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جامعة نورثويسترن  
في قطر

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## **MIT Media Lab Founder: Connectivity Is a Human Right**

**Doha, Qatar – April 18, 2018** – The founder and chairman emeritus of MIT’s Media Lab, Nicholas Negroponte, an inventor, thinker, and angel investor who has pushed the boundaries of connectivity and communication, shared his thoughts on the evolving world of digital information with students, faculty, and staff at Northwestern University in Qatar (NU-Q).

“Professor Negroponte is a pioneer in the world of interactivity and multimedia, and he has been a driving force behind much of the innovation and developments that have shaped our world today,” said Everette E. Dennis, dean and CEO. “For many years he has led and supported an enormous array of projects that brought new discoveries to the digital world.”

The Media Lab, which helped drive the multimedia revolution, was established in 1984 by Negroponte as a center for research and innovation, and the intersection of art, science, and technology. Since then, the lab has developed hundreds of original ideas and produced research on new technology including touch-screen sensitivity and flat panels long before they were introduced to the market.

“The thing I am most proud of is not the hundreds of projects that we create every year, but merely the existence of the Media Lab, which continues to serve as a hub for innovation and creativity,” said Negroponte.

Negroponte, known for his philanthropic work, founded the One Laptop Per Child organization, which designs, develops, and distributes low-cost laptops for children around the world with a mission to empower them through education. “The one thing I realized throughout the years is that the telecommunications industry does not work in the interest of people,” said Negroponte, “yet, we are reaching a time when I believe connectivity should be a human right.”

A combination of serendipity and years of hard work gave Negroonte a chance to pitch this concept to the Pope, who became an avid supporter and partner. With the Pope's support, the United Nations Security Council may be voting to change the international rights regarding access to Internet connectivity in the coming year. "My hope, and this is truly a hope, is that there is a 50 percent chance the UN might declare connectivity as a human right in a resolution, which will be interesting because human rights are free and all you have to do to qualify is be human, and that really does change the landscape," said Negroonte.

Throughout the conversation, which was moderated by Dennis, Negroonte discussed his hits and misses on predictions he made about the world of technology.

"I made many predictions throughout my life, some of which materialized and others that simply didn't," said Negroonte. "Some examples of those that did are touch innovation, which many people opposed and thought would be inconvenient, as well as flat panels; however, I also spoke passionately about working models of 3D holography, which did not materialize."

Negroonte explained that the point of making predictions is not always to be accurate, but to put ideas into the minds of people who could make these thoughts and aspirations a reality and to start a conversation about it.

Negroonte was in Qatar to deliver the keynote address for Qatar National Library's official opening.

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***About Northwestern University in Qatar***

*Northwestern University in Qatar draws from its parent organization, [Northwestern University](#) (Evanston, Illinois), a distinguished history, famous programs and an exceptional faculty. Founded in partnership with Qatar Foundation, NU-Q provides a framework through which students explore the world and, ultimately, shape its future through its distinguished schools of [communication](#), [journalism and strategic communication](#), and [liberal arts](#).*