The Use of Laptops within the Gulf and Islamic Culture

Bradley Saunders, Zayed University, AE
Emad Bataineh, Zayed University, AE

This paper describes the experiences of both students and faculty in a university for women in the Middle East which requires all students to purchase a laptop computer. It examines the benefits and drawbacks of laptop use within the Gulf and Islamic culture. The positive reaction of female students toward the use of laptops is compared with less successful uptake by female students in the West.

Consideration is given to how laptop use has impacted university planning. To what extent has the provision of laptops to students precluded other means of instruction? How can laptop use be regulated and standardized given the intrinsic freedom that laptops make possible? To what extent do societal pressures reduce the possibility for these young women to benefit from their laptops when away from the University Network and Intranet?

The impact of unexpected technical problems and the need for institutions to develop and implement integrated plans for change are discussed, as is the effect on faculty, who have to cope not only with a new workload created by the introduction of laptops but also with an unexpected new learning paradigm.