

# UAE drops two places but remains in top 30 of Network Readiness Index 2023, with Saudi Arabia and Qatar following closely

Submitted by: BlueSky Education

Monday, 20 November 2023

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The United Arab Emirates (UAE) ranks 30th in this year's global Network Readiness Index (NRI) (<https://networkreadinessindex.org/>), published today, falling two places since last year. Saudi Arabia comes in 41st place, whilst Qatar ranks 46th, exhibiting the Top performances among the Arab States.

The results show Saudi Arabia prioritising digital workforce development, and Qatar investing in emerging technologies. The UAE notably outperformed other Arab State nations in the categories of Technology, People, and Impact, but placed third in the region for Governance.

The Network Readiness Index, published by Portulans Institute and Saïd Business School, University of Oxford, provides a robust framework for assessing the impact of Information Communication & Technology (ICT) on society and the development of nations. It evaluates 134 economies based on 58 indicators across four dimensions of digital readiness – technology, people, governance, and impact – providing meaningful insight for business leaders and policymakers.

This year's report, titled 'Trust in a Network Society: A crisis of the digital age?', draws attention to the potential for a serious crisis in public trust in the internet and related technologies in an increasingly interconnected world.

Within the Arab State, 13 economies featured on this year's NRI, with Bahrain (51), Oman (54), Kuwait (64), Jordan (68), Morocco (77), Egypt (81), Tunisia (88), Lebanon (96), Algeria (103) and Mauritania (131) all making the list. The region generally performed well across the Governance pillar, but what set the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar apart from their neighbouring economies was the scores they received in the Technology pillar, demonstrating a dedication to enhancing digital access and a renewed focus on emerging technologies.

Soumitra Dutta, co-editor of the NRI and Petre Moores Dean of Saïd Business School, said:

'The United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar are driving the Arab States' progress in the Network Readiness Index. The UAE excels in digital access and participation, Saudi Arabia prioritises digital workforce development, and Qatar invests in emerging technologies. These efforts underscore the region's focus on building digital capabilities, particularly in nurturing a robust digital workforce.'

Globally, as in 2022, the USA placed first with Singapore also retaining its second-place position. Finland surged by four places to secure #3 from #7 last year. The Netherlands and Sweden have ranked fourth and fifth, respectively.

Switzerland ranked sixth (down from fifth in NRI 2022) in this year's NRI, Republic of Korea achieved

seventh place (up from #9), Denmark placed #8 (down from #6), Germany dropped to ninth place, (down one), and the U.K. ranked 10th.

Among the top 25 countries, 16 are from Europe, five are from Eastern and Southeastern Asia (including Singapore, the Republic of Korea, China, Hong Kong, and Japan), two come from Oceania (Australia and New Zealand), and two are from North America (Canada and the United States).

The NRI 2023 publishes at a time characterised by dramatic technological advancement, and captures the readiness of 134 economies to capitalize on this widespread change.

Reflecting on this year's NRI, Bruno Lanvin, co-editor of NRI, said:

'You cannot improve what you cannot measure. But can you improve anything that remains imperfectly defined? As our digital world continues to evolve and shape before us, policy makers, investors, analysts, academics and ordinary citizens are often expected to make fast decisions and articulate sound assessments about rapidly changing trends and practices. The need for fact-based and quantifiable descriptions of our network societies has never been so urgent. This is an area in which, for several decades, NRI has been trying to inform the choices to be made by business, government and civil society.'

The regional leaders for NRI 2023 include Kenya, United Arab Emirates, Singapore, the Russian Federation, Finland, and the United States. Overall, these regional trends in the NRI 2023 highlight the varying levels of progress and challenges faced by economies across the different parts of the world as their journey towards digital readiness and network capabilities continues.

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