan, manager of the Yanbu' Gas Plant Department.

Using proverbs such as, "a sound mind in a sound

body" and "Prevention is better than cure," Al-Alwan encouraged employees to participate in the campaign. He urged them to benefit from the information being made available.

Quoting medical sources, Al-Alwan said that about 35 percent of Saudis are diabetic.