

# DUBAI

# THE MIDDLE EAST'S DIGITAL VANGUARD

Dubai combines technological ambition with a strategic edge, leveraging AI to position itself as a global leader in safety, trust, and cyber resilience

From AI-powered surveillance towers to seamless biometric airport experiences, Dubai has been reengineered as one of the world's safest and most digitally advanced cities. This transformation results from a national strategy that places equal weight on citizen safety, data sovereignty, and global connectivity, underpinned by billions spent in infrastructure investment and an ambition to lead the world in innovation.

According to the Numbeo 2025 Mid-Year Safety Index, the UAE is the safest country in the world, with Dubai itself listed as the fifth safest city. While Dubai's extravagance often grabs headlines, the city's digital resilience and smart governance now define the narrative. In today's cyber-volatile world, physical safety and cybersecurity are inseparable, and Dubai is positioning itself as a benchmark for both.

Across the city, a culture of innovation is shaping how people live, work, and connect, fuelled by serious investment in cybersecurity. This is no branding exercise. It's a state-backed evolution toward a smarter, more resilient society.

## A strategy rooted in cyber trust

At the core of Dubai's digital vision is the Dubai Cyber Innovation Park (DCIP), a government-led initiative aimed at positioning the city as a global cybersecurity hub. The park attracts leading security companies and experts from around the world, while also fostering the development of local talent through specialized training courses in advanced security topics. This focus on talent-building ensures that Dubai is not only a consumer of innovative security solutions but also a key contributor to the region's cyber expertise.

Citywide innovation, backed by robust cybersecurity, is creating a smarter, more resilient society in Dubai

Complementing these efforts is GISEC Global, the region's largest cybersecurity event. In 2025, GISEC set numerous milestones by breaking 11 Guinness World Records, including the most nationalities participating in a cyber drill and the largest ransomware training session. These record-breaking achievements demonstrate Dubai's unwavering commitment to cultivating its cybersecurity community, especially at a time when global cybercrime costs are projected to reach USD 10.5 trillion annually.<sup>†</sup> Such initiatives highlight the city's proactive approach to building resilience in an increasingly digital world.

Further highlighting Dubai's commitment to innovation is the Museum of the Future. This iconic institution not only showcases emerging technologies like AI, robotics, and space exploration but also functions as an incubator for future innovations. By bringing together scientists, entrepreneurs, and policymakers, the museum fosters a collaborative environment to address global challenges and pioneer solutions—solidifying Dubai's reputation as a major digital and innovation hub. The museum exemplifies the city's forward-thinking mindset, inspiring progress and shaping the trajectory of technological development.

Dubai's momentum is also reflected across the region. National blueprints such as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the UAE's Centennial 2071 underscore the importance of digital transformation as a driver of economic growth. These strategies place innovation at the heart of sustainable development, with Dubai leading by example.

The UAE's robust digital ecosystem continues to attract global giants. Dubai's Area 2071 and Abu Dhabi's Hub71 serve as incubators for startups and established companies alike, offering access to funding, regulatory sandboxes, and international partnerships that accelerate growth. This ecosystem is further strengthened by the expansion of major cloud providers like Microsoft and Amazon Web Services (AWS), drawn by the region's advanced infrastructure and progressive governance.

Cost of global  
cybercrime  
could reach

**USD 10.5**  
**trillion**  
annually



### THREATLOCKER® TOUCHES DOWN IN THE MIDDLE EAST

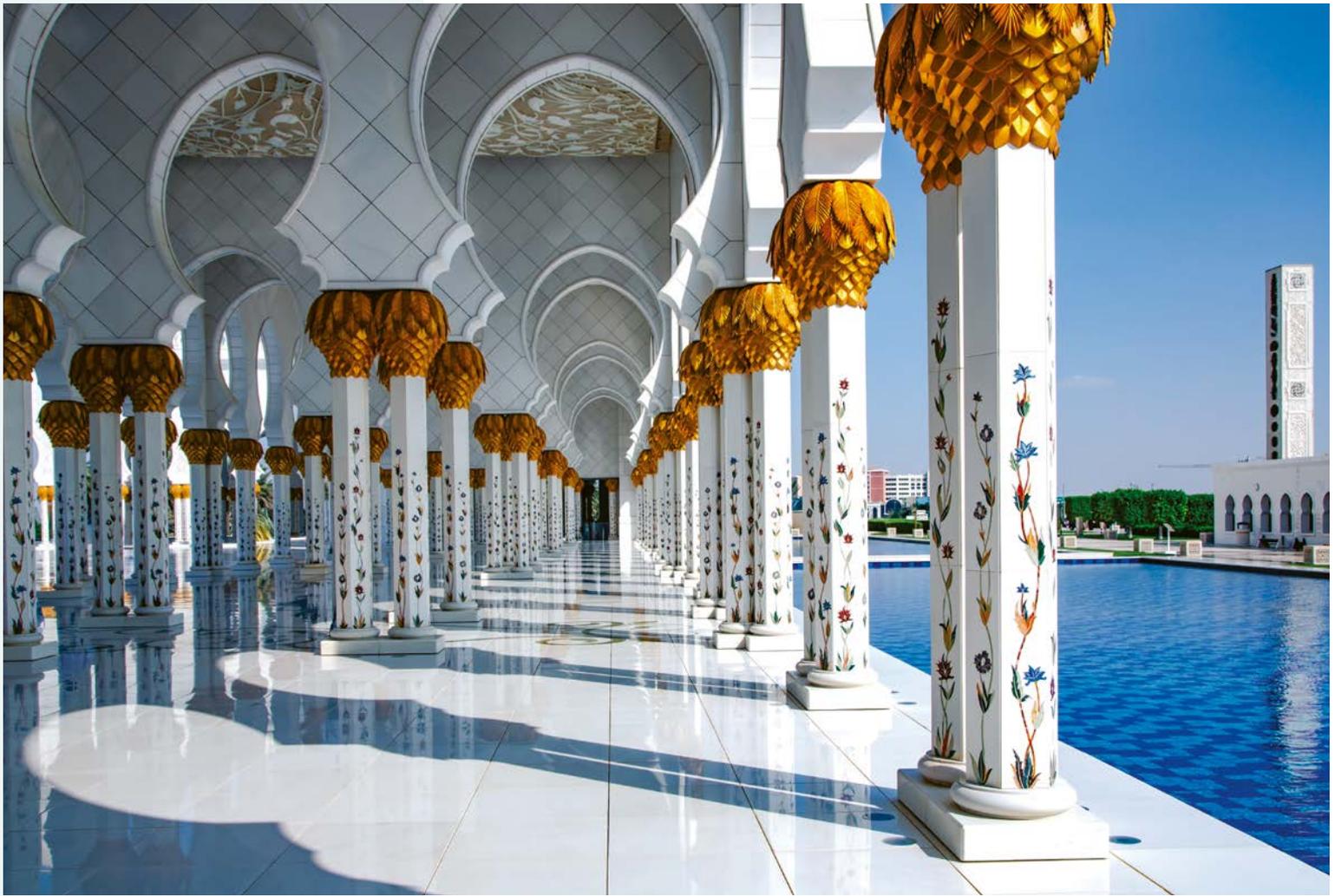
A year after opening its regional HQ in Dubai Hills Business Park, ThreatLocker has gone from local newcomer to major cybersecurity player across the Middle East. The company now protects over 50 enterprise customers in Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia—from defense agencies and government bodies to ports, financial regulators, and national development banks.

The fastest growth for ThreatLocker has come in the financial sector, where sovereign wealth funds, banks, and regulatory authorities are adopting Zero Trust methodologies and using ThreatLocker tools to protect critical operations. In a region where cyber risk and digital transformation move hand in hand, a Zero Trust approach is proving both timely and trusted.

With new legal entities established in both the UAE and Saudi Arabia, the regional team is set to expand to 15–20 specialists in 2026, strengthening local expertise and customer support. And ThreatLocker is not stopping there. The Middle East is becoming a springboard into the wider CIS region, including Türkiye, Azerbaijan, and Armenia—fast-developing markets where Zero Trust security is supporting rapid digital transformation.



ThreatLocker Enterprise Sales Manager Alessandro Bologna talks progressive security with Faisal Ali, CIO of leading UAE business (and ThreatLocker customer) Gargash Group



Abu Dhabi's Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque highlights the contrast between the UAE's technology explosion and its rich cultural heritage

## Tech infrastructure designed for scale

Dubai leads the region in digital infrastructure, with strategic access to emerging markets. As a crossroads of global trade, the city is a natural launchpad for multinational expansion.

Central to this is the Dubai Economic Agenda (D33)—a plan to double the city's GDP by 2033 through focus on AI, data science, and fintech. The Dubai AI Campus, the largest AI hub in the MENA region, aims to incubate 500+ startups by 2028.<sup>†</sup> This growth is supported by widespread 5G rollout, aggressive cloud adoption, and quantum-ready government services.

Dubai is also leveraging blockchain for public-sector efficiency, integrating it into visa and licensing systems to reduce fraud and streamline services.

## Safety beyond the physical

Safety in Dubai is more than just a perception—it's an experience. Women walk home alone at night, commutes are smooth, and petty crime is nearly nonexistent. This sense of security is supported by real-time anomaly detection through cameras, while facial recognition and biometric identification are seamlessly integrated into daily life—from public transportation to banking. These systems foster confidence, thanks to strict regulation and clearly defined boundaries around data use. Dubai enforces



The Museum of the Future embodies Dubai's drive for innovation, fostering collaboration and shaping tomorrow's technologies

these boundaries through the UAE's Personal Data Protection Law (PDPL), which requires organizations to collect personal data only for specific, lawful purposes. They must store data securely, process it with consent, and guarantee individuals access to their data or the right to correct or restrict its processing.

Meanwhile, the Dubai Police, among the most technologically advanced in the world, use predictive analytics, smart patrol systems, and robotic units to maintain safety. According to Numbeo's Crime Index—derived from crowdsourced surveys and scaled from 0 to 100, where lower values indicate less perceived crime and higher values more—Abu Dhabi scores as low as 11 and Dubai scores just under 17, placing them firmly in the “very low” crime category among the world's safest cities.

### Strategic geography, geopolitical calm

Dubai's geography is convenient and strategic. With the world's busiest international airport and the Jebel Ali port, the city lies within eight hours' flight of 80% of the global population. This makes it a hub for innovation, but also a potential target. That's why geo-cybersecurity is a national priority. With regional tensions and cross-border threats, Dubai is doubling down on data localization, offensive cybersecurity training, and intelligence-sharing to stay ahead of threat actors. Dubai is one of the few cities in the world where national security, enterprise resilience, and personal safety converge.



Dubai's Museum of the Future cultivates creativity and breakthroughs for the next era of innovation



Dubai blends awe-inspiring experiences with cutting-edge safety, where innovation turns fantasy into reality

## A sustainable model for global tech cities?

In a post-pandemic, AI-led world, the definition of a “safe city” has evolved. No longer underpinned by cleanliness or crime, but instead focused on systems, foresight, and trust. Dubai exemplifies this mindset with emerging tech zones like Dubai Silicon Oasis and Dubai Internet City, each offering sector-specific incentives and regulatory flexibility. Add to that virtual work visas, 100% foreign ownership, and green financing, and it’s clear why the city is becoming home to a new generation of long-term digital citizens.

## And yet, a surreal world beneath

Despite its systematized efficiency, Dubai remains a city of awe. You can dive into the world’s deepest pool at Deep Dive Dubai, where AI monitors swimmer safety. Walk beneath sharks at the Dubai Mall Aquarium or sip coffee in the clouds at Aura Skypool, the world’s highest 360-degree infinity pool. These surreal experiences are expressions of Dubai’s vision for a future where innovation brings fantasy to life—where safety and spectacle coexist.

## Dubai’s future in one word: Integrated

As Dubai evolves, it’s shaping the future with scale, safety, speed, and sophistication—a rare combination in the global landscape. Whether you’re a startup founder, a global executive, or a cybersecurity visionary, Dubai offers more than a sandbox; it provides a trusted, integrated platform to build the future. ■

## Competing digital blueprints: Dubai and Singapore

While Dubai accelerates its digital journey, comparisons with other global tech hubs are inevitable. Singapore, long regarded as the world’s smartest city, has built its transformation on citywide Zero Trust cybersecurity principles, implemented first in government and then across sectors. In contrast, Dubai is currently expanding its Zero Trust architecture across multiple industries, having already embedded it in key public services.

AI plays a significant role in both cities’ ambitions. Singapore deploys AI in areas such as healthcare and public transit, while Dubai leverages it to enhance public services, urban planning, and regulatory efficiency. Both cities also nurture dynamic startup ecosystems, though at different stages of maturity. Strategically, Singapore’s ecosystem is well-established and highly competitive, whereas Dubai’s is younger but growing fast, with an open-access approach that encourages international participation.

When it comes to cybersecurity governance, Singapore adopts a centralized model through its Cyber Security Agency (CSA). Dubai’s approach is more distributed but coordinated, with the Dubai Electronic Security Center (DESC) working alongside national entities to enforce robust standards and frameworks. Strategically, Singapore is focused on maintaining its lead as the world’s most connected and intelligent city, while Dubai is positioning itself as the boldest and most transformative player in the digital space.



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