

**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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NEWS UPDATE

WAN POSTPONES ANNUAL CONGRESS, FORUM

The World Association of Newspapers has decided to postpone its World Newspaper Congress, World Editors Forum and Info Services Expo, scheduled to be held in Hyderabad, India from 22 to 25 March, until December, due to the impact of the global financial downturn on newspaper companies.

"These events have been hugely successful in recent years, with growing participation and great programmes. We want our first Congress and Forum in India, the world's biggest democracy and a flourishing press market, to continue this trend. But the economic conditions simply don't allow that at this precise moment," said Timothy Balding, CEO of the Paris-based WAN.

"The economic crisis has hit travel and conference budgets and has had a profound impact on participation in the events. Our belief is that newspaper companies will, by necessity, learn to live with the crisis over the year and be more willing to invest again in conferences and travel by the end of the year."

The events, hosted by the Indian Newspaper Society, are now to be held from 30 November to 3 December, subject to confirmation.

Last year's event drew more than 1,800 participants from 113 countries to Göteborg, Sweden, a record for the 61-year old conference.

Source: WAN

ABU DHABI INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR

Between 17 and 22 March 2009 the UAE capital Abu Dhabi will host the 19th edition of the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair using the slogan Tomorrow's Markets Today.

Organized by Kitab, a joint venture between the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage and the Frankfurt Book Fair, the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair is expected to attract hundreds of publishers from various countries around

the world, according to His Excellency Mohammed Khalaf Al-Mazrouei, Director General of the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH).

Mazrouei stressed that the book fair will be accompanied by an extensive cultural program, adding that it "is the fastest growing in the Middle East and has become more international, professional and attractive to publishing houses and intellectuals."

"The forthcoming fair will attract an unprecedented level of foreign publishing houses," he noted.

All the cultural projects operating under the ADACH umbrella will participate in the fair, including the Sheikh Zayed Book Award, the Kalima and Qalam projects, the National Library, tangible and intangible heritage projects, the Poetry Academy and the Middle East International Film Festival.

HE Jumaa Al Qubaisi, Director of the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair, stressed that "the fair is always committed to addressing the key issues facing the publishing industry today such as piracy, distribution and publication of translations."

"The fair includes an important exhibition of old and rare books and organizes several events aimed at developing the sector of books and publishing in the region, boosting ties between Arab and international publishing houses and improving literacy in all parts of the United Arab Emirates," Qubaisi concluded.

Source: Middle East Online (A periodical publication by Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture & Heritage)



Mohammed Khalaf Al-Mazrouei, Director General of the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH)

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FOR A STRONGER ARAB PRESENCE IN PRESS DISTRIBUTION

"My election as President of Distripres is probably a sign of recognition of the growing importance of the Middle East and some other regions of the world in an industry traditionally dominated by its players in Europe and North America. Many countries in these regions show a healthy development even in the field of the 'classical' printed press products but are at this moment less involved in international cooperation and distribution." APN spoke to Tony Jashanmal, Director of the Jashanmal Group in the United Arab Emirates and the first ever president from the Middle East of Distripres, the largest organization of companies involved in distribution of print media internationally.

APN: You were recently elected the first Distripres President from the Middle East. How will this be reflected in the activities of the organization?

Jashanmal: We need a stronger presence and activity in the Arab region, as well as a more important involvement of the publishers and distributors from the region in Distripres. Here I see one of the main priorities for the next three years - both for me personally and for Distripres in general. One of the ways to reach this goal is through a stronger dialogue with the existing regional organizations of the press industry in the Middle East.

At the same time we have to strengthen our contacts on a national level, too. We will revise our membership policy and open our doors to publishers and distributors who are less involved in international business, or, to be more precise, in international physical distribution of press products. Their involvement will strengthen Distripres and these "newcomers" can benefit from the trade knowledge accumulated by our other members. They can also count on our support if they are facing violations of the freedom of the press when it comes to distribution matters. Their membership in Distripres will make it easier for them to find new international partners for worldwide export of their products as well as for import and distribution of foreign press products in their countries, or for new licensing agreements.

On the other hand, we have to draw the attention of our members in other regions of the world to the Middle East. The Gulf region forum at the Distripres congress in Istanbul last year has been a first step; other trade events focusing on the region will follow.

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October 26-30, 2008

53rd DISTRIPRES Congress



ISTANBUL2008

APN: Is the Arab press playing an increasingly important role on the international media scene?

Jashanmal: We see increased reporting emanating from the Middle East in the international press as the number of publications increase in the area. One sees more independent newspapers in countries where the press used to be mainly government-controlled.

On the other hand, print media is also represented by magazines, which together with newspapers cover cultural, social, environmental and other niche issues and interests. These have grown greatly in number either ethnically or under international licensing arrangements which include a certain amount of local content. Interaction between international distributors and publishers of these locally produced publications through a forum such as Distripress will lead to an increased distribution of local news and other content in the wider world. It is therefore imperative for us at Distripress to enrol a greater number of publishers and distributors from the Middle East into our membership.

APN: What are the strongest assets of the Arab press?

Jashanmal: The present strongest asset of the Arab Press is that in many countries it is still at a nascent stage. Economic growth is strong in many areas, the population is young and increasingly educated and advertising revenue is still increasing, thus creating the possibility of increasing the number of publications and widening the spectrum of content.

APN: What are the most recent activities of Distripress in the area of press freedom?

Jashanmal: Distripress focuses on the freedom of press in sense of distribution. The violations of the freedom of press are of a particular nature in this field; they may have an ideological, political, financial or organizational background. As our main task is the promotion of the international circulation, the majority of the cases we are dealing with are in this field.

The most "typical" problems we regularly face are linked to customs duties or other charges on imported press products. These charges on newspapers, magazines and books are prohibited by the Florence agreement of UNESCO, however the agreement has been signed only by half of the countries of the world and it happens quite frequently that even signatory states forget about their international undertakings. Violations of this kind were the subjects of our last two interventions, in Nigeria and Albania. The abovementioned agreement is more than 50 years old, so it is perhaps time to start a new campaign to increase awareness about it and invite all countries to sign it if they have not done so yet.

It is important to add, however that on request from our members we deal also with questions related to domestic distribution. For example, a drastic and unjustified increase of postal fees for the delivery of subscribed press products can force many readers to withdraw their subscriptions, leading to limited access to press products. Recently we had a successful intervention in a very similar matter in Russia.

Source: Arab Press Network

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GULF PRINT DUBAI 2009

Gulf Pack & Gulf Print 2007 were a resounding success, and saw a 51% growth on the previous exhibition sqm, and a 44% growth on visitor numbers. Over 12,000 decision makers passed through the doors in April 07. With figures like these, it is clear that Gulf Pack & Gulf Print are the leading events for a vibrant market, eager to buy. We will build on this success for 2009, with a new image, new marketing initiatives and a new conference program.

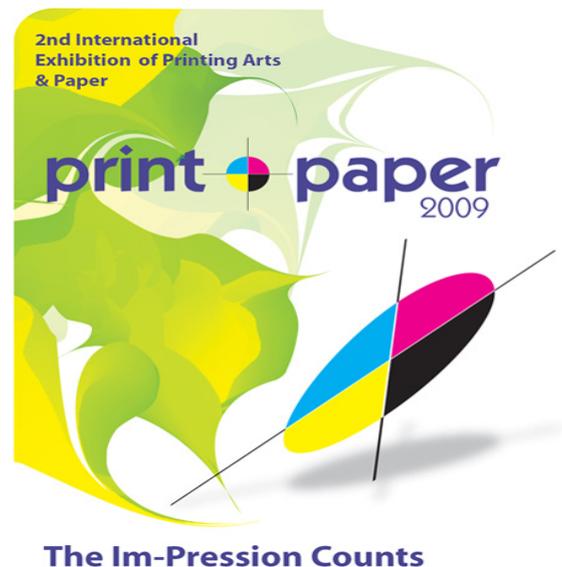
www.gulfpack.info
www.gulfprint.info

6—9 April 2009
Airport Expo Dubai
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

PRINT & PAPER 2009

PRINT & PAPER 2009 is the 2nd International Exhibition of Printing Arts & Paper, participation in the exhibition is the best chance to investigate the market, to meet its leaders and new manufacturers exhibition creates for you the opportunity to demonstrate the whole range of your production and services before the numerous visitors.

The show delivers qualified buyers of Pre-press Equipment, Digital Image Capture Equipment, Digital and Traditional Presses, Wide Format Inkjet Printers, Bindery and Finishing Equipment, Converting Equipment and Supplies, Media and Substrates, Chemicals & Supplies, Services to the Trade.



02 - 05 April 2009
HELEXPO International Exhibition Centre
Athens, Attiki—Greece
<http://www.biztradeshows.com/trade-events/print-paper.html>

ADVERTISING REVENUE GROWTH DROPS

Advertising revenue growth in the UAE will drop from a robust 41.5 per cent last year to just 6.7 per cent this year, according to a regional media study released yesterday.

However, growth is expected to bounce back into double digits next year. The trend mirrors the overall direction of media spending projected for the 12 Middle Eastern countries surveyed in the second annual Arab Media Outlook study, produced by PricewaterhouseCoopers in conjunction with the Dubai Press Club.

"Growth in advertising revenue will fall significantly in 2009 because of the impact of the downturn," said Ian Sanders, a partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers in Abu Dhabi. "At some point, it will start to pick up. The five-year outlook is positive, although it is unlikely to return to the very high level it reached in early 2008."

Adjusted for inflation, advertising revenues in the Middle East were expected to be flat this year, he added. However, in the longer term, the report's authors saw reasons to be optimistic about the Middle East's media sector, particularly when it came to the opportunities presented by the region's large proportion of tech-savvy young people and the convergence of all media into the digital format.

"The most important trend behind all of this is the digitalisation of all content," Mr. Sanders said. The report outlined a global demographic of 15 to 25-year-olds it deemed the "Net Generation", who grew up with the internet, "are absolutely addicted to their cell phones" and "want their content anytime, anywhere", he said.

Maryam bin Fahad, the executive director of the Dubai Press Club, said this demographic was particularly important in the Arab world, where in several countries people under 21 made up more than 50 per cent of the population. "This age group is driven by technology," she said.

But to capitalize on the business opportunities presented by an increasingly digital media world and a large population of content-hungry young people, the region must invest in its mobile and broadband infrastructure, Mr. Sanders said.

He pointed to findings in the report that even wealthy Middle Eastern countries such as Bahrain, Qatar and the UAE – which each have more than 100 per cent mobile penetration – have less than 12 per cent broadband penetration.

"There are markets in this region with high GDP per capita that have not really realised their potential as far as broadband infrastructure," he said.

Twice last year, the undersea cables connecting the region to the rest of the global broadband grid broke, revealing the large opportunities that exist for investors willing to help expand the region's telecommunications infrastructure, he said.

Governments could help this process by creating a regulatory environment that encouraged broadband investment, the report recommended. "Without broadband infrastructure, none of this can happen," Mr. Sanders said.

Although the report called on traditional media to adapt its ways to the new digital landscape in several ways – from creating online distribution strategies to developing new types of content such as "snack TV" for mobile television – it had an unusually positive message for print media in the region.

"Despite the growth of the internet, newspaper readership will continue to grow," Mr. Sanders said, noting that the trend was in direct contrast to more developed media markets such as northern Europe.

Newspaper advertising revenue in the UAE was expected to increase 16 per cent between 2007 and 2012, according to the report. This rate is topped only by Egypt, Qatar and Yemen, where newspaper advertising revenue is expected to increase 42 per cent. – The National

Source: UAE INTERACT



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**Middle East Publishers Association
MEPA is a FZ. LLC organization with
the motto of building a society of pub-
lishers 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 elec-
tronic publishers, whilst raising the fu-
ture standards of the publishing industry
in the Middle East.**

**WE ARE ON THE WEB :
WWW.MEPA.CC**