Computing for Human Services

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# Book Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter No</th>
<th>Chapter Title, Author(s)</th>
<th>Page No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Book Contents</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Part I
Computing to Serve Educational Aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 1</th>
<th>Status of Higher Education in Developing and Islamic World, Shihab A. Hameed</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>Planning the Future of Higher Education in Developing and Islamic World, Shihab A. Hameed</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>Internet Impact on Education, Shihab A. Hameed</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>Eliminating Internet Weakness in Education, Shihab A. Hameed</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>Computing Role in Educating Deaf Children, Haidawati Mohamad Nasir, Othman Omran Khalifa, Shihab A. Hameed</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td>Management of Research and Development in Educational Organizations, Rushid A. Soeed, Othman O. Khalifa, Aisha Hassan, Shihab A. Hameed</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
<td>Virtual-Learning Content Management System Using Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Norul Ashikin Bt Abu Kasim, Teddy Surya Gunawan</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
<td>Development of Final Year Project Portal for Engineering Program, Teddy Surya Gunawan, Abdul Mathoolib, Mira Kuriivi</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part II
Computing to Serve Ethical, Social, and Environmental Aspects

Chapter 10  Software Engineering and Ethical Values,  
*Shihab A. Hameed*  
83

Chapter 11  New Model for Software Engineering Ethical Principles  
*Shihab A. Hameed*  
91

Chapter 12  Hajj and Information Technologies: Analytical Study,  
*Shihab A. Hameed*  
101

Chapter 13  Framework for Comprehensive Hajj Model with ICT,  
*Shihab A. Hameed*  
109

Chapter 14  RFID for Hajj Identification Guide Information and Personnel Announcement,  
*Dziul Izzat Bin Julaihi, Ahmad F. Abdul Rahman, Othman O. Khalifa*  
121

Chapter 15  Development of Online Application for Muslim Traveler with UML Diagram,  
*Teddy Surya Gunawan, Asif Abul Fajr Che Omar, Shihab A. Hameed, Mira Kartiwati*  
133

Chapter 16  Computers and Electronic Devices Waste: Fundamental Facts  
*Shihab A. Hameed*  
139

Chapter 17  Computers and Electronic Devices Waste: Analysis and Solution,  
*Shihab A. Hameed*  
149

Chapter 18  ICT and Environmental Problem,  
*Shihab A. Hameed*  
157

Chapter 19  Strategy for Green ICT: An Islamic View,  
*Shihab A. Hameed*  
165

Part III
Computing to Serve Healthcare and Medical Aspects

Chapter 20  Fundamental to Medical Data Centre,  
*Shihab A. Hameed, Waleed A. Badurik*  
175

Chapter 21  Network Based Telemedicine for Fetal ECG Monitoring,  
*M. Ibrahimi, S. M. A. Motakabber*  
185

Chapter 22  Electronic Patient Medical Record to facilitate Patient Monitoring,  
*Shihab A. Hameed, Shazana Mustafo, Aina Mardhiyah, Vladimer Miho, Aisha Hassun*  
195
Chapter 23  Developing EPMR to Serve Effective Patient Monitoring Database,  
Shihab A. Hameed, Shazana Mustafa, Aini Mardhiyah, Vladimir Mihol  

Chapter 24  Interactive Web-Based Model for Medical Emergency,  
Shihab A. Hameed, Shahina Shabnam, Nur Hafizah Chek Nuh, Nur Huda Bt Salim  

Chapter 25  Mobile Web Model to Serve Healthcare,  
Shihab A. Hameed, Vladimir Mihol  

Chapter 26  SMS to Facilitate Healthcare and Emergency,  
Shihab A. Hameed, Shahina Shabnam Bt Mohd Sharifudeen, Nur Hafizah Chek Nuh, Nur Huda Bt Salim, Aisha Hassan, Othman Khalifa  

Part IV  
Computing to Serve Security and Privacy Aspects  

Chapter 27  Wireless Technology to Secure Emergency and Guidance,  
Shihab A. Hameed, B. A. Aliyu  

Chapter 28  Authentication Enhancement for Medical Data Centers,  
Shihab A. Hameed, Waleed A. Badwirik  

Chapter 29  Integrated Authentication Model: Face Verification,  
Shihab A. Hameed, Waleed A. Badwirik  

Chapter 30  Confidentiality to Service Medical Emergency Model,  
Shihab A. Hameed, Habib Yachoh, Wajdi F. Al-Khateeb  

Chapter 31  Fundamental to Password based security  
Shihab A. Hameed, Ahmed Fathi Zainalbin, Herman Sazwan nor rahim  

Chapter 32  Graphical Password Security Model,  
Shihab A. Hameed, Ahmed Fathi Zainalbin, Herman Sazwan nor rahim  

Chapter 33  Automobile Monitoring and Tracking,  
Shihab A. Hameed, Othman Khalifa, Aisha Hassan
Part V
Computing to Serve Industrial and other Aspects

Chapter 34  Speech to Text to Sign Language,  
*Khalid Khalil Kamal, Othman O. Khalifa*  
297

Chapter 35  Speech to Sign Language Interpreter System (SSLIS),  
*Khalid Khalil El-Darymli, Othman O. Khalifa and Hassan Eronosah*  
313

Chapter 36  Speech Codec for a Voice over IP (VoIP) Systems,  
*Othman O. Khalifa, Shihab A. Hameed*  
323

Chapter 37  Reconfigurable Platform in Embedded System,  
*Amelia Wong Azman*  
329

Chapter 38  Smart Grid Communication Layer,  
*Norulhuda Lokeman, Norizan Mohd Hasson, Sigit PW Jarot*  
337
Chapter 5

Computing Role in Educating Deaf Children

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5.1. Introduction

The major priority of education for the deaf student is language acquisition and communication. The right to language is necessary to educational growth and central to the human experience. Failed communication leads to failed education, and failed education leads to failed adulthood. Communication is central to all subsequent education in every subject area, including mathematics. It appears, however, that mathematics is not given the serious attention it deserves [1]. The field of deaf education as a whole must recognize the significance of mathematical knowledge and make mathematics education a priority to enable the deaf population to assume a productive place in society and the marketplace.

5.2. Educating Deaf Children

In a number of published articles reviewed very rare was concerned with education of deaf children. As late as 1994, studies showed that teacher preparation programs in deaf education fell short of providing students adequate instruction related to mathematics education. Programs focused on issues related to language and communication, to the exclusion of most other subject areas. Comparatively little research has been conducted on the status of mathematics reform in deaf education. Drill and practice and rote memorization dominated, and the use of technology was limited to drill and practice. A national survey of teachers and administrators was conducted to determine the extent of these reforms in the mathematics education of deaf students. Results show that some aspect of reform, (such as problem solving, use of concrete materials, etc.) have been incorporated into the deaf education mathematics curriculum but that many traditional techniques, (such and drill and practice, rote memorization, etc.) remain in use. The number of teachers who actively integrated mathematics across disciplines was limited.

Linguistic difficulty with math word problems has been identified as a problem area for young deaf children. College level deaf students exhibit difficulties with math problem solving tasks, particularly when presented these tasks in text format as typical word problems. Language structures that particularly vex deaf students in word problems include conditionals, (if, when) comparatives (greater than, the most)