

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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KINGDOM ANNOUNCES NEW WEB PUBLISHING LAW

JEDDAH: Online newspapers, blogs and forums will now need to register with the Ministry of Information and Culture for licenses to operate, according to new regulations that the ministry announced Saturday it is to introduce.

The new system, which will be introduced in a month's time, has been discussed by online newspapers and bloggers who say the attempt to regulate online media in the same way that the Kingdom's print publications are regulated is not workable.

The regulations also specify punishments in case of violations. These include the obligatory publishing of corrections, fines and bans for various time periods, including total bans. Applicants for licenses need to be Saudi, no less than 20 years of age, have high school certificates in the least and documents testifying to their good behavior. Online newspapers also need to employ editors in chief who have been approved by the Ministry of Information and Culture.

Abdul Aziz Khoja, minister of information and culture, said that the system is "in line with the development moves that the media sector is witnessing." He added that the rules do not include any clauses restricting freedom of speech and that the ministry is eager to ensure there is transparency. He also said that the rules will be made open to improvement in the future.

Turki Al-Rougi, editor in chief of Al-Wiaam Online newspaper, said that the rules are welcome as they specify a particular government department that will be in charge of online media. He, however, added that there is fear that the regulations might be misused to restrict freedom of speech.

Al-Rougi said the Ministry of Information and Culture wants to implement the rules governing the print media on Internet websites and that this is not workable. He added that the drawbacks of the system will be discussed with the ministry at a seminar that is to be held on Monday at the Riyadh Literary Club.

"The fines could be as high as SR100,000 and SR50,000. The owners of websites simply cannot afford them as they are individuals unlike the print publications which are owned by establishments and businessmen," said Al-Rougi, adding that the new system neglects mentioning visitors to websites.

Trad Al-Asmari, who blogs about poverty, unemployment and social justice in the Kingdom at alasmari.wordpress.com, said the system will remain "ink on paper" because it is "not applicable."

"There are already contradictions in the system. It says that the person needs to have a license for his website and at the same time the person is actually applying for a license," said Al-Asmari who won an award — "Reporters Without Borders, freedom of expression" — for his blog.

He added that the system would work for online newspapers but not for blogs, forums or Twitter. He also wondered whether it would be a requirement to ask the Ministry of Information and Culture for permission to post on Twitter or Facebook.

"What we hoped for is a chance for the media to obtain a self-controlled system not that of a government one," he said.

Source: ARAB NEWS



TECOM INVESTMENTS MEDIA CLUSTER LAUNCHES 'THOUGHT INCUBATOR' WORKSHOP SERIES

Inaugural Session to Focus on 'Marketing to Online Communities'

Dubai-UAE: 30 January, 2011 - The Thought Incubator series launched to provide industry-specific information and innovative concepts to stakeholders will open with a workshop on 'Marketing to Online Communities', TECOM Investments Media Cluster announced today.

The workshop will be held on 31 January and focus on harnessing the power of online forums as a powerful marketing tool that companies are yet to utilise to their complete advantage. The session will also aim to leverage the synergy between social media and online communities to advance marketing objectives.

The Thought Incubator series will feature monthly workshops, addressing issues from social media, online/digital media and public relations to advertising and marketing, media content and industry initiatives.



Mohammad Abdullah, Manag-

Mohammad Abdullah, Managing Director of TECOM Investments ' Media Cluster, said: "The Thought Incubator initiative will be an important platform for the media and marketing community to gain insight into trends, best practices and the tools driving the industry.

"It is also a unique opportunity for all media professionals within the Media Cluster community as well as external stakeholders to meet and network with peers and leading experts and take the best decisions that are critical to the success of their organisation."

The first session on 'Marketing to Online Communities' will be conducted by Magnus Nystedt, Group Editor Consumer Technology at CPI Dubai, responsible for GameWorld, Macworld and PCWorld Middle East editions. With a background in teaching and technology journalism, as well as a unique combination of skills and interest make him a trustworthy source for audiences around the region.

Nystedt said: ""As a publishing company based in TECOM Investments Media Cluster, we at CPI think it is important to participate in similar community activities. We are ready to share our experience with others in the hope of helping and giving ideas. Personally, I believe this is just the beginning of a productive series of workshops, presentations and other activities that will have the power to educate and inspire."

The workshop comes at a time when the conversation in any market and for any business is increasingly being dominated by online platforms and largely taking place through the different types of social networking tools and services.

A thriving media community of over 1,800 companies/business partners at TECOM Investments plays a crucial role in contributing to the online and digital platforms that make up the TECOM Investments ' Media Cluster that also comprises Dubai Studio City and the International Media Production Zone. The cluster provides a complete value chain of specialized offerings that have created an established community hub for the media and content creation industries in the region.

Source: ZAWYA

NEW TURKISH WEBSITE TRACKS IF PAPERS GET IT RIGHT

A new Turkish website, 'Media Disclaimer Center,' has drawn attention to the ethics of journalism in Turkey by publishing all reader requests and court orders for corrections sent to newspapers. Although the site's owner claims they are working to contribute to a more transparent media, critics say not every correction is wholly correct



The Media Correction Center (www.medyatekzip.com) posts court-ordered corrections and requests for corrections that readers have sent to media outlets.

objector can take the media outlet to court and obtain a court-ordered correction, which officially notes the objection and must by law be published in the same media outlet in which the offending piece originally appeared. Failure to do so can result in a fine up to 150,000 Turkish Liras.

"I had the idea a few years ago," Hardal said in an interview with *Hürriyet Daily News & Economic Review*. "As a lawyer I was already familiar with the legal procedures of corrections, but now we have built an archive for them."

Hardal doesn't work alone. He has two editors and an advisory board of experienced journalists and academics.

"We don't just publish corrections, we also put up news stories that have been corrected or denied. We write our own headlines too, so it's more or less like a news website," Hardal said.

The Media Correction Center (www.medyatekzip.com) posts court-ordered corrections and requests for corrections that readers have sent to newspapers, magazines, websites, press agencies and TV channels, serving as a repository of challenged media. It also provides free advice for those who think they have been misrepresented in the media.

"We also prepare reports on how many court-ordered corrections or reader requests for corrections were sent to each newspaper, column writer or reporter," Hardal said. The website's data shows that the dailies *Hürriyet*, *Habertürk* and *Milliyet* are the top three newspapers that receive the most corrections. In 2010, official corrections were issued for 690 articles published in Turkish newspapers. "The website is definitely a major need for the Turkish press," said Doğan Akın, who runs an independent news website, T24. "The Turkish press hasn't really figured out how to implement a self-monitoring or external-control mechanism," he told the *Daily News*.

Professor of communications Yasemin İnceoğlu from Istanbul's Galatasaray University offered a different perspective. "The entry of corporations into the Turkish media has started to control journalists' and writers' thoughts and started a period of disinformation," she told the *Daily News*. "And therefore the media has lost its power as the watchdog."

İnceoğlu said there are common reasons a court-ordered correction is issued. "There are many reasons, from the looseness of the relationship between the reporters and news sources, to publishing a story without truly investigating it or also editorial weakness." Although many people think archiving the corrections is useful, some question their validity. "Not every correction means that they [the correction-requesting party] are right," said Faruk Bildirici, who works as the readers' representative for *Hürriyet* to follow up on reported errors and requested corrections.

ase transparency and accountability across Turkish website is archiving corrections that the country's news and the court orders that sometimes come with them. provided experts, with critics saying court-ordered corrections simply incorrect.

w bureau in an old passage in Beyoğlu, lawyer Şe a website with the stated purpose of making the re transparent. His website, "Media Correction Cen and archives every correction request sent to media

w, a person has the right to object in writing to the content of an article or other media production if they think their personal rights have been violated in the piece. The media outlet must

publish that written objection within three days; if it does not, the ob-

jector can take the media outlet to court and obtain a court-ordered correction, which officially notes the objection and must by law be published in the same media outlet in which the offending piece originally appeared. Failure to do so can result in a fine up to 150,000 Turkish Liras.

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“As required by Turkish law, newspapers have to publish every correction sent to them by court decision. At Hürriyet, we publish every correction that has been sent to us. However, the courts don’t investigate whether the corrections are correct or incorrect,” Bildirici told the Daily News. “Unfortunately it is a legal loophole in the Turkish system,” said Mehmet Yüksel, a communications professor at Ankara University who specializes in media law. “The court decides only by the dates of the sent documents, it doesn’t investigate on the accuracy of the correction.” Hardal said if there is a court decision, they publish the document.

“If the newspapers publish the corrections, why shouldn’t we publish them as well?” Hardal said. “It is not our interest to decide who is right or wrong; if there is a court decision, it means that the correction is legal.”

Another reader representative, Hasan Sutay from daily Zaman, said the content of the corrections is more important than their number. “I don’t think it is really useful to publish which newspapers have had how many corrections,” he told the Daily News. “We already take care of every correction we receive. Every case is different. You cannot categorize a newspaper according to how many corrections it gets.”

Self-criticism

Since 1999 many Turkish newspapers including Milliyet, Yeni Şafak, Hürriyet and Sabah have started to employ reader representatives, sometimes known as ombudsmen, to better facilitate interaction between the papers and the news-reading public.

“But many of these reader representatives are already people who work at those newspapers. Sometimes you even see a managing editor also working as a reader representative; that is a major conflict of interest,” said media critic Alper Görmüş.

According to Ian Mayes, who worked as the first readers’ editor at British daily The Guardian from 1997-2007, to balance out the potential for conflict of interest, reader comments or complaints should be evaluated through several mechanisms.

“At The Guardian, the complaints are first sent to the readers’ editor and if there is no solution there, they are directed to an external person who doesn’t have an organic relationship with the newspaper,” Mayes said.

“It has to be the same in the Turkish media,” T24 site owner Akın said. “As much as we lack self-criticism, we also need independent and external critiques.”

Yet despite their reader representatives, media mistakes still happen in the Western media as well. On his website www.regrettheerror.com (also the name for his book), journalist Craig Silverman reports corrections, retractions, apologies, clarifications and trends regarding accuracy and honesty in the press.

According to the site, 2010’s trend of the year in media mistakes and corrections was Twitter, which according to Silverman was “arguably the most noteworthy news platform of the year.”

“I’m not suggesting Twitter should be seen as a negative when it comes to news and quality reporting,” Silverman wrote on his blog. “But its status as an emerging platform for reporting and the sharing and dissemination of information means that it is raising new issues and introducing new challenges and opportunities.”

According to Professor İnceoğlu, the idea of self-criticism is still a problematic issue in Turkey. “Self-criticism is still considered disclosing one’s weaknesses in Turkish society and the media suffers from this as well,” he said.

“The Turkish media falls behind in many ways when compared with Western media,” İnceoğlu said. “We need to improve a lot more in many issues such as respecting one’s private and personal rights, recognizing the thin line between news and interpretation, validating a news item from at least two sources, not spreading or disseminating racism and not making news solely because of a claim to defend national interests.”

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With print advertising revenues under pressure, most newspaper publishers are seeking new revenue models and practices to sustain their businesses and pay for quality journalism.

The conference, which includes numerous case studies, examines a variety of concepts and strategies for more profit: advertising department tools and training, the consultative sales approach, audience focus, new product development, power of print strategies, online advertising, multimedia advertising campaigns, hyper local advertising strategies, online content monetisation, audience targeting for subscriptions and advertising, and increased efficiencies.

Moderators:

Bandar Asiri, Managing Director,
Al Khaleejiah, Saudi-Arabia

Dr. Dietmar Schantin, Executive Director
Publishing, Editorial and General Management
WAN-IFRA, Germany



8 – 9 February 2011, Dubai—UAE
Location: JW Marriott Hotel Dubai
For More info: mechthild.schimpf@wan-ifra.com

TWITTER WILL TRIPLE AD REVENUE IN 2011: RESEARCH

Twitter is set to triple its advertising revenue this year and could generate \$250 million in ad revenue in 2012, according to an industry research firm's projection.

The revenue estimates provide one of the first public assessments of the fast-growing Web service's money-making performance and come a month after Twitter was valued at \$3.7 billion.



Twitter, which had 175 million users as of September, is among the new crop of popular Internet social networking services including **Facebook**, **Zynga** and **LinkedIn**.

A growing secondary market has developed for shares of the privately held Web sensations, and investors are watching the companies closely in hopes that they might eventually float shares to the public. LinkedIn has selected financial underwriters for a planned initial public offering this year, sources told Reuters earlier this month.

Twitter, which allows users to broadcast short, 140-character messages to groups of "followers," was created in 2006 but did not offer a way for marketers to advertise on the service until mid-2010.

According to the report released on Monday by industry research firm eMarketer, San Francisco-based Twitter generated an estimated \$45 million from ads in 2010 and is expected to bring in \$150 million in ad revenue in 2011.

The growth in Twitter's revenue this year will come from the forthcoming launch of a self-service advertising feature, eMarketer said. The report noted that such a self-service advertising capability, in which marketers can quickly create ads online, has been a major factor behind growth at **Google** and Facebook.

Google, the world's No. 1 Internet search company, generated roughly \$29 billion in revenue in 2010. Facebook, **which was recently valued at \$50 billion**, generated roughly \$1.9 billion in ad revenue in 2010 and will bring in about \$4 billion in 2011, according to eMarketer.

Twitter is privately held and does not disclose financial information. Twitter spokesman Matt Graves declined to comment on the eMarketer report. He said that Twitter has previously announced plans to introduce a self-serve ad platform in 2011. In December Twitter received \$200 million in venture funding in a deal that valued the company at \$3.7 billion.

Source: CNBC



**MIDDLE EAST PUBLISHERS'
ASSOCIATION**

Dubai Media City;

- Media Business Center, 2nd Floor, No 06**
 - 5th floor, No. 506**
 - Building No. 2, CNN**
- P O Box: 502038, Dubai, UAE.**

Tel: +971-4-3916559

Fax: +971-4-3918019

E-mail: mepa@mepa.cc

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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