

MEPA Newsletter

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

JULY 29, 2006 VOLUME 18, NUMBER 18



OJD "DEEPLY INTERESTED" IN MIDDLE EAST AUDITS

French circulation audit firm OJD has said it is "deeply interested" in increasing its presence in the Middle East after the Circulation Audit Steering Organisation (Castor) said it would like to see the company play more of a role in the region.

Campaign Middle East reported that OJD, which already audits three publications in Lebanon from its offices in Paris, said that it was serious about setting up shop in the Middle East.

Castor, which is made up of the Gulf Cooperation Council Advertising Association (GCCAA), the Dubai chapter of the International Advertising Association (IAA) and media agencies, has now certified BPA Worldwide as an official audit provider.

But the organization has reportedly said that it is keen to forge links with other companies in an effort to give publishers greater choice when applying for an audit.

At present, BPA is the only company that is offering audits to Middle East media owners. It has almost 40 titles that have either been audited, or that have already applied to be audited. ABC continues to retain a small number of members following its decision to cease local print media auditing in the region back in April 2006.

Source: Campaign Middle East

ONLINE SPEND SET TO GROW 25 PERCENT WORLDWIDE IN 2006

Internet advertising will continue its rapid ascent in 2006 and help prop up growth in the ad market as a whole, according to a new report from Carat International.

The Aegis-owned network said in its latest "Global Market Update" that the online medium will grow 25 per cent year-on-year worldwide, and will overtake the amount of ad revenue generated by newspapers in the US by 2008.

In the UK, it overtook outdoor advertising in 2005 and is likely to outstrip magazines this year. For early adopters like Sweden and South Korea, the internet is forecast to become the third biggest advertising medium this year, after television and newspapers.

Robert Lerwill, chief executive, Aegis Group, said: "2006 is shaping up to be a pretty solid year in the majority of markets around the world and global advertising expenditure is expected to grow by 5.7 per cent worldwide."

He added: "Digital is driving growth in almost every single market, transforming the marketing landscape in the process. Investment in digital media has now definitively moved from 'experimental' to 'essential'."

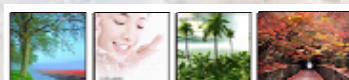
Also in the report, Carat International tracks strong ad spend in the US, where television is on course for 4.3 per cent growth this year boosted by cable markets, Spanish channels and activity around the Congressional elections in the Autumn.

European forecasts were revised down slightly due to a faltering UK market. Italy's economy also remains fragile.

Ad spend in Asia-Pacific was also revised down slightly, with Carat citing slower than anticipated growth in Japan. The Japanese economy is on course for a good 2006 but advertising has yet to benefit from the upward turn.

The rest of the region continues to perform well and should be further buoyed this year by the 15th Asian Games in December 2006. China and India's advertising markets remain strong and South Korea is starting to recover.

Source: www.mandmeurope.com



Good Advertisement

An advertisement for internet advertising. It features a globe on the left, a laptop in the center, and a smartphone on the right. The text "INTERNET ADVERTISING" is at the top. Below the globe is the URL "www.realtor.com". Below the laptop is the URL "www.maryone.com".

JORDAN CENSOR EASES OFF

As a sign of its growing commitment to civil liberties, Jordan's ministry of culture has announced that it would no longer censor local and international publications. The state-controlled Publications and Publishing Department (PPD) has closely monitored books, newspapers and magazines for content that might be deemed offensive to the government, the royal family or religious groups, and all imported books had to be approved by the PPD before distribution inside the country.

In the capital, Amman, the acting general manager of the PPD, Ahmad Al Qudah, told the UN's IRIN news agency that the recent move to allow greater press freedom was part of a broader strategy to create "space for creative expression". The department could now give the go-ahead for publishing regardless of content, and also had a mandate to develop the country's publishing industry.

Despite the recent easing of restrictions on the press, there are huge challenges ahead. Local papers recently reported a police raid on a popular city bookstore, called Kushk Abu Ali. According to the owner, Hasan Abu Ali, members of the public security directorate came into his shop and requested a list of books they said were to be confiscated, including Dan Brown's best-selling novel, *The Da Vinci Code*.

Al-Qudah said although Brown's book had been approved for circulation, some religious groups claimed it was offensive. "After approving the book title for circulation, we received a letter from a Jordanian bishop, stating that the book was offensive to Christianity and should be banned.

"While censorship has always been harsh on any offence to religion, we (the PPD) acknowledged that the book was a purely a work of literary fiction," al-Qudah pointed out. Distribution of the novel was not stopped, despite the objections, but additional copies were not allowed to enter the country.

Source: 7 Days

FIVE ISLAMIST PUBLISHERS DETAINED IN EGYPT

CAIRO - Five publishers, all members of Egypt's opposition Muslim Brotherhood, were detained as they prepared to publish material criticising Egypt's emergency law, the Islamist movement's spokesman told AFP on Saturday.

"Five publishers, members of the Brotherhood, were taken from their homes at dawn on Friday," said Issam Al Aryan.

"They were preparing a poster and a book against the emergency law," he said.

Egypt's emergency law, put in place in 1981 following the assassination of then-president Anwar Sadat, restricts freedoms and curbs non-governmental political activity in the country.

"Following their arrest, they were led to an unknown place and the security personnel seized their personal belongings (and) amounts of money," read a statement on the Muslim Brotherhood website.

The website also stated that the arrests may be linked to the upcoming elections in the Egyptian Publishers's Union "where the detainees have a strong presence."

The Muslim Brotherhood, which is officially banned in Egypt, won 20 percent of the seats in parliament by fielding candidates as independents in the November legislative elections.

"The government likes to arrest our members in waves," said Aryan, referring to publisher arrests. "They want to try and weaken each group."

The latest arrests bring to 23 the number of Brotherhood members arrested in the last two weeks.

Source: Khaleej Times