

GUEST EDITORS' NOTE

Philip Auter, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Lafayette, USA

Guest Editor

and

Ali Alkarni

The Spring 2013 issue of Global Media Journal American edition focuses on the rapid changes occurring in the "Arab World." In the midst of rapid social and governmental change, as well as the rise and fall of political regimes, personal and social media seem to stay at the forefront. During the initial period of revolution in Egypt, the Mubarak government tried to "turn the internet off." Rather than quash the protests, as cutting off communication has typically done in the past, it inflamed the public even further, possibly escalating the government's fall.

Communication technology has influenced the public sphere in the Middle Eastern cultures in the past a few decades, starting from radio to television, but probably, the start and the spread of TV satellite channels in the early 1990s, with an open sky in the Arab world,, was a turning point in the effect of technology on societies of the region. The Internet became political and social tools of real changes in the region since 2011, when the Arab Spring started in Tunisia, Egypt and the rest of the change. The development and the introduction of technology within the Internet industry has accelerated the pace of change, and became the friend of Arab revolutions.

As people cross cultures, religions, and geography with instant and free or low cost communication one to one -- such as Skype and SMS -- they became more able to converse with people across the world as if they were merely across the street. Blogs, comes the forth in terms of social media effects on the region. Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and other social medial allowed these people to now become producers or publishers creating one to many content -- spreading their messages and fueling change at a faster pace.

We share with you both invited papers and juried papers -- many collaborated on by both faculty and graduate students together.

Prof. William R. Davie lead a team of researchers that surveyed young people in a number of MENA countries and the U.S. on their perceptions of media coverage of politics and change, discovering some surprising results.

Prof. Mahmoud Galander contributed a piece on how Al-Jazeera's "advocacy journalism" may have affected the diffusion of revolution in the region.

Prof. Naila Hamdy looked at perceptions of media credibility in Egypt post revolution.

Prof. Yusuf Kalyango explored how SNS has changed communication styles in East and West Africa.

While Prof. Odine looked at how women use social media in the region.

Dr. Obaid S. Al-Shaqsi presents a study of readership and reader opinions of Omani newspapers.

Dr. David Coulson reviews how social media affects politics and public policy in the Arab World.

Graduate student Gina Harden compares social media use in Saudi Arabia vs the United States.

These papers all share with us some insights into technology and change in the region. All has not been as expected with the change. Some has been for the better, some for the worse. Some change could be either -- depending upon your cultural viewpoint. In the midst of this rapidly changing region of a rapidly changing world, we are pleased to present this issue with articles focused on Middle East communication events.

Sincerely,
Profs. Philip Auter and Ali Alkarni