

MISSION OF MEPA

"UNITY AMONG PUBLISHERS IN MIDDLE EAST"



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 Creative Media Services
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NEWS UPDATE

DATA PUBLISHERS URGED TO HARNESS MOBILE POTENTIAL

Data publishers were challenged to harness the person-centric nature of mobile phones as a medium for connecting with consumers at the Data Publishers Association (DPA) seminar at the recent PPA Magazines and Business Media 2008 conference in London.



With mobile phone penetration near 100 per cent, making customers accessible anytime, anywhere, the ‘Mobile – new platform, new market, new audience?’ session explored the use of mobile phones in the b2b sphere. “When will be the year of the mobile?” is a question often asked – and speaking at the conference Robert Thurner of Incentivated mobile marketing claimed it was 2007. Whether that is true or not, lots of big brands are starting to make use of mobile and publishers are increasingly offering new services via mobile.

For publishers, utilising mobile falls into four main categories: marketing; content; commerce; and customer relationship management. And while new, flashy technology is constantly emerging, more traditional methods should not be ignored. Using the most appropriate technology was key, delegates were told – and this could be as simple as SMS responses or subscription reminders.

“Harness the power of the personal while avoiding the pitfalls” was the message from Douglas Macdonald of Sponge – warning that you need to be asked, through a strong opt-in mechanism, to be allowed into people’s personal space. Otherwise you risked damaging your brand.

Ajit Jaokar of Futuretext questioned “where is the money?” in mobile publishing – suggesting that context was king. Location based services were highlighted as a key area where mobile can work with (utilising GPS), ‘snack content’ and widgets.

Source: FIPP

TWO BRITISH PUBLISHING FIRMS CONSIDER A MERGER

Publishing group, United Business Media (UBM), and conference organiser and publisher, Informa, are involved in talks that may lead to the creation of a £3bn media giant.



Informa is considering the proposal for a merger and discussions are at an early stage with UBM. **United Business Media**

It is understood that UBM and Informa are confident about the potential merger. A tie-up would create an international powerhouse. It has been suggested that the synergy would make good strategic sense as the businesses are very similar.

The media sector, which has been hit by reduced consumer spending and a slowdown in the economy, is prompting media companies to consolidate.

It is thought the merger plans are likely to attract rival bids for Informa from other companies, despite banks being less willing to lend money for deals in the current economic environment.

UBM has more than 5,000 staff and has a presence in 30 countries including China, India and Brazil. The publisher produces trade magazines, newspapers and websites.

UK-based Informa is established in the Middle East, Dubai and Singapore. It also organizes exhibitions and conferences.

Source: BUSINESS SALE REPORT

“MUHTAWA FOR SPECIALIZED MEDIA” (MSM) SIGNS AN AGREEMENT WITH MEDIA SERVICES GROUP (MSG), FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL ADVERTISING AND PR NETWORK.

MSN, a subsidiary of the Saudi Company for Specialized Publishing, which is part of the Saudi Group for Research and Marketing (SGRM), signed a Memorandum of Understanding with MSG, which is part of JiWin, a PR company in the UAE, for the establishment of a regional advertising and PR network.

The new entity will combine two of the leading media groups in the region, for the establishment of a wide regional advertising and PR network that will cover the Middle East and North Africa region, together with some of the important world markets.



Mrs. Mona Al Marri and Dr. Azzam Al Dakhil signing the memorandum of understanding

The agreement was signed at Dubai Press Club by Dr Azzam Dkhayyil, executive president of SGRM, and Muna Marri, executive president of Media Services Group. Present at the ceremony were officials from the two groups.

The project, it is to be noted, will be launched from Dubai Media City. It will provide quality services in advertising, the establishment of media brands, direct marketing, development of websites, crisis communications management, and media training. The project will mainly target markets in the MENA region, with emphasis on Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, and Egypt.

The partners are now conducting discussions with the leading international media and communications groups, in order to establish alliances and partnerships that will serve and wide clientele around the world.

Dr Dkhayyil said that the macroeconomic conditions in the region give reasons for optimism, since oil prices and revenues reached record levels. In addition, expenditure on advertising is growing at an annual rate of 22 per cent. The project, he believes, has ample chances for success and the addition of concrete value to the media industry. “We are all confident that the synergies of the two groups will help establish new standards in this vital sector. It will also upgrade the level of services provided at present. We are looking forward through this project to achieving our strategic goals of developing the media industry throughout the Arab region and the world,” Dr Dkhayyil said.

Ms Marri said that MSG, only two years after it was launched, was able to expand and accelerate the range of its services to provide the best consultation and advisory services in PR, and communications with the government agencies and the leading businesses in the private sector. The project, Ms Marri noted, emphasizes the vision of the MSG in the establishment of a leading role for the group as a prominent player in the various media and marketing sectors in the Middle East. She added that she was confident that this project with give JiWin For Public Relations and Sidra for Government Relations and Public Affairs, which are part of MSG, big potential to expand its services to clients across the region.

“We chose as our partner Muhtawa for Specialized Media, in order to achieve our ambitious goals, in view of our common and shared vision, an din view of the integrated solutions that the company provides, so that we can make real change in the media and communications sector in the region. We are confident that this alliance will be of great benefit to all parties associated with our activities, and to the advertising and media sectors in general,” Ms Marri added.

The Saudi Company for Specialized Publishing was established, two years ago, as a subsidiary of SGRM. The object was to create an entity that actively pursues specialized content and publishes some of the most important licensed projects in the world. It established in Dubai Muhtawa for Specialized Media, a wholly owned subsidiary, in order to pursue its activities in specialized content and projects at the regional level.

MSG is growing at a fast pace since its launch. The present portfolio of the group includes JiWin For Public Relations and Sidra for Government Relations and Public Affairs, in addition to various initiatives and projects that are planned to be launched in the near future.

Source: SRMG

ACTIVITIES AND OTHER UPDATES

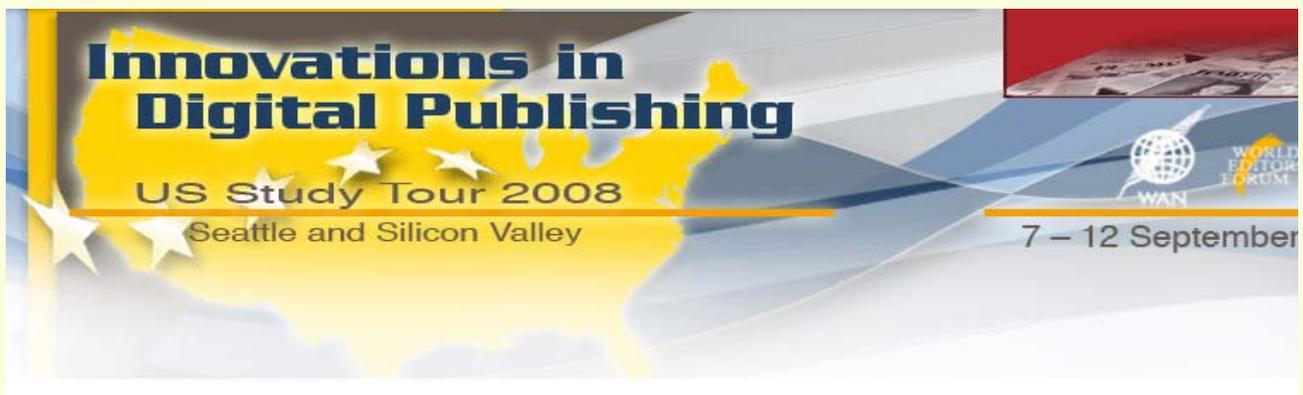
ABM/FIPP WORLD CONFERENCE 2008 - B-TO-B'S PASSPORT TO TRANSFORMATION

For the first time ever, B-to-B comes to New York! American Business Media (ABM) and [International Federation of the Periodical Press](#) (FIPP) brings together global business information leaders in the Big Apple, where they will exchange the ideas and latest information that will significantly increase their revenues and profits.



Time: 7-9 September 2008
Event type: Conference
Venue: Roosevelt Hotel, New York, NY, USA
Language: English

INNOVATIONS IN DIGITAL PUBLISHING US STUDY TOUR



The winds of change and opportunity are blowing. Newspaper companies can respond by either building windmills or windshields.

The World Association of Newspapers "Innovations in Digital Publishing" study tour will visit some of the most impressive pioneers and experts in the digital world: Microsoft, Amazon, Google, Yahoo, Hewlett Packard, the San Jose Mercury News and Stanford University.

Time: 7 September - 12 September 2008
Venue: Seattle and Silicon Valley—US
Event type: Study tour

RESEARCH ARTICLE

NEWSPAPERS SEE SALES, ADVERTISING REVENUE CLIMB: WAN

GOTHENBERG (SWEDEN): Newspapers saw their circulation and advertising revenue climb worldwide last year as the rapid growth of free titles and online publications extended their reach, a report said on Monday.

The World Association of Newspapers (WAN) said global newspaper sales were up 2.57 percent over the year, and had increased 9.39 percent over the past five years.

"When free dailies are added to the paid newspaper circulation, global circulation increased 3.65 percent last year, and 14.3 percent over the past five years," it said.

"Free dailies now account for nearly seven percent of all global newspaper circulation and for 23 percent of circulation in Europe alone," it noted.

"Advertising revenue for paid dailies were up 0.86 percent last year from a year earlier, and up 12.84 percent over five years, WAN said. "Print remains the world's largest advertising medium, with a 40 percent share."

WAN chief executive Timothy Balding said that "Newspaper circulation has been rising or stable in three-quarters of the world's countries over the past five years and in nearly 80 percent of countries in the past year."

"And even in places where paid-for circulation is declining, notably the United States and some countries in western Europe, newspapers continue to extend their reach through a wide variety of free and niche publications and through their rapidly developing multi-media platforms."

WAN's annual survey of world press trends was released at the annual congress of the association and of the World Editors Forum in Sweden.

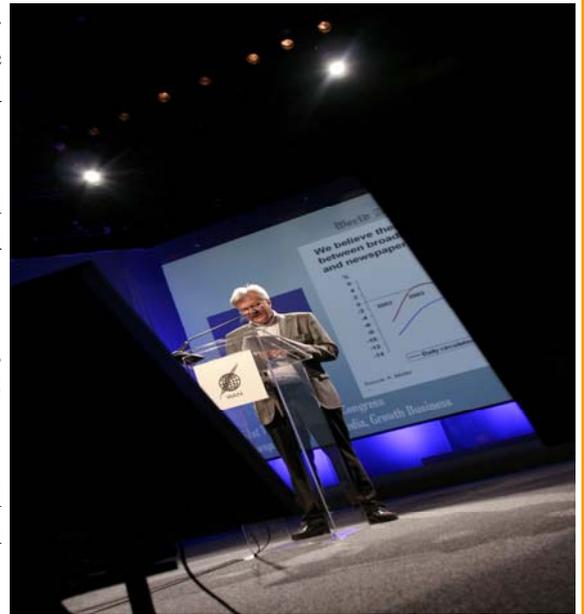
The survey of all countries and territories where newspapers are published showed that global sales of paid-for newspapers rose to more than 532 million daily.

With free dailies added, circulation increased to more than 573 million, while average readership is estimated to be more than 1.7 billion people.

"The total number of paid-for daily titles was up 2.98 percent in the world in 2007 and up 11.02 percent since 2003 to a record 11,926 titles," WAN said.

"The total number of paid and free titles increased by 3.65 percent in 2007 and by 14.30 percent since 2003."

Of the world's 100 best selling dailies, 74 are published in Asia, with China, Japan and India accounting for 62 of them, WAN said.



The five largest markets for newspapers are China, with 107 million copies sold daily, India, with 99 million, Japan, with 68 million, the United States, with nearly 51 million, and Germany with 20.6 million.

Sales rose in Latin America, Asia and the Middle East, but fell in other regions, though in the European Union for example the advent of free papers kept circulation up.

Internet advertising revenue -- not just newspapers online, but all Internet advertising -- was up 32.45 percent over one year and 200 percent over five years, WAN said.

"Most of the revenue is generated in the United States, western Europe and in the Asia-Pacific region: North American Internet advertising revenue is 20 times greater than the combined revenue generated in central and eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa."

"In Europe, Internet display advertising revenues now surpass classified revenues while search remains the largest advertising market online. Newspaper online revenues are forecast to more than double in the next five years and will account for 12 percent of total newspaper advertising by 2011."

A total of 312 free daily newspapers had a combined circulation of 41.04 million daily, a circulation increase of 20 percent over one year and 173.2 percent over five years.

"When free and paid-for circulations are combined, free dailies account for seven percent of the total world-wide, 23 percent in Europe, eight percent in the US and two percent in Asia."

The number of newspaper on-line sites grew 13.77 percent in 2007 and 50.77 percent over the five years from 2003, WAN said.

"A study in the US shows that newspaper web site users also read the print edition: 81 percent of online newspaper readers also read a printed newspaper at least once a week."

Source: INDIA TIMES



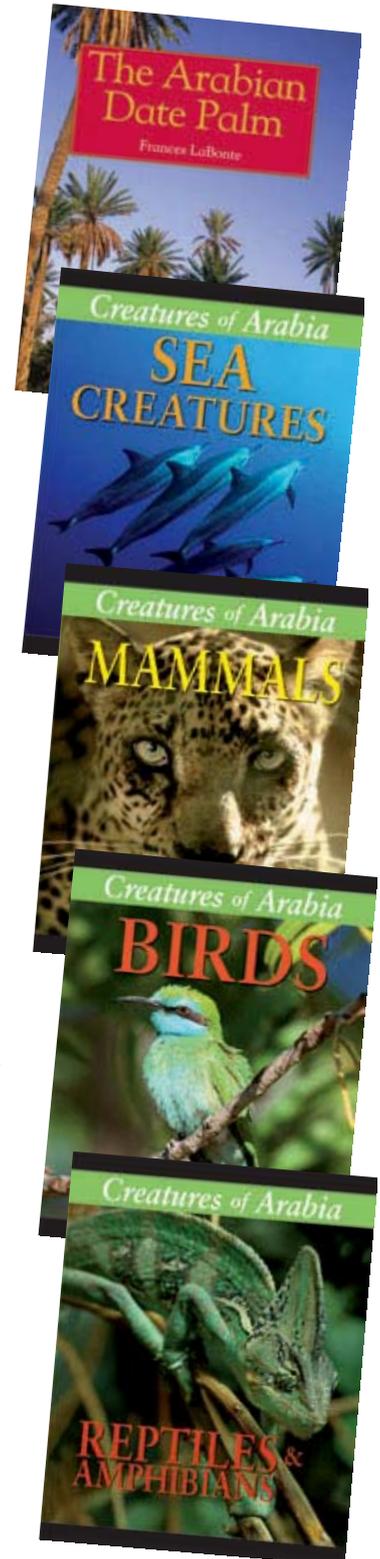
POFILE OF MEPA MEMBER

JERBOA BOOKS



Jerboa Books is a ground breaking publishing house in Dubai. Only three years old, with 90 plus titles already published, Jerboa Books is the only publishing house in the region doing the following

- Producing colourful and exciting stories for children in both Arabic and English (separate publications)
- All these titles relate to the region, providing all those who live here with information and story books which are 'homegrown', and not set in the USA or United Kingdom!
- All publications highlight the richness of material in the Gulf, making learning fun and easily accessible.
- Information series have been accredited by Institutes of learning
- All publications are of the highest standard and pay particular attention to matters of cultural and environmental sensitivity
- Publications start with toddlers and go all the way to mid teens in appeal
- Encouraging local talent to write and illustrate stories for children.
- Jerboa Books's main aim is to encourage reading as a family activity from the earliest age.
- Jerboa Books has won an award two year's running from Sharjah International Book Fair in recognition of services to children's publishing.



SEASONAL NEWS

MOUSSEM OF ASILAH THE FESTIVAL OF ASILAH 2008

Moussem is a word of Arabic origins which means „season“. It is used to designate religious and agrarian feasts. The fact of preferring this word (so emblematic and deep-rooted in local tradition) to others like `festival` was due to the aim of the founders to link the culture to the progress of the city without forgetting its roots. Thus, put straight into the manifesto of creation like a desperate scream, was: “Against the excesses of the imported western culture, against the culture of the “clubs”, against alienation, against the elitist congresses, against the culture of artistic exhibitions in the galleries of the well-catered-for, against the culture of the mean dialectic meetings”. The cultural association “Al Mouhait” was created that same year to organise the events of the festival. As of then public and private investors began to take interest in the project. The Portuguese walls, Karma tower, and Raïssouni palace were restored in order to house workshops and exhibitions. The town was gradually being provided with basic infrastructures: the streets were paved, the old houses renovated; always following their craft patterns.



Raïssouni Palace, also called
The Palace of Culture

Thirty years afterwards the town attracts artists - Moroccan as well as foreign; not only during the period when the Moussem is being held, but all year round. Many of the children of Asilah who participated during the first years helping the artists or painting the walls or doing engravings in the workshops are today established Moroccan artists.

Main activities and events of the Cultural Moussem of Asilah (Every year, from the beginning of August till the end of the month):

-Wall paintings. Different Moroccan and foreign artists create wall paintings in the white walls of the buildings of the medina. It is the hallmark of the festival and consequently, of the city itself. In this activity the children and youth of Asilah take part, for whom open workshop are carried out, as well.

-Engraving workshops. It is another of the hallmark activities of the festival. The first acquisition of the Cultural Association **Al Muhit** were two printing frames. Every year, about fifteen engraving artists, internationally known, exchange their experiences and techniques. At the end of the Mussem, every artist donates part of his work to the Association, which, after almost thirty years, has an impressive collection.

-Shows. Poetry readings, concerts and dance shows from all around the World, as well as traditional and contemporary Moroccan ones. Although at the beginning the shows were free and took place in the open air, more recently there has been a cover charge, and most of them are held in the **Hassan II Centre** or in the **Raïssouni Palace**.

-Mata. The party of the Man and the Horse. It is a play of ancient tradition, in which the raiders have to take possession of a big doll and keep hold of it during a crazy ride.

-Conference and lectures in the Hassan II International Meeting Centre. Forum of debate and dialogue among intellectuals of any tendency. Artistic creation, architecture, urbanism, and many other disciplines are discussed here. Known personalities of the Arabic world take part.

-In the framework of the intercultural North-South dialogue, two institutions were founded: **Afro-Arabic Cultural Forum** and the University of **Al Mutamid Ibn Abbad** that took its name from a King from Seville in the XI century, outstanding thinker and poet. It was created in order to promote dialogue between the Arabic and the Spanish worlds.

Source: TAVELLERS BOOK