



## Saudi Women and E-learning

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### Abstract

Despite cultural and religious barriers to higher education for Saudi women [3], female enrolment in higher education has risen, with massive investment in the country's higher education system with specific provision for women [4]. There has been a rise from a mere seven universities about a decade ago, to thirty three universities including nine private, today [6]. However, opportunities are still limited because of the restrictions of access put upon women[1]. Women may not attend universities due to early marriage and or mobility restriction, or because their family does not support their attendance, but largely universities are effectively inaccessible to women as they need to be taken by a male relative and also, the distance may be impractical [ibid]. Saudi Arabia is considered to be one of the developing countries that has made rigorous efforts towards transforming its society in an information society by investing in information technology and integrating it in various sectors including the education sector [7]. E-learning is one innovation introduced by some Saudi universities along with the E-learning Centre that could assist in expanding educational opportunities for female learners at Higher Education in Saudi Arabia [2]. It should however be realised that access to Higher Education for women as well as the implementation of e-learning in a culturally sensitive environment is challenging but possible [5]. This indicates that the implementation of e-learning is affected by cultural issues in developing countries not only by financial or technical issues [8]. This paper will therefore seek to investigate how these challenges and possibilities could be explored in order to enhance the higher educational opportunities of Saudi women.

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