Al Azhar University Selects Google Workspace For Education to Empower Faculty and Students With the Latest Digital Learning Solutions

The collaboration is part of Al Azhar University's Smart Campus Project that aims to digitally transform the learning experience for 500,000 students in Egypt and around the world.

Cairo, Egypt, March 21, 2023 - Google Cloud announced today a collaboration with Al Azhar University, one of the Islamic world's first and most prestigious educational institutions. The collaboration involves deploying [Google Workspace for Education](#) (GWFE) as the official learning and productivity platform for more than 24,500 faculty members and 500,000 students at the university, which was founded in 970 AD and gained university status in 1961.

The rollout is part of Al Azhar's smart campus project, which is one of the first projects amidst public universities in Egypt aimed at using technology to digitally transform the learning experience for local and international students.

The digital transformation of the educational process began with the Faculty of Sciences at Al Azhar, where GWFE has been instrumental in ensuring that classes and learning were uninterrupted during the pandemic. More than 4,000 students across all 300 streams of sciences at the Faculty of Sciences relied on Google Classroom to attend and collaborate in more than 700 courses online during that semester. Workspace also helped faculty and students ease the transition to a virtual setup, and the effectiveness of connecting faculty and students via GWFE in that one faculty prompted the university to start rolling out the platform more widely across all 88 faculties in the university.

Cutting-edge collaboration tools accessible to every teacher and student
With GWFE implemented as the official collaboration and productivity platform at Al Azhar, faculty and students will benefit from having access to one platform that integrates Google Classroom with Gmail, Meet, Chat, Docs, Sheets, and Drive. Having all assets in a unified platform makes it easier for them to have the support needed to complete their studies efficiently and collaborate across every step of their educational journeys.

During the academic year that ran from January to December of 2022, students and faculty relied on Google Workspace in their learnings everyday. An average of 2,000 online classes took place on Meet via Google Classroom, ensuring that faculty provided the necessary academic support to students across all subjects studied at the university, and that enabled students to collaborate with each other.

The students also leveraged Google Docs to develop scientific research papers for their course work, write assignments, and complete homework, while faculty were able to review and provide direct feedback on the course work in the docs.

Moreover, Google Chat was effective in helping students discuss learning outcomes from lectures and prepare ahead for exams through the study groups they created on the platform. During that semester, there were more than 700 chat rooms created by students for study groups that remained active for 60 days across the university.

Different faculties also relied on Google Meet to conduct online classes and administer examinations at the university, while students used the collaboration tool to create study groups for projects and presentations. During the same semester, an average of 100 students attended one classroom online per day, and there were an average of 500 online Meet sessions scheduled for group collaboration during the same period.

Dr. Mohammad Al Sherbiny, Vice President for Education and Students Affairs, Al Azhar University said: "Al Azhar University is one of the first universities in Egypt to have made strides in the digital transformation of the educational system since 2014, before the Coronavirus pandemic made hybrid and distance learning a trend. We witnessed how successful and transformational Google Workspace for Education was with the Faculty of Sciences, and accordingly decided to implement the platform across all faculties in the university. Today, we are also able to open our virtual academic gateway to millions of students around the world with the support of Google Workspace for Education."

High security to safeguard academic information
Now that Al Azhar is fully online, it relies on Google Drive to securely store all of its academic and professional data, such as e-books, student assignments, exams, research papers, faculty, and student information. Google Drive uses the same robust security architecture that Google uses for its own products, such as YouTube, Search, Maps and Gmail, which ensures that the university's proprietary information is protected using high security standards.

The university also turned to GWFE to accommodate its storage capacity requirements, as it was searching for the biggest storage capacity that a cloud provider can offer. Today, the university uses up to 13.5 terabytes (TB) of storage capacity on Google Workspace.

Innovative features to make learning more accessible to international students
While Al Azhar has around 500,000 Egyptian students enrolled, the university also attracts 24,000 international students from more than 100 countries on an annual basis. Before the pandemic, all students had to be physically present at the university campus to pursue a degree. With the rollout of GWFE, Al Azhar is now able to empower more international students with access to top quality education, as they can enroll, attend classes, and complete their examinations remotely.

Elie Tabchouri, Head of Cloud Public Sector, Middle East, Turkey and Africa at Google Cloud said: "During the global pandemic, international students were unable to return to Egypt to continue their studies, which presented a significant challenge for faculties like Islamic Studies that required students to be physically present for Quran recitation panels and review boards. The availability of Google Meet helped students and faculty overcome this challenge and set up the examination board online. This is just one example of how Google Workspace for Education can support educational institutions in the Middle East, helping them overcome unprecedented challenges and be better equipped for the future."

Reinforcing ethics in the academic process
To reinforce ethics in the digital realm, Al Azhar leveraged unique features and plug-ins that GWFE provides in Docs and Meet to detect plagiarism in student research papers. The university also introduced a new digital grading system across all faculties, that relies on a grading [rubric](), which is an online tool built in Google Classroom to create a fair and equitable grading system for exams based on predetermined module answers. Additionally, GWE helps faculty proctor exams online effectively with the help of plug-in features in Meet, Docs, and Forms that rely on AI to detect student movement.

Google Cloud collaborated with Cloud 11 in Egypt as the official partner that supported the establishment of the university's online learning platform on Google Workspace.

About Google Cloud
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