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## Open souq application



OpenSooq is considered one of the leading entrepreneurial projects in the Arab world. In a relatively short period of time, it managed to become a primary digital platform in the daily lives of users by offering efficient solutions for classified ads and facilitating the buying and selling process between individuals and businesses. The platform aims to connect buyers and sellers directly, without intermediaries, which helps improve the user experience in terms of time, effort, and cost, eliminating the need for traditional advertising methods such as newspapers and physical visits to markets.

The platform was founded in March 2008 by Libyan entrepreneur Salah Al Sharief, who has a strong technical background and a clear strategic vision. Al Sharief holds Libyan nationality and currently resides between Jordan and Saudi Arabia. He earned his bachelor's degree in Computer Science from California State University in the United States, providing him with a solid technical foundation to develop advanced digital platforms. His career began as a programmer and analyst at State from 2001 to 2006. He then worked as a Java programming consultant at Sapphire Technology and Comsys between 2006 and 2008. These cumulative experiences helped shape his technical skills and practical approach to solving problems.

In addition to OpenSooq, Al Sharief also co-founded and currently serves as the CEO of "Syarah" in Saudi Arabia, a digital platform specialized in buying and selling cars, launched in 2015. Through these ventures, Al Sharief has proven himself to be one of the most notable tech

entrepreneurs in the region, constantly working to bridge market needs with innovative technological solutions.

The idea behind OpenSooq came from Al Sharief's personal observations while living abroad in Europe and the United States. He noticed how easy it was to sell and buy products online using developed digital platforms, unlike in the Arab world, which still heavily relied on traditional methods such as physical markets or outdated newspaper ads. This gap inspired him to create a localized digital solution for Arab users. He launched the first version of OpenSooq in Libya, which was a very simple version at the beginning but quickly gained traction as more users engaged with it.

As user demand increased, the need to expand and professionalize the platform grew. In 2012, the headquarters was moved to Jordan in partnership with iMENA Group, which provided investment that helped OpenSooq expand its services and improve its digital infrastructure. Over time, OpenSooq grew to operate in more than 19 Arab countries, including Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, and several North African nations.

The platform evolved to include a wide variety of categories catering to individual and business needs alike, including cars, real estate, electronics, furniture, jobs, services, fashion, private lessons, and even pets. This broad range of services helped OpenSooq become a comprehensive and inclusive platform that serves all segments of society, from individuals looking for affordable products to small and medium-sized businesses seeking low-cost advertising solutions.

One of OpenSooq's major strengths is its user-friendly design. Users can post ads in just a few steps, and they can browse content freely without needing to create an account. The platform offers advanced filtering options by category, price, location, and item type. It also supports paid promotions and featured listings, giving users flexible tools to reach a larger audience.

The development team behind OpenSooq focuses heavily on user experience. The platform includes a clean and intuitive interface, direct communication tools between users, push notifications, and email alerts. Features like user reviews and ratings were added to increase trust between buyers and sellers. Additionally, the platform constantly monitors ads to ensure they comply with content guidelines and uses algorithms to detect potential fraud or suspicious activity.

Throughout its expansion, OpenSooq faced several technical and organizational challenges, including data security, platform reliability, and adapting to the diverse needs of different local markets. However, the strategic vision and leadership of Salah Al Sharief and his team allowed the platform to overcome these challenges and grow into one of the most successful digital ventures in the Arab world.

Today, OpenSooq is much more than a classified ads app. It represents a major shift in the landscape of Arab e-commerce and stands as a real example of how a simple idea, rooted in everyday needs, can grow into a regional success story serving millions. Combining robust infrastructure, service diversity, and a user-centered focus, OpenSooq has become the go-to platform for users across the Arab world.