

## Oasis 500 and Jordan Gaming Task Force Open Advanced Interactive Game Lab



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AMMONNEWS - Jordan- Stemming from His passion for computer, video games, and mobile apps, and His vision to support the youth of Jordan and enable a creative ecosystem for game and apps/software

developers in the Kingdom of Jordan, His Majesty King Abdullah II attended the finalist presentations and demos of iPhone Apps development competition for high school student teams from around the kingdom.

“Simply put, Jordan has a Cool King who loves mobile apps and interactive video games” declares Dr. Usama Fayyad, Executive Chairman of Oasis 500 and former EVP and Chief Data Officer of Yahoo! Inc. “Where else would a monarch actually spend an afternoon in demos of iPhone Apps developed by high school student and then awards the winners personally?” continues Fayyad in a an interview at the Interactive Gaming Lab that King Abdullah II of Jordan had just inaugurated and funded through the King Abdullah II Fund for Development (KAFD), “In my long career from my days at NASA-JPL through Microsoft through Seattle and Bay Area startups and my 5 years with Yahoo! I have not seen anything quite like this”

Fayyad continues with interview: “Last September, HM King Abdullah asked me to help with defining an iPhone App development competition for high school students. My reaction was that we should target university students as I thought high school level is too junior for development in objective C,” Said Fayyad who eventually served as a judge in the competition, “The King looked at me and said: ‘No; high school, and we need your help defining it.’ Looking at the results, I must say I was wrong and he was right!”

Participating students, aged between 15 and 17 years, worked in groups of five to design applications for mobile devices in a competition aiming at encouraging high school students on embracing the latest gaming and applications development technologies. The competing teams had one month to learn mobile apps development and produce a fully-fledged mobile application that aid tourists during their stay in Jordan. His majesty presented prizes to the winning team from Amman National School. In attendance where U.S. Undersecretary of State, Robert Hormats and the U.S. Ambassador to

Jordan Robert Beecroft ( See photo and video footage [www.oasis500.net/gaming](http://www.oasis500.net/gaming) )

The event that took place at the inauguration of an interactive electronic gaming laboratory that was established under a Royal initiative with the aim of boosting the production capabilities of a fast growing cadre of gaming technology companies growing in Jordan. The lab is not only equipped with machines and resources that are unparalleled in today's gaming arena, provides training on the essentials of game design, from story to interface to sound effects to all game developers in the country.

"It's a rare and delightful moment to see a monarch supporting the youth of his country by attending a competition for high-school students, and interacting with them throughout their demos." - Commented Nour Khrais Founder of Maysalward, a leading game development company in Jordan and the lead organizer of the competition.

Funded with support from the King Abdullah II Fund for Development (KAJD), and Managed by Jordan Gaming Task Force and Oasis500, the Lab is yet another step to turn Jordan into a regional hub for game developers, noting that the value of investment in the sector worldwide stands at around USD \$80 billion.

"With his Majesty continued support for Jordan Gaming Task Force (JGTF), we managed to attract international and local partners like Sony ,Unity, NOKIA, Umniah, and Microsoft to help develop Jordan game sector" said Nour KHRAIS Chairman of JGTF. "We believe Jordan stands a serious chance to become the Interactive Games development capital of the Middle East."

Jordan's plans to become a beacon for information technology in the Middle East is gradually uncovering with several partnerships, projects and investments in startups with companies like Oasis 500 that aims at launching and investing in 500 technology startups in the upcoming 5 years. Oasis500 gives entrepreneurs investment and acceleration to jump-start their business on an international level with seed funding, mentorship, incubation and acceleration, and access to angel investors with the support of big players from silicon-valley such as Google, Yahoo, and Microsoft.

The Oasis 500 Angel Network event held in Amman 2 weeks ago attracted 80 angel investors and VC's with one third coming from outside Jordan to listen to 6 pitching companies. These companies received investments at terms that showed they were able to grow their valuation from 3x to 7x in the 100 days of acceleration spent at Oasis 500.

“Oasis 500 is achieving in its first year of operation in Jordan much more than Y-Combinator and Tech Stars have achieved in the U.S. in their start” said Emile Cubeisy, Board Member of Oasis 500 and Managing Director of IV-Holdings, a VC Investment fund in Jordan. “The plans we are seeing are comparable to plans and growth rates of startups in Silicon Valley”.

Photos & videos are found on [www.oasis500.net/gaming](http://www.oasis500.net/gaming)

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