

News Updates
MIDDLE EAST PUBLISHERS' ASSOCIATION
MEPA'S OBJECTIVES:

- To encourage the widest possible spread of publications throughout Middle East and beyond.
- To promote and protect by all lawful means the publishing industry in Middle East
- To protect members by dealing collectively with problems.
- To cooperate for mutual benefits with other organizations concerned in the creation, production and distribution of publications.
- To promote the development of public interest in publications in association with other publishing organizations with similar objectives.
- To serve as a medium for exchange of ideas with respect to publication, sales copyright and other matters of interest.

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TADAWUL: Media and Publishing sector surges 5.72%

Saudi Arabia's benchmark stock index (Tadawul) turned green on Sunday (31 March 2014), recovering entirely from previous trading day's losses. The index continued inching its way higher to finish at 9,462.98 points, up 0.42 percent or forty points from the previous close. TASI also logged a healthy YTD return of 10.86 percent. All market cap indices finished to the upside, with Micro Cap growing 0.8 percent. Most of the major sectors closed in the green territory, accumulating an aggregate of 554 points.



Media and Publishing made the biggest jump among all sector indices, marching higher by 5.75 percent to close the day at 3,660.25. Insurance and Real Estate sectors followed it, surging by 1.31 percent and 1.09 percent respectively.

On the negative side, Hotel & Tourism suffered worst of all sectors, turning down exactly two percent and closing at 20,069.97. Heavy weights closed in mixed fashion, where market leader SABIC (Saudi Basic Industries Corp.) rose 0.85 percent and Saudi Telecom Co. fell 1.12 percent. SABIC shares have climbed near to a four-year high of SR118.75 before closing at SR118.

The top five most active stocks also closed in green, with Etihad Atheeb Telecom outdid rest of its peers, rising 3.29 percent to SR17.25. Advancing stocks outnumbered decliners by a margin of 99 to 39 and the prices of 21 companies remained unchanged. Share price of Tihama Advt. & Public Relations Co. rallied to a growth of 9.97 percent, clinching the spot as top gainer amongst Saudi stocks. BUPA Arabia for Cooperative Insurance was another significant gainer, moving up by 9.25 percent. Bupa shares also raced to a new all time high of SR59.25 before closing at SR59.

Tadawul volume went down by 8.7 percent and traded 260.8 million shares as compared to previous day's 285.7 million shares. Trading volume was led by Dar Al-Arkan, which liquidated roughly 35 million shares, a relative market share of 13.6 percent. Liquidity remained nearly unchanged from previous day's SR7.9 billion. The total turnover was slightly below the 50-day average level.

Source: ARAB NEWS

Oman Air re-launches redesigned in-flight magazine

For March 2014, Wings of Oman magazine — the in-flight publication of Oman's national carrier — has been re-designed and re-launched with a new layout and completely updated set of features.



The new design is a result of the collaborative effort between the corporate communications and media department of Oman Air, and the editorial and design team of one of Oman's leading publishing houses, National Publishing and Advertising (NPA).

The overall concept, design and creation of the magazine are also the result of extensive research and analysis done on the best of current in-flight magazine publishing practices. Each editorial feature is presented in a professionally designed style — with a look and feel that is striking, attractive and easy to engage with. The reader can now look forward to navigating their way through a magazine that is truly entertaining, up-to-date, and relevant to their modern-day lifestyles.

The magazine's two headline features are aptly named with the travel themes 'Check out' and 'Check in.'. Readers can check out of Oman this month and travel to London, the so-called Capital City of the World, and discover its thriving museum and art gallery scene. If you think that museums are dusty, old, boring places, then London's are the exact opposite. The city could well be called the World Capital of Museums as well.

Readers can then check in to Oman and go diving at the spectacular Daymaniyat and Sawadi Islands, which are considered the jewel in the crown of undersea Oman. These islands are an easy drive (and short boat trip away) from Muscat. Wings of Oman March also has a "Must see: Oman" page which features Oman's spectacular and very popular Bimmah Sinkhole.

Source: ARAB NEWS

Digital Print Production Continues to Move Forward

Digital presses have been around for years and they have been steadily improving in their quality and ability to produce longer runs profitably. When “digital” first started to impact the market, it was focused almost exclusively on short runs—for any job that needed more than about 1,000 copies, the technology simply didn’t make good business sense. But that margin has steadily eroded as the technology hasn’t just continued to improve, but the ideas of how to use it have adapted as well.

Today, while many newspapers in the United States are still printed using the traditional offset equipment, international printers have started to flourish with alternate technologies. It is a much less expensive initial investment to get started with a digital press, and while printed newspapers are defending their territory from mobile technologies, in many parts of the world, print is still the main—if not only—source of news. And where we are used to newspapers runs that top the 100,000 mark and more, in many cases the run lengths of international newspapers are quite a bit shorter; even in the U.S., as publishers look to find more relevant ways to re-capture their audiences, run lengths are getting shorter, and more local or “versionized,” versus the one edition that went out to hundreds of thousands of subscribers from all over the country.

And these scenarios are the ones in which digital excels.

In the InfoTrends 2012-2017 U.S. and Western European application forecasts for the production digital printing market (see graph), newspapers are one of the top predicted growth areas. InfoTrends sees impressions increasing by as many as 9.3 billion pages in that time frame. Those pages are not necessarily new, they are pages that are shifting from one technology to another.

“The top 10 fastest growing applications are dominated by publishing and promotional applications,” the company said in a statement. “Compared to analogue volumes, the share of production digital printing in most publishing and promotional applications is small, but shorter runs and on-demand production is shifting volume towards production digital printing methods.”

For newspapers in particular, InfoTrends noted, “In Europe, newspapers have a high growth potential for production digital print, more, for example, than in the U.S. Different languages, holiday destinations and a multitude of newspapers are opening opportunities for digital print. We also expect to see some more innovative approaches in distributed print, localization and readership targeting by 2017. Still, production digital print will only account for a tiny fraction of the total newspaper volume by 2017.”

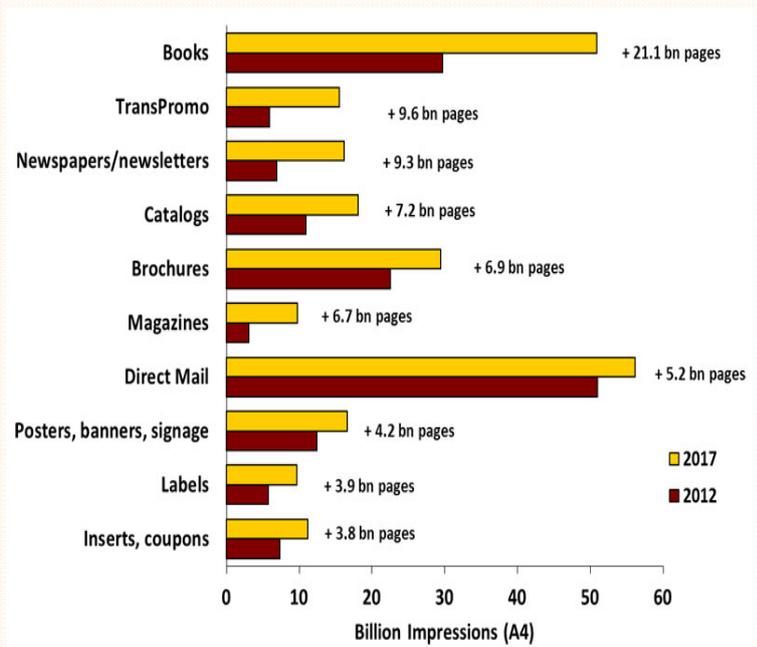
That belief that this growth in digital print production of newspapers—measured in the billions of pages—is only still a small fraction of newspaper volume is actually a good sign on a variety of levels. First of all, it is a forecast that predicts newspapers, in the traditional form, remaining a very strong player for many years to come. As much as various new technologies are looking to bleed readers from the newspaper business model, InfoTrends doesn’t see them imploding the market any time soon.

Second, this means there is a massive amount of growth potential still out there. Intelligent publishers and printers will continue to be creative in finding ways to produce newspapers more cost effectively, but also in more targeted ways. While a personalized newspaper for every single subscriber might not be on the immediate horizon, ideas that push boundaries that dramatically are still in their infancy. The growth and potential of these new print technologies mean publishers can explore ever more creative ways to bring their content to the masses.

One thing to keep in mind is that the digital print technology is moving ahead at the same speed mobile and other emerging technologies are advancing. Unlike with an offset press, where a printer could make an investment and continue to use that same machine for decades, digital press technology has a much shorter life span. It will still work of course, but to take advantage of the latest advances and open up the field for those innovative applications, printers will need to get themselves on a more regular upgrade cycle than they ever had to in the past.

Smart printers are constantly going to trade shows or manufacturer events to keep current on the latest technologies, and are constantly thinking about and testing how they can bring those innovations into their own shops. There is certainly a balance between throwing investment money at everything that comes along, and never investing at all. Publishers need to make sure they are partnering with intelligent printers that take the time to keep themselves educated. Because those printers making the investments into digital technology, and who are bringing new, fresh ideas to publishers, are the ones who will be your true partners for many years to come.

Source: EDITOR & PUBLISHER



THE MOBILE SHOW—MIDDLE EAST 2014

THE Mobile SHOW

MIDDLE EAST 2014

13-14 May 2014, Dubai International Convention & Exhibition Centre, Dubai, UAE

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AS MEDIA PARTNER FOR THE EVENT

Date : 13—14 May 2014

**Location : Dubai International Convention & Exhibition Centre
Dubai—UAE**

Future Of Print In The Middle East And North Africa To 2018

An Exclusive Peek Into Smithers Pira'S Major New Study On The Current State Play In The Region'S Printing Market.

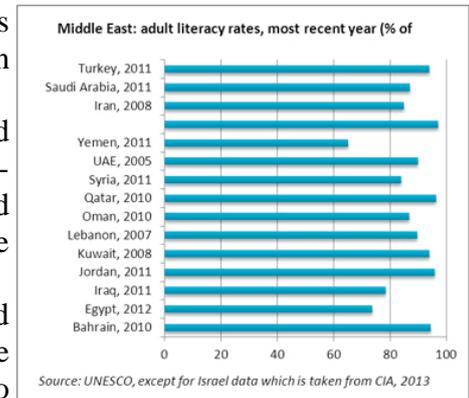
The Middle East region is known for its oil rich countries living next to resource-scarce ones in relation to population.

The oil price and legacy of economic policies have been defining the region's economy. However, recent dramatic fluctuations in the oil market are putting an increasing pressure on the countries to diversify their economies.

As a direct effect of governments' diversification initiatives, the printing and publishing industry in the region has seen an increased investment. New machinery has been continuously replacing the old equipment, which had limited capacity, and was often installed 50 years ago. With the new technology, the automation process is spreading.

This growth offers huge opportunities for printers, raw material suppliers and print equipment suppliers, but the instability in the region has meant that the amount of information available has declined. The need to acquire insight into the current print market is high as ever.

To help identify these opportunities, Smithers Pira has published a major new market study - The Future of Print in the Middle East and North Africa to 2018 - to provide interested parties with an up-to-date view of the current state of play in the Middle Eastern printing market, and providing a primary research-based projection of future activity. Containing more than 350 tables and figures, the report offers a comprehensive overview of the market by examining the factors in play, and provides hard, quantitative market sizes and forecasts, split by print process, end-use and country.



Balancing print

The printing industry in the Middle East is very diverse and varies from country to country. In 2012, the Middle East print market was valued at \$17.4 billion and reaching 8.0 million tonnes in output.

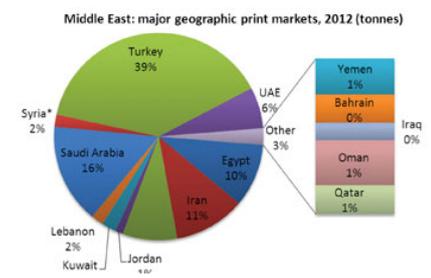
In 2013, Saudi Arabia is projected to account for the largest print revenues in the market; however, in volume terms, Turkey is expected to lead the market, accounting for 39% of output, followed by Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Iraq is expected to record the steepest growth rate in volumes during the year, while Syria is expected to further deteriorate due to the civil war conditions in the country, and account for the worst performance in the region.

The region's print industry is sometimes claimed to be at an inflection point, as the growth of the newspapers in 2011 was the worst recorded.

Traditional offset lithography still dominates the printing industry in the Middle East; however flexography has witnessed significant growth because of packaging.

In the recent years, digital printing has shown a robust growth, as the demand for long runs is shrinking and short runs and variable printing are becoming increasingly popular.



Young and growing

At the end of 2012, the Middle East population was approximately 355 million, increasing by 5.7 million during the year. The region is known for having a large share of its population made up by a younger generation.

The young population is driving media consumption across different platforms, and the trend of online migration is gaining traction. Nevertheless, due to low internet penetration rates, the migration online is still significantly slower than in other parts in the world.

Meanwhile, there are huge differences between literacy rates in different regional countries, with print industry development adversely affected by low readership rates in countries like Yemen.

Political issues are significant, with languages in use and government policy on freedom of the press. Educational expenditure plays a major role in literacy and the book printing market. In addition, political instability in the region will have some negative effects on the printing market.

The storm in masses

December 18, 2010, marks a day of the start of revolutionary movement in the Middle East and North Africa, now widely known as the Arab Spring. The ground-breaking protests took over the regimes in Egypt and Yemen, while civilian protests erupted in Syria and Bahrain.

The recent uprisings in the region added to prolonged downturn in the EU economy, undermining advertisers' confidence despite strong economic performance in the region. This resulted in private print media outlets, which heavily rely on advertising, suffering, especially ad-supported free sheets (free tabloid papers).

Commercial web, sheetfed and newspaper presses were the most affected by crisis as the size and number of newspapers in circulation declined. With the rise of protests and opposition against the oppressive regimes, a number of publishing projects were put on hold.

Print products

Overall popularity of newspapers in Middle East is high, but expected to tail off in the long-term. In many of the countries, publications must be licensed and follow guidelines on reporting, which limits the number and the content of the publishing. Self-censorship is widespread in the region.

Despite recent advancements, the Middle East printing industry is facing further challenges, as lack of specialised universities and colleges result in a shortage of skilled labour. Also, a large share of the installed machinery is outdated and second-hand.

The book market has been fuelled by the increased investment in education across the region, but was recently subdued by economic difficulties. Increasing literacy is expected to positively affect the levels of print media and print advertising adoption. However, the growth will be slow in the Middle East region and varied across countries. In the countries with low literacy, such as Yemen, the print platform is expected to come second after television as a news provider, even when these literacy levels improve.

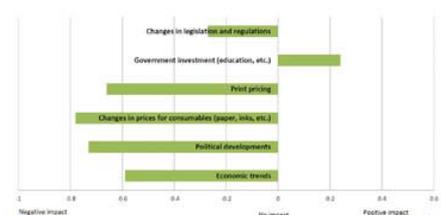
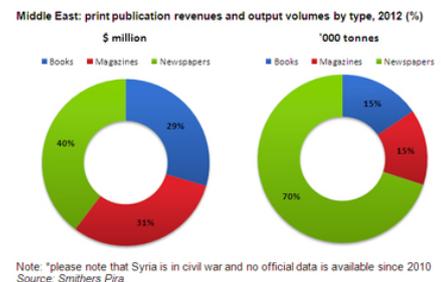
Meanwhile, many consumer magazines are following western trends and specialising in subject matter, with women being the key target customer in the region.

Considering the most popular content of magazines amongst Middle East women is fashion and beauty, the high quality colour from sheet and web offset are demanded by high-fashion advertisers in the region. However, the market remains subdued by the deficiency of audited periodicals, as advertisers need to rely on estimations while making an investment decision.

Packaging in Middle East region has benefited from the spreading urbanisation in the region, which in turn has stimulated the processed food industries. In addition, with a growing urban population, the retail market has gone through modernisation with more products sold packaged, rather than loose. Influenced by the western trends, the region has seen much of its rigid packaging replaced by flexible, with stand-up pouches and resealable packs appearing on the shelves. Meanwhile, narrow web presses are becoming more popular, as many converters choose to print labels on the machinery.

Newspapers to decline, magazines to grow

In 2012, the largest market share was accounted for by board packaging. During the year, newspapers accounted for 16% of volumes, generating 7% of print revenues. In 2013, newspapers are expected to decline, but other print publications, such as magazines and books, are projected to grow. Wide format inkjet is expected to be one of the key growth areas in the regional market.





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Middle East Publishers Association MEPA is a FZ. LLC organization with the motto of building a society of publishers that will think and act for the benefits of the publishing industry.

The aim of MEPA is to serve, promote and protect the interest of press and electronic publishers, whilst raising the future standards of the publishing industry in the Middle East.

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