

The Sultanate of Oman recognized IT as an enormous untapped wealth and began to focus her efforts in setting up IT business parks and Information Technology institutions. Apart from IT adoption in Governmental and the private sectors, educational institutions have embraced IT on a large scale. In the last few years, there had been a proliferation of the Internet Cafes in major cities of Oman and IT literacy continues to improve with many citizens using the email facilities and surfing the Web for needed information on a daily basis.

5. It is important that Oman is able to keep pace with the rest of the world. Al Balooshi (2001) asserts that e-learning is the 'no big thing' and not the 'one big thing' and that e-learning must be viewed with some seriousness in the Gulf region. On-line learning is the future of education and it is certain that those teachers who are still trapped in the chalk and talk tradition will be left behind as education advances into the 21st century. According to Canning-Wilson (2000), 'Educators in the Arabian Gulf and worldwide will need to be more proficient in educational technology, more aware of the theoretical and practical aspects of foreign and second language teaching, as well as recognize the need to build further awareness of how teaching methodologies, learning strategies, and learning may be altered based on this new medium of on-line education'.

6. In Oman, the population is spread thinly over a wide geographic area. To ensure that the population has access to the resources they need, two solutions exist which concern telecommunications. First, electronic storage and retrieval of information via the Internet will continue to erode the role, traditionally filled by books and printed media. Secondly, e-learning technologies will bring education to the Omanis by providing access to learning resources at a wide variety of locations, rather than making people travel to education. The World Wide Web offers a truly global library of a scale unimaginable and it is available equally to students studying at home or anywhere in Oman. Oman Telecommunication Company's Internet service has struggled from time to time as LANK6000 Mid-Term Practice Test _ Reading Text FALL2020 demands constantly outstripped capacity. There are about 40,000 registered Internet customers and over 90,000 users. It is understood that today SQU alone has over 15,000 users. Omani students get linked with their counterparts in any part of the world through the Internet (Al Rawahy, 2001).

7. Internet instructional uses by SQU faculty members are however, mostly limited to obtaining information and rich resources available at all times. This suggests that they should be trained and encouraged to broaden their use beyond the present status (Abdel Rahim & Al Musawi, 2002). Currently, there are attempts at e-learning, using the WebCT by faculty at SQU and a study on the implementation and perspectives of the early adopters has been conducted (Akinyemi et al, 2002). Omani educational system needs to learn from other countries' experiences in her development.

Conclusions 8. While Oman is not oblivious of the advantages of e-learning many Omani educators will be better convinced with more research evidence on the quality, security and credibility issues of e-learning. The Omani concern for comparability of standards with the traditional system is a genuine one which must be attended to before e-learning can be developed, disseminated and diffused into higher education on a large scale. According to the call by Al Balooshi (2001) and Al Majdoub (2001), there is a need for e-learning strategic plan for the Arab world and Oman will be a forerunner in the formulation of such e-learning strategies.