

Snapchat Launches Saudi AR Lens Challenge Hackathon to Fuse Culture and Innovation

RIYADH, RIAYDH, SAUDI ARABIA, May 15, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Snapchat. has successfully concluded the Saudi AR Lens Challenge Hackathon, held on May 6–7 at its Riyadh office. Organized by Snap Philanthropy in collaboration with Education For Employment (EFE -Global), the two-day event brought together 50 university students for an immersive experience in augmented reality (AR) design, storytelling, and cultural expression.

Over the course of the hackathon, students received hands-on training using Snapchat's Lens Studio and were mentored by Snapchat experts from the Riyadh office to create AR lenses inspired by Saudi culture and national celebrations. The initiative aimed to empower participants to explore the creative and commercial potential of AR while rooting their designs in local identity and shared community moments.

The program also featured a career panel featuring senior leaders from the Snapchat's Riyadh office and concluded with a showcase where teams presented their final lens creations to a judging panel. The top-performing projects were recognized for their creativity, technical execution, and cultural relevance. Top lenses from the event are being evaluated for inclusion in upcoming Snap activations and national campaigns, further demonstrating how initiatives like the Saudi AR Lens Challenge can transport cultural pride efforts into the digital innovation space.



Commenting on the event, Mr. Abdulla Alhammadi, Managing Director of Snapchat in Saudi Arabia, stated “Snapchat is proud to be part of the daily lives of young people across the Kingdom. This Hackathon was a platform to help them move from using AR to shaping it, to take cultural storytelling into their own hands, and imagine new ways of connecting with their own communities, and others around the world.”



Snapchat plays a central role in the digital lives of Saudi users, with over 25 million monthly active users and 85% engaging with AR on a weekly basis. It is one of the few platforms where users open the app more than 50 times per day on average, a reflection of its deep cultural integration and ongoing relevance across generations.

From EFE's perspective, the collaboration marks a new chapter in practical youth empowerment. “This program gives students access to the future, where creativity, tech, and culture come together to create opportunity,” said Mr. Amr Abdallah, Programs Director – Gulf Region, at Education For Employment. “Together with Snap, we’re helping prepare a new generation of Saudi talent for future careers that don’t just respond to change, but lead it.”

As Saudi Arabia advances toward a digitally driven, creative economy, the Hackathon highlights how platforms like Snapchat can serve as both canvas and classroom, empowering young creators to define their stories, in their own language, for a global audience.

–ENDS–

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