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Speech of the Rector of Antonine University Father Michel Jalakh
Smart Healthcare Forum
08 March 2019

Honorable guests,
Dear students and faculty members,
Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Welcome to the SMART Healthcare Forum. This is the second SMART event we are having this year at the Antonine University, targeting technological development throughout Lebanon. It is therefore a pleasure to talk about the importance we give to the new era of technology and to show the extent to which our Faculty of Engineering is a top-notch institution in terms of quality and state-of-the-art technological performance.

Our event today is coupled with the field of health, which is the most important one for human beings as it touches their wellbeing and their lives.

Technology has supported the field of health development in so many ways: diagnosing diseases, facilitating surgery, improving patients' treatment, and so forth. Moreover, with the extensive usage of mobiles, tablets and laptops, the concept of healthcare became more accessible. Nowadays we can be reminded of our medication on time, or look at our medical exams anywhere.

In Lebanon, we see hospitals promoting e-health and moving towards facilitating medical appointments, access to medical files, and online payments. The Ministry of Health launched lately a campaign to promote a magnetic card that would include a patient's health information so that, whenever he/she goes to a hospital, this patient would be taken care off immediately knowing the problems encountered and thus avoiding extra cost related to medical exams.

While these constitute indeed an excellent move towards taking care of patients, minimizing costs and accelerating processes, there remain the points of ethics and data protection.

In a previous event, I highlighted SMART as encompassing Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic goals in a Timely manner. Thinking back, I would add to the acronym SMART, an "ETH", in capital letters at the end, so we will NOT forget the Ethical part for a SMART-ETH Healthcare.
Why? For several reasons:

First, Healthcare is about "health and caring", which means that technology is supposed to be an added value to doctors' performance, thus caring about results and the secret that doctors pledged for.

Second, Healthcare is about data that should be protected not only from unofficial hackers but also from official ones! Can a hacker be an official one? In my opinion yes. What does this mean? It means we need to make sure that patients' files are not sold to a third party for supposedly the purpose of data collection and research without the patients' consent.

Third, Healthcare is about providing the best treatment to patients who fully trust a doctor or a hospital, and give them the authority to decide even about their existence. Therefore, SMART-ETH Healthcare is essential to make sure we offer the best treatments, in the best conditions, at the best price, acknowledging every single time the highest level of respect we owe to human beings.

As a higher education institution, the Antonine University is promoting Healthcare within its programs in all Faculties of which the Faculty of Public Health and Faculty of Sports Sciences. With these and other programs where the social aspects are always present, we went even a step further with a Vice-Rectorate for an Integral Human Development of all the university constituencies and beyond, to enable our graduates to think positively about professional and ethical solutions, thus promoting SMART-ETH Healthcare.

نفتتح اليوم، وفي قلب شمال لبنان، منتدى الرعاية الصحِّيَّة الذكيَّة لكلِّيَّة الهندسة في الأنطونيَّة. هذا المنتدى سيفتح بدوره المجال للمناقشات حول "تأثير التحوُّل الرقميّ على الرعاية الصِحِّيَّة". أردناه في حرم الجامعة في مجدليّا لا لشيء سوى لإظهار الأهمِّيَّة التي نوليها لشبابنا في هذه المنطقة.

من خلال هذه الفرصة المميَّزة بوجود عددٍ كبيرٍ من الأخصَّائيِّين في مجال التكنولوجيا الصحِّيَّة، سوف يستفيد طلّابنا في المعرفة وفي التفكير بشكل مبتكر وخارج عن المألوف، وستنفتح عيونُهم على مرحلةٍ تكنولوجيَّةٍ دائمةِ التبدُّل، وآمل أن يدركوا أن الابتكار والقيم الأخلاقيَّة لا تنفصلان عن بعضهما البعض بل تسيران جنبًا إلى جنب... طالما هذا الأمرُ يعنينا.

Once again, welcome to the Antonine University. I wish you a very productive and enlightening SMART-ETH Healthcare Forum.

Today's SMART Healthcare Forum by the Faculty of Engineering will open doors for discussions about the "Digital Transformation's Impact on Healthcare" in the heart of the North of Lebanon. The Campus of Mejdlaya has been chosen to show the importance we give to our youth of this region. With this excellent opportunity of sharing experiences with a plethora of experts in the field of health technology, our students will gain in knowledge and skill development to think outside the box, opening their mind and eyes on an era of technology always on the move, and to realize that innovation and ethical values go hand in hand everywhere… as long as we care.