

Title: ICT Minister Interview with Shorouk Newspaper  
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## **How can labour keep up with technological growth?**

AMR TALAAT: In order for Egypt to become a reference point for ICT in the region, the most important thing is for our population to have the required skills across the spectrum of ICT disciplines and specialisations. This needs to be the cornerstone of our strategy to attract investment and boost ICT services and exports. Sector revenue increased by 16.4% in the second quarter of 2018, showing that we are creating an environment conducive to the development of ICT.

As young people become the main segment of the labour force, this is transforming companies from within. To take full advantage of this generational shift, it is important to deepen and widen the skill set. Egypt is offering numerous platforms for learning and training across the spectrum of advanced technologies.

To take an example, artificial intelligence (AI) is an important discipline in relation to which we have set out a strategy to focus on building skills and developing talent. Despite not being a new field, AI is coming to the fore because we now have the data and computational power necessary to really take advantage of what it has to offer. We are working in coordination with the Ministry of Higher Education to involve universities and faculties and develop training centres to enhance the skills of young people. At the same time, we are concentrating on attracting companies specialised in AI, in order to increase knowledge transfer.

## **What impact could government digitalisation have on the role of technology in the private sector?**

TALAAT: Achieving digital transformation is a pillar of Egypt's economic development and ICT strategy. A multifaceted approach is required in a society with demographic variety. Thus, while we are continually making more services available online, these services will also be offered over the phone and in person at Egypt Post locations across the country. Internet penetration is growing quickly on the back of a mobile penetration rate of over 100%. An expanding segment of the population wants to be able to access services online. This is particularly true for the younger generation.

It is important to take advantage of the trust that Egypt Post has built up over generations, as well as its proximity to citizens across the country, who can use its 4000 locations as physical points to access digital services. The wider impact of the digital transformation will be felt not only in the greater efficiency of government services, but also through the catalyst this will provide for the digitalisation of a private sector economy and a concomitant increase in financial inclusion. We are already seeing the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises built on a technology foundation; businesses that have previously been limited by geography are better able to extend their reach.

TALAAT: The sharing of knowledge, expertise and ideas is important for innovation and the growth of any business. This is particularly true for start-ups, young entrepreneurs and businesses that are focused on new fields. In order to create an environment that is supportive of business growth and takes advantage of the benefits of innovative thinking, it is important to bring these types of businesses together. Our affiliate, the Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre, acts as an innovation catalyst and provides full-fledged support to entrepreneurs.

We are also in the process of establishing innovation hubs in public universities across eight governorates to boost entrepreneurship in those areas. These hubs are designed to enable this kind of interaction in an environment supported by the infrastructure needed for a modern, technology-focused business. This ecosystem development, combined with recent changes to the investment law, the digitisation of government services and the competitive cost of highly qualified talent, all make Egypt an ideal location for tech investment.