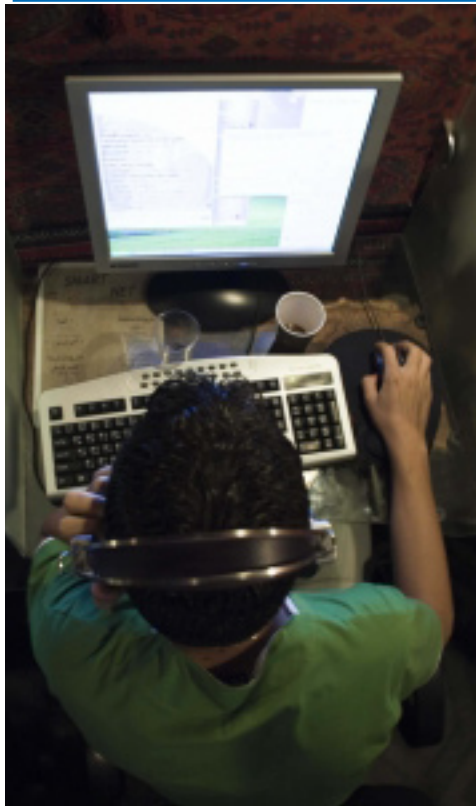


Perspectives

<http://www.meoc.us>

The Newsletter of the Middle East Outreach Council



A young man blogs in a Syrian cyber cafe. Picture by Kim Badawi. Courtesy Arab Media and Society.

Electronic Infitah: The Opening Up of Middle Eastern Media and Societies

by Tom Regan and Barbara Petzen

In the 1970s, the *infitah*, or opening up, of Egypt's economy brought great opportunity to some Egyptians and great dislocation to others. Today, the opening up of communications through the adoption of new media across the Middle East likewise offers many opportunities for economic and social change, along with the uncertainties that accompany any major shift in human social organization.

The rise of a plethora of satellite television channels, of cell phone usage, and of access to and use of the internet have all had profound social, cultural and political ramifications in the many states of the region. Each new technology has given the populations of the Middle East both access to new sources of information (and entertainment) and channels through which they can themselves add

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2009 Book Award Recipients Showcase New Writers and Forms

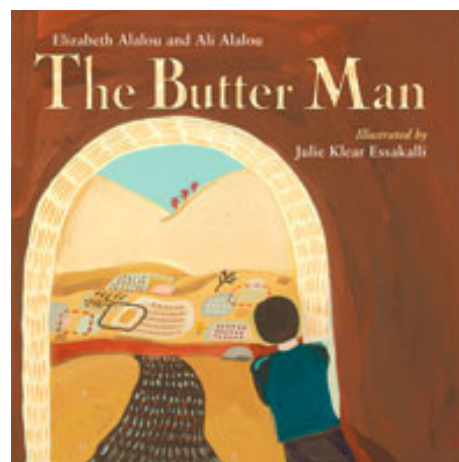
From Morocco to Afghanistan, from email friendship to old-fashioned letters, from the Holocaust to the Iranian Revolution, this year's MEOC Middle East Book award winners cover a lot of ground. Award recipients were announced at the MEOC annual business meeting at the Middle East Studies Association conference held in Boston, MA, in November 2009.

Established in 1999, the Middle East Book Award recognizes quality books for children and young adults that contribute meaningfully to an understanding of the Middle East and its component societies and cultures.

Books are judged on the authenticity of their portrayal of a Middle Eastern subject, as well as on characterization, plot, and appeal for the intended audience. For this award, the Middle East is defined as the Arab World, Iran, Israel, Turkey, and Afghanistan.

The 2009 MEOC award recipients are:
PICTURE BOOK WINNER: *The Butter Man* by Elizabeth Alalou and Ali Alalou

While Nora waits for the couscous her father is cooking to be finished, he tells her a story about his youth in the high Atlas Mountains of Morocco.



Every day, he would wait for the butter man to come ... surely today would be the day, wouldn't it?

Along the way, we meet the villagers who inhabit his world, and get to know life in the Berber villages of Morocco. Peppered with Amazigh (Berber) phrases, this story provides an introduction to Berber culture augmented by an informative note from the authors and an accompanying glossary.

The delightful illustrations round out this simple tale that landed at the top of our list this year.

HONORABLE MENTION: *The Grand Mosque of Paris: A Story of How Muslims Rescued Jews During the Holocaust* by Karen Gray Ruelle and Deborah Durland DeSaix

The Grand Mosque of Paris is based on a true story of how North African Muslims who

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President's Message

This newsletter's timely theme of new media is a stretch for someone who doesn't own a cell phone and who laments the passing of the days when a student research paper required sitting in the library surrounded by piles of books. The theme's importance, however, cannot be overstated.

The nature and rate of change in communication and making connections with each other and with information through new media truly are revolutionary. This is not superficial change with merely improved technology for old processes and actions. Instead, profound and deep change, especially in the Middle East, have resulted from expansion of new media. Dale Eichelmann, Jon Anderson and others have reported on how new modes of communication in the region have affected identity, sources of authority, and opportunities for public participation in discussion of religion, gender relations, and politics. Like most changes of substance, there are costs and benefits and the full effects will be understood better in years to come.

One of the nominees for a 2009 MEOC book award in the youth literature category, *Bottle in the Gaza Sea*, focuses on a teenage Israeli girl who puts a message and her email address in a bottle to be dropped in the sea. The increasingly personal and open email messages she exchanges with the Palestinian young man who finds the bottle demonstrate how this medium has a special capacity for developing and strengthening meaningful and important connections between people.

An example of a school-related project that makes use of new communication tools is Mercy Corps International's Global Youth Connectivity project. Regular internet communication has connected hundreds of Palestinian, Lebanese, and Iraqi youth with high school students in the U.S. The project involves an exchange of writing samples, student-produced videos, and community projects "to build cross-cultural connections that reduce isolation, create more accurate perceptions, and deepen each group's understanding of the other's political and social realities".

Now, a request to MEOC members and others who read this newsletter: MEOC has undertaken a major update of its website and review of communication tools for connecting with members and others served by our efforts. Please tell us the ways in which you find it most useful to receive and retrieve new information and resources related to teaching about the Middle East.

- What tools or new media sources are best suited for reaching your students?
- How are your students using new strategies and tools that allow them to make human connections across geographic regions or topics?
- What skills in using new media have you and your students mastered that facilitate making these connections?
- How do you feel these new resources are enhancing learning and strengthening your students' knowledge and understanding of the Middle East?

Please share your responses and recommendations via email with me (campbej@pdx.edu), Barbara Petzen, (bpetzen@mepc.org), chair of MEOC's communication committee, or with members through the MEOC listserv (meoc@utlists.utexas.edu). We look forward to your input.

—Jean Campbell

Awards

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Travel awards are available to MEOC members wishing to attend the MEOC workshop and MESA's annual meeting in Boston from November 21-24. More information on applying for the awards will be available soon on the MEOC listserv and the MEOC website at www.meoc.us, or contact Manoucher Khosrowshahi at mkho@tjc.edu.

Middle East Book Awards Feature Stories of Connection and Survival

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ran the Grand Mosque of Paris hid Jews from the Nazi forces occupying France, frequently sweeping the city looking for Jews to send to the concentration camps in Eastern Europe.

In a world in which Muslims are often stereotyped as terrorist, this story instead focuses on the many humanitarian deeds Muslims have been done and continue to do in the world. This is a must read in any study of the Holocaust by fourth-, fifth-, or sixth-graders. The illustrations are beautifully done often using dark colors to emphasize the dire circumstances of people during those dark days.

YOUTH LITERATURE WINNER: *Wanting Mor* by Rukhsana Khan

Inspired by a true story, the winning title has all the makings of tragedy: the titular Mor (“Mother” in Dari) passes away as the story opens, leaving Jameela and her father to seek a new life in Kabul. Jameela’s weak willed father, dominated by his addiction to opium and the will of his new wife, is persuaded to abandon Jameela in the marketplace, and she is taken to an orphanage where she meets a similar group of abandoned children.

Rather than succumb to the tragic overtones, however, Khan constructs a multi-layered, nuanced tale about a girl making her way in a patriarchal society, finding those who are willing to bend the rules, and figuring out how to use the strict societal norms to her advantage.

Much can be made of the differing forces and how they play off of each other (rural vs. urban; religious vs. secular; ethnic vs. ethnic; Afghan vs. American). There is a great deal here to explore.

HONORABLE MENTION: *A Bottle in the Gaza Sea* by Valérie Zenatti

Also inspired by true events, *A Bottle in the Gaza Sea* is the story of Tal Levine, an Israeli teenager who longs to strike up a correspondence with “someone on the other side.” She convinces her brother, who is serving in the Israel Defense Forces along the Gaza border, to throw a bottle containing a message into the Gaza Sea in the hopes that someone will pick it up and respond.

In this way, she meets “Gaza-man,” a sarcastic Palestinian who, at first, only mocks her. As their correspondence continues, however, their casual e-mail exchange turns into something deeper.

This “letter in a bottle” tale for

the Web 2.0 generation does not shy away from deeper issues, especially in the wake of tragedies that afflict both Tal and Gazaman along the way. This timely, topical tale is sure to inspire a myriad of follow-up classroom activities.

HONORABLE MENTION: *Extra Credit* by Andrew Clements

This second honorable mention title is directed at readers in upper elementary and middle school. Abby Carson is a sixth-grade student in rural Illinois whose head is everywhere but her schoolwork (“it’s not that she can’t do her schoolwork, it’s just that she doesn’t like doing it”).

In order to be spared the embarrassment of being left behind a grade, she agrees to an extra credit assignment involving writing to a pen pal in another country—and so she meets Sadeed Bayat and his sister Meriem in rural Afghani-



stan. As their friendship flourishes, problems arise on both sides.

This is an appealing book with complex Afghan characters, providing a nuanced view even for younger readers. As if this wasn’t enough, the title received enthusiastic praise from the Award Committee’s school aged children! As with the other two recognized titles, there is much here to explore, and *Extra Credit* is sure to inspire much classroom discussion and follow up activities.

YOUTH NON-FICTION

WINNER: *The Iranian Revolution* by Brendan January

Part of the Pivotal Moments That Changed the World series, this entry focusing on the Iranian revolution of 1979 won much praise from the Book Award Committee for its thoroughness, clear writing, and the use of supplemental primary sources.

Instead of succumbing to the “clash of civilizations” argument, author Brendan January instead delves into the deeper causes of the Iranian revolution, and brings the story forward to describe how the forces that triggered the revolution continue to play out in the troubled relationship between the United States and Iran today. An excellent addition to any middle- or high school library, this book is a welcome entry to the corpus of research literature for younger people.

HONORABLE MENTION: *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Arabia* by Mary Beardwood

This detailed encyclopedia entry focuses on the geography, cultures, and, especially, the flora and fauna of the Arabian Peninsula. With many photographs, charts, maps, figures, asides, this exhaustive and beautifully illustrated text will answer every question you never knew that you had about Arabia on subjects from pearling to fossils, migratory birds to the many uses of the date palm. The sheer breadth of information will eliminate the narrow geographic and social stereotypes so many students have about the Middle East.

HONORABLE MENTION: *The Middle East Today: Political, Geographical & Cultural Perspectives* by Dona J. Stewart
This textbook provides a clearly written, concise introduction to the modern Middle East. Short, easy-to-digest pieces are augmented by textboxes and maps, exploring all aspects of the region from politics and government, to history, geography, and various cultural perspectives.

While perhaps too advanced for some high school students, this book would find a home in Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate classes or libraries meant to support them, and is also suitable for many university level survey courses on the Middle East.

A full listing of Middle East Book Award recipients is available on the MEOC website at <http://www.meoc.us>.

The Electronic Infatih: New Media Opens Up Middle Eastern Communications

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input back into the social network.

Taken all together, these new media technologies have profoundly changed the information landscape and the social and economic infrastructures of the entire region, challenging the control that both socially conservative and politically authoritarian governments have sought to maintain over their citizenry.

If there is one statistic that shows how quickly these new technologies can be adopted when they are available, it's this one: According to Internet World Statistics, between 2000 and 2009, the rate of growth of the Internet in the Middle East has been 1,360%. The average in the rest of the world has been 362%. Almost 48 million people in the region are online out of a population of 202.5 million—about 24%.

Blogs are also enormously popular. In a June 2009 study, the Berkman Center for the Internet and Society estimated that there are 35,000 blogs written in Arabic that are updated on a regular basis. But that doesn't come close to the number of blogs written in Farsi—about 70,000. In fact, Farsi is now one of the Internet's 10 most popular blogging languages.

Satellite TV Breaks Open Communications

Even more than the Internet, however, satellite TV has played an increasingly important role in creating more open societies in the Middle East. For instance, the Committee to Protect Journalists noted earlier this year that

almost three-quarters of Egyptians have access to satellite signals.

“Three years ago, it was the terrestrial TV broadcasting that influenced Egyptian people, but now 70 percent of Egyptian people watch satellite TV stations,” said Mahmoud Saad, host of the popular program “Al-Beit Beitaq” (My House Is Your House), which is privately produced and airs on one of Egypt's state channels. “It takes only 20 Egyptian pounds to get the cable that gives access to these satellite TV stations. So the government no longer exerts media influence. That's why it's trying to regain control.”

At the Arab Advisors sixth annual Media and Telecom Convergence Conference held in Amman, Jordan in June 2009, delegates discussed the rise in the availability of free satellite channels in the region, which have basically undermined the influence of terrestrial stations, almost all of which are controlled by local governments. According to a May report from Radio Nederlands, which quoted the chief executive of an Arab satellite company in Abu Dhabi, satellite TV penetration in the Middle East, North Africa and southwest Asia is about 70%. Aware that their influence is under direct attack, local regimes have tried to stem the rising tide. In February of 2008, 21 information ministers of the Arab League agreed on a new charter which requires satellite TV broadcasting “not to offend leaders in the Arab world” and to “protect Arab identity from the harmful effects of globalization.” The lone non-signatory to the charter was the minister from Qatar—home of Al Jazeera. The government of Iraq did not send a representative to the meeting.

This charter is aimed in particular at news channels such as Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya, which have brought unfiltered news critical of Arab regimes into homes all over the region. More important, these channels operate from bases in the region rather than from Europe or America, which gives them enormous credibility with local audiences.

The biggest pushback has come in Egypt, where Al

Jazeera and local private satellite channels have provided extensive coverage of “sensitive topics such as the rising cost of food, a lack of public services and drinking water, and the hundreds of strikes, sit-ins, and protests that have rocked the country over the last two years.” Enormously popular talk-shows on subjects such as women's rights and sexuality in Islamic culture have also come under attack from government and religious authorities. Egyptian police have frequently raided the offices of local production companies, often charging them with “not having the proper permission to broadcast.”

Experts believe the next year will show just how much Arab governments can put the lid on this kind of coverage, but others think it may be too late. The region's demand for satellite TV, for both news and entertainment, may be greater than the authorities' ability to control it.

The Cell Phone Revolution: Can You Hear Me Now?

In the Middle East as in much of what the west calls “the developing world,” the cost of landline telephones is high and the infrastructure woefully insufficient to meet demand. Therefore it isn't surprising that the use of cell phones has grown rapidly. According to data compiled by Wireless Intelligence in 2006-2007, “the Middle East has surged to become the second-fastest growing mobile phone market in the world. With penetration set to cross the 50% mark [by 2nd Q in 2007], over 150 million handsets in circulation and a 30% growth rate in 2006, the Middle East is now only trailing Africa as the fastest-growing market.” Three countries—Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia—represent about 70% of the total connections in the Middle East.

This has had dramatic effects in both personal and political communication.

A dramatic recent example of the use of cell phones came during the June 2009 protests against the allegedly fraudulent results of the Iranian presidential election. Young Iranians took advantage of their cell phones' ability to send text and SMS messages to a large group of people quickly to organize extremely mobile demonstrations to keep

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Garbage Channels. Courtesy of Abdulaziz Rabea.



Activity: A Timeline of Communication History in the Middle East

by Joan Brodsky Schur

794 C.E. The world's first paper mill opens in Baghdad after papermaking technology is imported from China.

Late 1200s The Catholic Church resists the introduction of paper in favor of more "durable" parchment, but by the 13th century Italy imports Muslim engineers to make paper.

1454 Gutenberg's printing press in Europe.

1492 Jewish immigrants open Hebrew printing presses in Istanbul.

1514 The first book printed in Arabic is produced in Italy, thereby giving Europeans access to scholarship in Arabic.

1530 Coffee first produced in Ethiopia enters the Middle East via Yemen. The first coffeehouse opens in Damascus. Coffeehouses soon proliferate in the Arab world, creating a public forum for men where views and grievances are aired in public. It also becomes a place of entertainment (chess, backgammon, music etc.)

1537 The oldest surviving printed Qur'an is produced in Venice, probably for sale in the Ottoman Empire. Muslim scholars are reluctant to give up the tradition of hand-copying the holy word until the 19th century.

1587 Two Italian merchants receive a firman, a royal permit from the Ottoman Sultan to export Arabic books printed in Europe to the Ottoman Empire.

1729 Ibrahim Muteferrika, a scholar in Istanbul, is the first Muslim to create a printing press using movable Arabic lettering.

1798 Napoleon introduces the printing press and Arabic type to Egypt when he invades that country in 1798.

1820-1839 217 titles published in the Ottoman Empire

1831 The first Turkish newspaper, *Takvim-i Vekayi*, is published in Istanbul

1870s Private printing becomes an established business in Egypt

1876-1908 9,094 titles published in the Ottoman Empire

1870s Imams in the Ottoman Empire who are exposed to newspapers are encouraged to share news in their sermons.

1875 Pan-Islamic ideas are spread through newspapers like *Basiret*. Print allows those outside the established theologically-trained madrassas to spread their ideas. Newspapers also read aloud in coffeehouses.

1870s Women's press in the Ottoman Empire and Egypt and develops and promotes an idealized image of a Muslim mother and wife as literate and well educated

1920s Radio enters the Arab media. Used by many Arab governments to inculcate the political values of the rulers. State-sponsored broadcasts like Voice of the Arabs thus arouse distrust in listeners in the official party line.

As an alternative, people turn to personal oral communication.

1950 Audio cassettes proliferate. Alternative to state-regulated media, they are generated by individuals disgruntled with the state and passed from one listener to another. Religious sermons leading to an Islamic revival spread this way. Cassettes credited with playing a role in the Iranian Revolution of 1979.

1960 State-owned Arab television stations programmed to promote the regimes' political agenda.

1990s Satellite television stations like al-Jazeera are driven more by commercial than state interests. Content more open, reflective of multiple and often contentious viewpoints. Still a uni-directional media, from producer to listener.

1999 Cell phone use starts to proliferate, especially in the Gulf states.

2001 Websites proliferate. Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt establishes an official website. It is blocked by Egyptian authorities in 2004.

2003 In Egypt approximately 10% of families own a computer at home. Internet cafes are found in almost every town, and access is inexpensive. Internet cafes become places where the young (mainly men) congregate to share news and play games.

2003 First bloggers in Egypt are young and technologically savvy.

2003 Blogging spreads throughout the Middle East. Participants do not need to "listen" in real time since comment threads remain open to future commentators. Anonymity fosters the development of identity communities, including those for women, homosexuals, and politically oppressed groups like the Muslim Brotherhood.

2006 Beginning in 2002, bloggers have been arrested in Egypt, although never in great numbers. Some optimism about the political effect of blogging has dissipated as a result. However, a Facebook page supporting an April 6 2008 strike in Egypt protesting pay and working conditions generates enormous support.

2009 Iranians protesting against fraud in the June 2009 election use twitter, Facebook and blogging to aid their movement.

Much of the information in this timeline is from two articles from the online journal *Arab Media & Society* at <http://www.arabmediasociety.com/>: Brian Ulrich, "Historicizing Arab Blogs: Reflections on the transmission of ideas and information in Middle Eastern history," from Spring 2009 and Marc Lynch, "Blogging the New Arab Public," from Spring 2007. Read these and other articles on the for more information.

Questions for Discussion

- When did the first paper mill open in the Middle East? How long did it take for Europe to embrace paper-making technology? Investigate the reasons for this delay and assess its consequences.
- How many years elapsed between the invention of Gutenberg's press and the opening of the first Arabic press in the Ottoman Empire? Investigate the reasons for this delay and assess its consequences.
- What role did Muslims play in bringing paper-making technology to Europe? What role did Europeans play in introducing the printing press into the Ottoman Empire?
- Compare the rate at which communications technology spread in the Middle East in the 18th-19th centuries to its spread in the 20th-21st centuries.
- In what way did the Arabic coffeehouse serve as a means of person-to-person transmission of information? In what ways has the coffeehouse tradition been revived by internet cafes and blogging? What similarities and differences do you see?
- Beginning with the coffeehouse, describe the ways in which Middle Easterners have used oral transmission and communications technologies to evade the control of information by the government and religious authorities.
- In an article posted on Arab Media & Society, Marc Lynch writes:

Blogs could ...allow ordinary Arabs to re-engage with politics, hone their analytical and argumentative skills, and escape the state-driven red lines which even the most independent of Arab media are forced to acknowledge....Do blogs represent a revolutionary new tool for Arab political mobilization? Can they break the filter of state-controlled media and give both non-Arabs and Arabs themselves direct access to real Arab voices?

Over the next two weeks, follow the news from one Arab or Middle Eastern country using several sources of print and online media, including blogs. As you gather information about the effects of blogging in that country take notes on a chart. On one side of the chart write down evidence you find to support the hypothesis that blogging is a revolutionary new tool in political mobilization. On the other side of the chart write down any evidence you find that it is not and will not become one. At the end of the two-week period, reach a conclusion and support your conclusion with evidence.

The Electronic Infatah: New Media Opens Up Middle Eastern Communications

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ahead of the police. Protesters also used their cell phone cameras to record images of police brutality that were beamed over the Internet to the rest of the Iran and the world. Although the Iranian authorities tried to limit the use of cell phones by shutting down SMS services, savvy cell phone users were often able to find ways around the restrictions.

It's not the first time that cell phones proved to be a problem for a repressive regime. The flashpoint demonstrations in Egypt in 2008 were often organized in the same way.

A completely different use of cell phone technology has arisen in Saudi Arabia. Strict rules on meetings between men and women, often enforced by religious police, have been sidestepped by cell phones, particularly those with Bluetooth technology. A 2006 Washington Post article looked at how this technology was challenging the strict Saudi cultural norms:

In the past five years, the number of cell phone users in this country of 27 million people has increased from 1.7 million to 14.5 million, according to industry analysts. Cell phones permit young people to talk discreetly without a parent listening. Bluetooth, which allows high-speed transfer of photos, videos and text messages to others within a range of about 15 yards, enables them to communicate without even knowing each other's phone numbers.

Before cell phones and Bluetooth, if a young man wanted to give a



"Blackberry Fever!" Courtesy of Abdulaziz Rabea.

woman his phone number or attempted to make personal contact, he had few and risky options. He might toss a cassette tape through the window of her car, or wait for her outside a shop and drop a piece of paper with his phone number on the street for her to pick up. Now, young people can send numbers and pictures of each other as they travel near each other at high speeds, or walk by each other in the mall or on the street.

But the technology is not without its dangers. Some women are being blackmailed by men who have obtained their phone numbers or pictures from cell phones or from private computers or off the Internet. Often the blackmail takes the form of a threat to "ruin a woman's reputation by telling or showing her family scandalous information" if she doesn't pay a considerable sum of money to the extortionist.

Victims typically range in age between 16 and 39.

But many Saudi women are fighting back. Some are reporting the threats to authorities, who will "forgive" the young women for making a mistake and then go after the blackmailer. Some women are even starting their own businesses that will

protect and repair women's computers, since male computer technicians have frequently been those who have taken images off a woman's computer to blackmail her.

Online to What End? Blogs, Facebook, MySpace and Twitter

Meanwhile, the growth of the blogosphere and social networking in the Middle East has also provided new outlets for expression. In particular, the use of online sites like Facebook has grown rapidly across the region, particularly but not

exclusively by young people. In fact, regimes, conservatives, radical Islamists and progressives all use it. The growth in the number of mobile phones in the region has also contributed to the growth of social networking, since many people update their pages on networking sites via cell phone.

The blog site Social Networking Around the World reported in 2008 that there were 27 local social networks operating in the Middle East. The largest number were "friendship" sites, with video and photo sharing networks the second most popular. Meanwhile, all this social networking is making cell phone companies and others, like the music industry, a lot of money.

As noted above, blogging also plays a key role in the Middle East. Bloggers like Waed Abbas in Egypt have been at the forefront for social change in their countries. Abbas started his blog in 2005, but it didn't really take off until 2006 when he posted video footage of police torture. Visitor flocked to his site and eventually several police officers were convicted based on the video evidence provided by Abbas and others. Abbas has become the best-known and most influential blogger in the Middle East, and also has a YouTube channel and Twitter feed.

The reaction of local authorities has often been harsh. While Abbas has not been arrested yet, many of his fellow Egyptian bloggers have seen jailed by authorities, sometimes for lengthy sentences. Abbas has been detained, questioned many times, had his laptop confiscated and been denounced in government-controlled TV as a criminal. Other regimes

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This cartoon dramatizes the problem of Bluetooth blackmail. Courtesy of Abdulaziz Rabea.



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have also used a variety of penalties to try and control bloggers. Syrian and Iran, for instance, have extended repressive laws (in which damaging “the good name” of the republic is a crime) to all forms of electronic media.

But social networking provides a threat to these regimes unlike anything they’ve seen in the past. In most countries in the Arab world, Facebook is now one of the 10 most-visited Web sites, and in Egypt it ranks third, after Google and Yahoo. Many of its Middle Eastern users are advocating political change via the site.

BBC Monitoring reports in 2007 that “...in some Middle Eastern countries where governments’ grip on the media is tight Facebook has acquired social and political significance. For many Arab governments it is proving to be a challenge. Syria has taken the lead in blocking the website. Users in Gulf countries like the UAE and Saudi Arabia are worried that their authorities could follow suit. In other Middle Eastern societies with a tradition of a free but fragmented media, like Lebanon, Facebook has been turned into a political platform by supporters of rival parties.”

In Egypt, the April 6th Youth Movement Facebook group has provided a study in how young, educated Egyptians are using social networking to criticize the government. Started spontaneously in April of 2008, it quickly grew to 70,000 members. In January of this year, journalist Samantha Shapiro wrote about the group in the New York Times magazine:

When I spoke earlier this month to Samer Shehata, an assistant pro-

fessor of Arab politics at Georgetown University, he said that it was no surprise that young Egyptians have chosen to put their political energy into a group that is not part of the Egyptian political process. “The state of the opposition in Egypt is so pathetic that existing parties have lost all credibility,” he told me. “They’ve been around for a long time and produced nothing.” The April 6 Facebook group, he said, “has credibility because it hasn’t sold out to the regime or played the pathetic, limited game of politics the regime engages in.”

In Iran, despite or all the efforts undertaken by authorities prior to the June elections to limit electronic media (such as shutting down several social networking sites and online news outlets seen as favorable to opposition candidates and jamming texting and SMS services on election day itself), people used tools like Twitter and Facebook to keep the world up-to-date on what was happening. In particular, the death of a young student shot by a police sniper was captured and sent out over Facebook, galvanized people in Iran and around the world to protest government actions.

But social networking is valued not only for political openness, but also for what it allows in the cultural sphere.

Women’s groups, for instance, have praised the use of blogs and Facebook for allowing women to speak in public on any issue. The Internet has given many women in the Middle East an outlet to connect to others that is often much more difficult in the physical world.

Another popular Internet-based tool increasingly used for expression, both political and cultural, is YouTube. Countries



This graffiti reads April 6, 2008: We are all on strike--for the sake of Egypt. Courtesy Arab Media and Society.

like Iran have had an explosion of forbidden music online, starting with the group O-hum and expanding to include bands exploring rock, rap, heavy metal, death metal and other genres.

Not all uses of YouTube in the Middle East are focused on criticism of local regimes. Queen Rania of Jordan has started a YouTube channel to combat stereotypes about Muslims, particularly in Europe and America.

So what’s the future of these new technologies in the Middle East? The incredible growth of the Internet and free satellite TV shows that it will be very difficult for authoritarian regimes to totally block all of these new forms of expression. Events in Iran and Egypt in particular have shown that expression of political and cultural freedom can have an effect on the ruling powers. On the other hand, US-owned companies like Yahoo! and Google have shown an uncomfortable tendency to shut down outspoken political sites at the behest of local governments in order to preserve business connections. How these competing tensions will be resolved remains to be seen. The next year should provide many clues to the long-term effects of all of these new technologies.



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“Internet addict!” Courtesy of Abdulaziz Rabea.

Jordanian Internet Radio Entrepreneur Daoud Kuttab

Abridged from an interview by Lawrence Pintak with AmmanNet founder Daoud Kuttab

There are few media professionals in the Middle East who juggle as many commitments as Daoud Kuttab. Director of the Institute of Modern Media at Al Quds University and a regular columnist for the Jordan Times and Jerusalem Post, perhaps his greatest achievement has been as founder and chief of the Arab World's first online community radio station AmmanNet.

So what has online radio achieved in Jordan? And where can it go from here? Co-Editor and Publisher of Arab Media & Society finds out (to listen to this interview, click here).

Pintak: Daoud, this station evolved from a purely Internet operation. Tell me about the origins.

Kuttab: Well, it actually started as an experiment. I was attending a conference in 2000 in Jordan with the International Press Institute and the Jordanian Minister of Information who was boasting that in Jordan the Internet is not censored, there are no proxies, anybody can do anything on the Internet. And I knew that in Jordan private radio was not allowed so I said I'm going to start a radio station on the Internet. And I did and it was a big success.

Jordan is very close to Palestine, and there are FM radio stations in Palestine, so we asked stations there to download some of our radio programs and re-broadcast them back on the FM frequency so people in Jordan could hear things about themselves. So we were kind of doing something illegal but in a legal way.

Pintak: So a bit of a pirate radio station?

Kuttab: No in the West Bank there are proper private FM radio stations that exist and so we used the geographical proximity of the West Bank to Jordan, and the fact that in the West Bank there are FM radio stations. So basically the Internet became a conduit for broadcasting or maybe for publishing radio programs online to send some of the programs we would re-broadcast back into the community.

Pintak: What kind of reaction did they get?

Kuttab: Well it was quite interesting. I mean I don't want to claim that the private stations or the audio-visual media law happened because of us, but certainly two years later, anybody who wanted to could apply for and get an FM licence in Jordan. Because basically what we were doing was we were exposing the monopoly that existed on FM stations while the Internet was free.

"If I was optimistic it's not because the powers that be are really changing, it's because technology has provided a platform for people to break through and break out of the systems that exist in their countries."

And, so you know, there is talk in Jordan about members of the cabinet who are digital members and members who are analog members referring to the more kind of open-minded ones and so our experiment was used as a reason to liberalize the media laws.

Pintak: What kind of programs were you broadcasting?

Kuttab: Well, we began with news programming and we started community-based programming about society—we applied a theory that is kind of strange in the Middle East. We decided that even though our reach is global with the Internet our content had to be local. So we insisted that everything on our station had to be original, had to be authentic, had to be obviously honest and true and objective.

But we also wanted to concentrate on AmmanNet on issues of Amman. Enough media is escaping local issues by covering regional and international news, but we didn't want to do that. So we insisted on local programming, local news, addressing local problems in the capital of Jordan.

Pintak: The criticism of the Al Jazeera and the Al Arabiyas and the other satellite channels is that they are aggressively regional, that they are ignoring domestic issues in given countries. So you are essentially the antidote to that.

Kuttab: I would say not only the Al Jazeera and the Al Arabiyas but I would also say that the local, national stations are also quite regional. I mean you can put on Jordan television or probably Egypt television and actually have the protocols of the president or the king. The majority of the news is often about Iraq or Palestine or about Lebanon.

Because that's an easy issue, it's an issue there is consensus on and local issues are much more controversial and much more sensitive and so state-run media also does that. And certainly the Al Jazeera and the Al Arabiyas do that—they don't focus in on what's happening in Doha or in Dubai. There's not that much going on there, but they don't really give a local perspective because I would say they are escaping to the regional issues.

Pintak: But yet the government-owned television channels, in response to the rise of satellite, are all talking about public-service broadcasting. What does that mean and are they achieving anything like the community reporting you're doing?

Kuttab: Look there's certainly slow but sure understanding that local and national media can only compete with the transnational media by concentrating on local and national news. How much they're doing this I question. How courageous they are in dealing with local issues, I question. They do understand that theoretically they have to do that. My problem is that they haven't really become public service broadcasting. They are giving lip-service to public service, [but] they are still controlled by the prime minister's office or by the palace or the President, and therefore the news still tends to be protocol news, or they become the media of the government in power rather than the community or the nation.

Pintak: So give me an example of the kind of story you're doing.

Kuttab: Well the economic situation is a huge story for us. They have been in Jordan two rises in the fuel price and therefore the fuel cost has doubled or tripled in about a year. I would guess that in a year more than 50 percent of our programming in one way or another dealt with the pocket books of everyday Jordanians. How they are dealing with the rise in fuel, how they are using alternative fuel, they're going back to using wood and so on, how there are constant complaints that salaries are going less and less far in each month. So we are doing a lot on economic issues. We are doing a lot on municipal issues. We have just taken on for example the local public transportation. We have a special program called Siyara FM or Car FM where we do almost town-hall meetings where we go out to different communities and talk to different people using the transportation and they are quite angry because, a) the prices of fuel went up and b) there isn't enough response by the government to the needs of the community. And so these are the issues that touch people's lives. They are affecting them everyday—the price of fuel, the salaries, how things are going.

We have also recently taken up two campaigns I would call them in that we shed light on issues that have not been covered. The thirty-some Jordanians who are still in Israeli jails after the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel. It's a very sensitive issue the public media has shied from dealing with and we've taken it upon ourselves to humanize this case, spending time with families and making portraits of the thirty prisoners or so who are still held in Israel after fifteen to twenty years of a peace treaty, basically saying these people



Sees “Huge need for independent media” in Middle East

have a right to go home now that they're safe. And I think that has already produced results in that for the first time in sixty years the Jordanian government and the Red Cross organized visits for the families to them, and there's now talk they might be released. This is one campaign.

We also did a campaign this week, or this month, because the media law—the press and publications law that is being discussed in the Jordanian Parliament—still doesn't include a very clear clause against arresting journalists. And so, together with the Center for the Defence of Journalists, we have created a campaign with interviews and quotations from everyone from the King to former prime ministers, journalists and human rights activists, saying we want the freedom to write without worrying about being put in jail and that freedom of expression should be allowed without interference or the threat of jailing journalists for what they write.

Pintak: Everywhere in the Arab World these days there are red lines journalists can't cross which vary by country. How close do you get to the red lines in Jordan and are you crossing them, and are you worried about them?

Kuttab: Well there's constitutional red lines and there's practical red lines. The constitutional red lines mean that you cannot write anything in any way against the Royal Family. That's part of the constitution. But in reality the intelligence services—the mukhabarat—is indeed a red line.

We have a few times crossed that red line. The Human Rights Watch recent survey of twenty cases of people who were tortured in Jordanian intelligence surveys was one which we highly publicized and they were quite angry with us. They put a lot of pressure on us not to keep it on the website.

They seem to be quite worried when you use the actual word 'mukhabarat' or 'intelligence'—there's some kind of an alarm system that rings in their offices when you use that word. When we use the 'security forces' or a general term, they don't seem to be as upset as when you actually refer specifically to the word 'mukhabarat' or 'intelligence'.

Pintak: And you're looking at expanding the concept [of community radio] around the region, aren't you?

Kuttab: I am. Last year in November we had the very first ever conference for global community radios called AMARC (World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters), and AMARC agreed our request to have their once-every-three-years global meeting in Amman. And we introduced the community media and community radio through the conference and since then we have established a network

of activists in community radio and hopefully we will have another conference in Morocco this year, 2007, all aimed at trying to introduce the concept of community radio and the need for governments who are interested in development and who support the idea of community radio so yes, I am involved there.

I have also started a project last year setting up nine Internet radio stations in the Gulf countries and Yemen. The project is called *KhaleejNet.net*. It's a project where we're training active journalists in how to do Internet radio, helping set up a website for them, and giving them simple tools—software and hardware—and basically allowing them to broadcast their radio or audio programs on Internet sites that have names, from Kuwait or from Yemen and Dubai and so on.

So we have quite an interesting group of authentic local young journalists who are interested in explaining what they think is happening in their countries or cities using the Internet radio medium. Again we're hoping that our experiment in *AmmanNet* would be replicated in the sense that if in some of these countries Internet radio succeeds enough, there will be enough local support to convince government to actually allow people to have FM radio, not just Internet radio.

Pintak: You've been around for a while—I can say that because we're about the same age. You've seen a lot of changes in Arab media. How optimistic are you about the direction of Arab media today?

Kuttab: If I was optimistic it's not because the powers that be are really changing, it's because technology has provided a platform for people to break through and break out of the systems that exist in their countries. So I think the more successful we are in using technology to break up monopolies, I think governments will give up on their attempts to deny people their inherent right to know and to let know.

I'm optimistic because of that. The Arab World has a majority of young people, people under 21, and these people have grown up with technology literacy that is quite high. They can now use their computers, their laptops, their cellphones, and governments are not able to stop people communicating with all this technology.

Pintak: Daoud Kuttab, founder and chief of *AmmanNet*, thank you very much.

To listen to this interview, go to <http://www.abmediasociety.com/audio/index.php?item=5>.

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Further Resources & Middle Eastern Blogs

Readings

Arab Media and Society: articles on media-related subjects and a news feed: <http://www.arabmediasociety.com>

Bottle in the Gaza Sea
Novel for middle and high school readers about an email relationship between an Israeli Jewish girl and a Palestinian boy from Gaza.

Baghdad Burning: Girl Blog from Iraq by Riverbend
Well-known female blogger gives an insider's view of the war in Iraq.

Iraqi Girl: Diary of a Teenage Girl in Iraq
Fifteen-year-old Hadiya, blogging from the city of Mosul, Iraq, let the world know what life is really like there.

Blogs

It's difficult to give a listing of blogs to read, because they are often quite ephemeral, for both personal and political reasons. Here are a few places to check out. Note: No guarantee that the content on these blogs is suitable for K-12 use; teachers, please check and filter material before sending your students to look at blogs! Also, note that you can use google translator or other free online tools to translate web pages to at least get a gist of the conversation of blogs written in Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Hebrew, Berber, etc.

Global Voices: Blogs from everywhere
<http://globalvoicesonline.org/>

Mona Eltahtawy
<http://www.monaeltahawy.com/>

Bint Battuta in Bahrain
<http://battutabahrain.blogspot.com/>

Omraniya: Egyptian Blog Aggregator
<http://www.omraneya.net/>

T. Shahnin's cartoon blog from Egypt
<http://cairofreeze.blogspot.com/>

Middle East Outreach Council Member Updates

Middle East Policy Council

Barbara Petzen, Outreach Director at the Middle East Policy Council, is happy to report that the Council's new educational website, TeachMideast, is up and running at www.teachmideast.org. The site has an innovative Google Earth interface, background essays and lesson plans, downloadable multimedia, a blog on teaching Middle East-related current events in the classroom, and on-line registration for hosting free teacher workshops anywhere in the US. The TeachMideast site also incorporates the excellent materials from the Arab Culture and Civilization site created by the National Institute for Technology and Liberal Education (NITLE). The revamped MEPC teacher workshop program is also underway, with a number of free workshops held nationwide since last March. Anyone who would like to see the new program or book a workshop can do so at the new website or email Barbara Petzen at bpetzen@mepc.org.

Tyler Junior College

Visit Turkey with the Texas Professor of the Year! 22nd Journey to the Biblical and Archeological Treasures of Asia Minor (March 5-14, 2010) Tyler Junior College will offer the following travel/study project during 2010 to the western Turkey. All-inclusive cost is \$1,415 plus the airfare. For insurance purpose, TJC will purchase the airline tickets for travelers. A deposit of \$415 is required before Friday, December 4, 2009. A full payment is due by January 8, 2010. For detailed information, itineraries, and registration form, please visit the following URL's: <http://www.tjc.edu/turkey>. Because of space limitations, enrollment will be on a first come, first served basis. Any community member, student, or faculty member from any part of the U.S. may enroll for the project. Travelers may extend (four days or more) their adventure beyond this trip in Turkey. All age groups are welcome to join the tour. For more information, contact M. Khosrowshahi at mkho@tjc.edu.

Global Learning Across Borders

Global Learning Across Borders (Global LAB) is accepting applications for its spring 2010 Morocco semester program open to students aged 16-22—especially appealing to “gap/interim/bridge” year students taking time off between high school and college. This cultural immersion program will take place from mid-February to mid-May and include: Moroccan Arabic (“darija”) language instruction; home-stays; community service; cultural lectures and round-tables; trekking; and independent study projects. Fes, Marrakech, The High Atlas Mountains, The Tinerhir Oasis and Todra Gorge, The Sahara, Chefchaouen, Essaouira, Rabat, Asilah, Tangier,

and Casablanca are among the diverse locales students will experience during this comprehensive Morocco survey before a week-long conclusion in Andalusia, Spain. For program details and an application, visit www.global-lab.org. Global LAB also designs and manages 2-6 week custom programs for students or educators with a group minimum of 10 participants. Interested institutions are encouraged to contact us. Candidates interested in Morocco semester leader positions should send a resume and cover letter to info@global-lab.org. Moroccan Arabic or French language proficiency, country knowledge, and prior experiential education with young adults are required.

University of Arizona Center for Middle Eastern Studies

In summer 2009, the University of Arizona Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) organized a Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Teach Ottoman Empire program. The study-tour, which included three pre-travel workshop sessions, took twelve K-12 educators from all over the United States on a month-long seminar and curriculum-building trip through western Turkey and the Balkans (Serbia, Bosnia, western Croatia, Montenegro, Albania, and northern Greece). The focus of the project was to study Ottoman history and its impact on the process of cultural exchanges between Europe and the Middle East. Upon their return from the trip, participants developed lesson plans. To see these and other lessons, go to: <http://cmes.arizona.edu/outreach/lessonplans.php>. For summer 2010, CMES has applied for another Fulbright-Hays grant, this time to take thirteen K-12 teachers to southern Morocco for four weeks. Participants will study the various peoples of this borderland region between the Middle East and Africa: their cultures, languages, history, economic life, and adaptation to the environment. For more information on this trip, email CMES Outreach Coordinator Lisa Adeli (adeli@email.arizona.edu).

New Era Academy

Joe Stanik, MEOC board member and secretary, is the 12th-grade social studies instructor at New Era Academy High School, a public school in Baltimore, where he teaches AP European History and an elective course on the history of the Middle East. Since 2001, his students have participated in the National High School Model Arab League program, where they simulate the deliberations and actions of diplomats in the Arab world. This school year, his students are representing the Kingdom of Bahrain. He also leads a monthly seminar on Muslim civilization for two Annapolis-area churches and teaches the

history of the Middle East at Anne Arundel Community College (Arnold, MD). He travels independently to the Middle East each summer. This summer's destination has not been determined.

Center for Middle East and North African Studies, University of Michigan

In June and July 2009, having received a Fulbright-Hays Group Project Abroad grant, CMENAS sent sixteen teachers from across the U.S. to Turkey for a month-long study tour under the leadership of Gottfried Hagen, Director of CMENAS and associate professor of Turkish studies at the University of Michigan. The trip was designed to familiarize them with Turkey, its history, and culture, and enable them to teach in a more profound way in a variety of subjects, from literature to the social sciences. A good amount of time was spent in Istanbul, as well as travel to Ankara, Konya, Ephesus, Troy, and other sites. The trip highlighted historical heritage as much as present-day culture and politics. In turn, the participants are expected to integrate the new knowledge into their teaching. Each participant must create an original curriculum unit or project based on their experiences. The program sought to explore the core questions through guest lectures, group discussions of assigned readings, visits to sites of historical and contemporary interest, and person-to-person interactions.

The Middle East Center at the University of Utah

University of Utah Middle East Outreach Program is saddened to announce the retirement of our Director Linda Adams. Linda has been working at the Center since 1977 but has been making her mark in the Outreach community for the past 12 years. Her last day was on July 1, 2009, which she spent in Israel with a group of Utah teachers and community members. She will be greatly missed. Our new Outreach Director, Julie Mayhew, starts in October 2009. The Middle East Center's International Year-Long Seminar is called “Egypt: Jewel of the Nile” and will focus on educating teachers and interested community members on Ancient and Modern Egypt. Our first meeting will be held in conjunction with the Outreach workshop “The View from the Pyramids- A Glorious Past and a Challenging Future” held at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts on October 24th. If you would like more information on our program, please check out our website at www.mec.utah.edu/outreach or call Deborah Dilley at 801-581-5003.

Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University

The CCAS outreach program embarked on a new effort during spring 2009—a semester-long course for teachers titled



Middle East Outreach Council Member Updates

“U.S. Policy in the Middle East.” Thirty U.S. history and government educators signed up for the course. During the week of June 22-26, 2009, we held our annual summer workshop, “Approaches to Teaching the Middle East,” which offered multidisciplinary approaches to teaching the region. On June 6, the workshop “Egypt: An Introduction to the Country and Its People,” covered Egyptian society, culture, history and politics, with a special session for the educators traveling on the CCAS-sponsored study-tour to Egypt July 6-18. On March 28, a Saturday Seminar on “A Celebration of Nowruz/Nevruz: The Spring Equinox in the Persian and Turkic Worlds” was cosponsored with Georgetown’s Center for Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies. Upcoming programs include a workshop on Islam and science (November 5th) and a Saturday Seminar on Arab culture and history for elementary teachers (November 14th). Contact Zeina Azzam Seikaly at seikalz@georgetown.edu for more information.

Southeast Regional Middle East and Islamic Studies Seminar (SERMEISS)
The Southeast Regional Middle East and Islamic Studies Seminar (SERMEISS) will meet March 19-21, 2010, at Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN. For program and registration information, contact John Parcels at parcels@georgiasouthern.edu. Information on SERMEISS can be found at <http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/sermeiss/>.

Middle East Studies Center at Portland State University
The Middle East Studies Center (MESC) at Portland State University has had a year focused on celebration of its 50th anniversary. The July anniversary week-end offered a concert by Al-Andalus Ensemble, a banquet for 300 attendees with distinguished alumni presentations, a silent auction, an anniversary video, and Persian music. The Outstanding K-12 Educator award went to Gabriele Ross, a school counselor in Evergreen, WA, who has developed curriculum materials and made presentations on Iran, media literacy, and reducing stereotypes about the Middle East. The August Iranian Festival, co-sponsored with community organizations, attracted approximately 1500 visitors. MESC distributed free materials at the Oregon Council for the Social Studies fall conference. Teachers who participated in the MESC and World Affairs Council’s Teach the Middle East conference in April will bring middle and high school students from all over the state for a December Youth Forum. Students will attend break-out sessions, interact with Middle Eastern international students, and develop action plans to implement in their schools.

The Council on Middle East Studies at Yale University
CMES is hosting “Breaking the Veils: Women Artists from the Islamic World,” on display at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, 409 Prospect Street, New Haven, CT from Sept. 1 to Dec. 12. Presented exclusively in the United States by The ArtReach Foundation, this exhibit is a unique and compelling international art exhibition showcasing 51 women artists from 21 Islamic countries. This exhibit is designed to challenge contemporary stereotypes about the lives of women in the Islamic world and celebrates their artistic contribution in shaping a rich, cultural heritage. For additional information, email cmes@yale.edu or see <http://www.yale.edu/macmillan/cmest/btv/index.html>. The Programs in International Educational Resources (PIER) at The MacMillan Center offers professional development programs, as well as lectures, conferences, and other events for educators, students, business, media, and the community. Educators and the general public can locate video and text resources through the PIER Resource Center. Please contact Maxwell Amoh at (203) 432-3438 or maxwell.amoh@yale.edu for more information.

Middle East Studies Center at Ohio State University
After an August 22 workshop on Afghan culture, 150 marines from the 3rd Battalion, 25th Lima Company, based at Rickenbacker Airport, are now more familiar with Afghanistan as well as Islam. OSU’s Middle East Studies Center (MESC) conducted the workshop to give the Marines an insider’s perspective on the Afghan context. Prior to that, a two-day workshop for military, government, and NGO leaders and trainers was held on July 21, 2009. Several other military units were prepared for deployment. During the workshops Alam Payind, director of MESC, and faculty-in-exile from Kabul University, speaks about Afghan history and the history of conflicts in Afghanistan. There are also sessions on negotiating cultural differences, and specifics about Pashtun values, the dominant ethnic group in Afghanistan, and foundational training in Pashto. Please see <http://www.continuinged.ohio-state.edu/AfghanStudiesWorkshop/> Teachers, if you are interested in participating in future workshops, we are happy to tailor the content to your needs; please let us know by sending an email: mesc@osu.edu

The Outreach Center at the Harvard Center for Middle Eastern Studies
The Outreach Center at the Harvard Center for Middle Eastern Studies assists K-12 educators teaching on topics related to the Middle East region and Islam/Muslim communities, and develops

region related content on-campus to take off-campus. One of the highlights of the 2009-2010 year was a joint workshop for teachers on oil that focused on the topic from regional settings. Two other NRCs on campus (Russia/Eurasia and Latin America) co-sponsored the workshop. We created a Google Earth program to spatially demonstrate some of the data from the workshop. These and other materials are available at <http://cmes.hmhc.harvard.edu/outreach/news/oilworkshop-summary>. We continued to support the development of Arabic teaching in the K-12 classroom through workshops and cultural material support. To coordinate the various museum resources on campus for use by educators we created the Open Campus at Harvard initiative to bring together NRCs and the teaching museums. A fruit of this work is our joint program Using Art Objects to Teach About Religion and Sacred Space, which is a co-production of a variety of museum and academic centers on campus. In 2009-2010, we are looking forward to hosting the MEOC workshop at MESA on Global Education, Human Rights and the Middle East region, which is co-sponsored by Yale University, Ohio State University and New York University. In addition to this, we will host some smaller workshops on teaching controversial topics in the classroom and using technology in the classroom..

The Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies, New York University
The Kevorkian Center hosted four Saturday Seminars this year on topics as diverse as: Women, Islam and the Law; The Arabic Language; Comparative Race in the Middle East and Latin America; and Palestine through the Eyes of its Youth. This fall, the Center is hosting three Saturday Seminars coupled with curriculum development projects. In September, the Center collaborated with the Queens Museum of Art to host a seminar and develop online curriculum on modern art from the Middle East and Central Asia. In October Kevorkian hosted a workshop on Political Participation in Iran and introduced a project on campaign posters from the most recent election. Also in October, the Center hosted the First New York Kurdish Film Festival, held a teacher’s workshop in conjunction with the screenings and will develop online discussion guides on several of the short films included in the festival. Finally, Associate Director Greta Scharnweber is also working with the Friends Seminary in New York City to create a study tour on the Politics of Water in the Jordan River Valley in collaboration with the Friends of the Earth-Middle East. The tour will happen in Spring 2011. For more information on these and other programs, contact Greta Scharnweber at gs113@nyu.edu.

Perspectives
Middle East Outreach Council
c/o Barbara Petzen
40988 Redwing Song Lane
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