

Welcome (*Ahlan Wa-Sahlan; Marhaba*)

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Welcome to this premier issue of the Arabian edition of Global Media Journal.

The *Global Media Journal* is an experiment started over a decade ago by Dr. Yahya Kamalipour from Purdue University's Calumet campus as a venue for scholars to publish their international mass communication studies. At the time, there were few outlets for global scholars in existing journals. They had to compete with academic research conducted primarily in established media markets in the United States and Western Europe, much of it empirically oriented. *GMJ*'s impact was immediately felt, and a new need was identified: journals that concentrated on specific regions around the globe to address specific regional concerns. Over the years, global media journals have been established in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Malaysia, the Mediterranean (from North Cyprus), Mexico, Pakistan, Persia (from Tehran), Poland, Portugal (from Porto), Russia, Spain, Turkey, and now the Arab World through this Arabian edition. We are honored to join this esteemed body of international scholarship.

The Arabian edition succeeds the *Global Media Journal* Arabic Edition, which had been sponsored by the American University in Cairo for academics who published their studies exclusively in Arabic. *GMJ*'s Arabian Edition takes a different tack, seeking quantitative, qualitative and conative research in both English and Arabic. Like its predecessor, this publication encourages diversity of studies in mass communication in the Arab World, which geographically includes the Middle East and North Africa.

The MENA region is important for media scholars. No other region on earth is undergoing such rapid change in its mediascape: more daily newspapers have been started up in the region—in both English and Arabic—than anywhere else over the past 40 years. While newspaper readership is declining in America and Western Europe, it is on the rise in MENA, no small feat considering that just over half of its indigenous population and read or write in any language. The revolutionary additions of the Internet and mobile telephony, and growth of social media has made study of the region even more important and significant.

With the advent of digital satellite distribution from Arabsat (Saudi Arabia) and Nilesat (Egypt), every country in the 22-nation region can reach each other through state-run television networks uplinked to satellites 35,000 kilometers above the earth, then redistributed to service providers in every country. This ability to potentially reach 320 million viewers with messages from various countries is tantalizing for media researchers, who must surmount a number of

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obstacles, the largest being permission from most of the region's governments to research their citizenry in the first place, and the shortage of qualified research assistants and institutional support. The fact that less than a third of that potential audience actually uses mass media on a sustained basis opens the phenomenon to scholarly investigation.

The Middle East fascinates investigators as it has for centuries. There is no more dynamic place for mass media, evidenced by the move by major international media companies to establish bureaus in places like Cairo, Beirut, Jerusalem, Baghdad and the Gulf Cooperation Council nations on the Arabian Peninsula. It is a region marked by uneven growth in media products and consumers and a paucity of scholarly media research, which is changing at a breath-taking pace.

The region is the epicenter of social and economic change, not only from East-West influences, but also from North-South dynamism.

After years of scholarly neglect, the Middle East over the last decade has witnessed sudden interest from researchers around the world. We, the editors of Global Media Journal Arabian Edition, welcome this exciting trend. We also welcome our involvement with a network of international scholars.

In this premier issue, Naila Hamdy from the American University in Cairo, examines how traditional media in the region is embracing new media in conflict coverage, and Hebatella El Gamal of the Modern Arts and Science University, Sixth of October City, Egypt, probes social media's influence on young people. Don Love of the American University of Sharjah reports on what advertising employers want from university student applicants, and Mustafa Taha of the American University of Sharjah investigates how two U.S. presidents—Clinton and Obama—crafted their comments on the Somalia crises of 1996 and the public diplomacy effort in the Arab World in 2009 and what they, separately, sought to accomplish. Hania Nashef and Ralph Berenger conclude the English portion of the journal with book reviews.

Writing in Arabic, Noha Sameer Mahjoob of Cairo University, investigates *hypermnnesia* that results from dissonant message reception, and Mustapha Qassim from the National Center for Educational and Development Research in Cairo probes the Arab media revolution as well as the means of transforming the Arab civil society.

Putting together an academic journal is a collaborative process, and I would like to thank my colleagues at the American University of Sharjah and from around the world who acted as referees for journal articles for their help and guidance. I especially thank His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohamad Al Qassimi, ruler of Sharjah and president of AUS, and the University's administration for their support of this journal, the first of its kind sponsored by this university.