



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

1,200 DIGITAL LEADERS DISCUSS BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION AT ARABNET DIGITAL SUMMIT

- *Held in Strategic Partnership with Digital Media Services (Choueiri Group), the event brought together government leaders, enterprise decision-makers, innovators and investors to connect and discuss the future of digital in the region.*
- *The 4th edition of the ArabNet Digital Summit brought together over 70 speakers, 65 sponsors and partners, and 1,200 attendees from over 50 countries across the world - all the way from China to Ecuador.*

Dubai, 30/05/2016 – In collaboration with Digital Media Services (Choueiri Group), the 4th edition of the ArabNet Digital Summit brought together 1,200 government leaders, enterprise decision-makers, innovators and investors to connect and exchange ideas on how to leverage technology to drive business growth and improve quality of life. *“Today, excelling in digital is a key driver for competitive advantage, business growth and customer satisfaction” declared Omar Christidis, Founder and CEO of ArabNet, during his opening speech. He added that “The ArabNet Digital Summit delves into the way digital is transforming public and private enterprises, from smart cities, to connected lives, machine learning, big data, corporate investments, and much more.”*

With a focus on digital transformation, the Digital Summit included 1-on-1 interviews with top private sector executives navigating such changes, including Mark Pilkington, CEO of Kamal Osman Jamjoom and Alex Saber, Chairman, MENA at Publicis Media. To shed light on digital banking transformation, ArabNet released its “Digital Banking Adoption in MENA, 2016” report, published in partnership with OMD. Finally, the Summit included various senior executives from DED, DEWA, RTA, Dubai Police, Dubai Silicon Oasis and others.

Digital media and advertising innovation were again key themes this year. The Summit featured a range of panels - from native advertising to video distribution - as well as global keynotes by Rogier Croes, Chief Digital Officer, MEC; Nick Rockwell, CTO of The New York Times; Andrew Bradford, Chief Digital Officer, Ipsos Connect, and Stefano Maruzzi, Vice President EMEA at GoDaddy. The Summit included the “Next Track,” sponsored by Starcom, which explored how banks, retailers, FMCGs and agencies are adapting, and the technologies they are leveraging to engage a more connected consumer.

In the entrepreneurship space, over \$750M were invested in 450+ tech startup deals in the MENA region between 2013-2015, according to ArabNet's latest research, "The State of Digital Investments in MENA", which is sponsored by Dubai Internet City (DIC), and is, according to Omar Christidis *"the most comprehensive research on investments in technology startups in MENA to date"*. The UAE captured the lion's share of deals, with double the number of any other market, cementing itself as a key hub for digital startups.

Commenting on the launch of the report, Majed Al Suwaidi, Managing Director of Dubai Internet City, said: *"The report highlights that the UAE is emerging as one of the driving forces of technology investment and entrepreneurialism in the region. This not only reflects Dubai's ambitions to become one of the most innovative cities in the world, but is also consistent with our own innovation strategy, which supports the vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai"*.

On the other hand, the Summit included the 4th edition of the Digital Showcase, allowing young digital enterprises a platform for growth - with 35 participating companies. For the second year in a row, ArabNet also collaborated with 500 Startups to bring Silicon Valley expertise to MENA entrepreneurs.

The ArabNet Summit hosted the inaugural edition of the Smartpreneur competition, where entrepreneurs pitch their business ideas for supporting the smart city transformation of Dubai. The competition was organized by the Dubai Chamber of Commerce, with final pitches taking place at the Summit, and the winners announced during the Summit's closing ceremony on May 31st.

The ArabNet Digital Summit 2016 was held on May 30-31 at the *Madinat Jumeirah Conference and Events Centre* in Dubai, and was one of the most exclusive ArabNet events yet. Past ArabNet events have notably attracted top speakers, participants, and partners from corporations such as Smart Dubai, Souq.com, Du, Touch, Alfa, TBWA, Facebook, DMS, Majid Al Futtaim, JWT, STC, Twitter, Starcom, Criteo, SkyNews, VISA, Leo Burnett, Deloitte, LBC, Microsoft, Uber, Vivaki, GE, MakerStudios (Disney), FP7, 500Startups, OMD, International New York Times, and many more.

To learn more, go to: www.arabnet.me/conference/summit

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About ArabNet

ArabNet is the hub for Arab digital professionals and entrepreneurs, creating online and offline platforms for them to connect and learn. ArabNet's vision is to grow the web and mobile sectors in the Arab region. It also aims to build business bridges across the MENA, stimulate the growth of the Arab knowledge economy, and support the creation of new businesses and job opportunities for youth through conferences, partnerships, and competitions.

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