An Editorial Comment

Welcome to the seventh issue of *The Journal of Middle East Media*.

In this issue, the English-language section includes six articles. In the first article, Matt Duffy of Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates examines the concept of networked journalism by applying it to Al-Jazeera English, which was recently cited for its embrace of audience engagement via the use of Twitter, Facebook, blogs and the user-generated mapping platform, Ushahidi.

In the second article, Renee Hobbs of Temple University, Jiwon Yoon of Roosevelt University, Rawia Al-Humaidan of Kuwait University, cAghigh Ebrahimi of Temple University and Nuala Cabral of Temple University show how specific instructional practices using media can help combat negative stereotypes and increase knowledge, tolerance and acceptance of the peoples and cultures of the Middle East. In one U.S. school, elementary school children interacted with young adults in Kuwait by creating simple videos and using an online communication tool. Evidence shows that both students and teachers decreased their reliance on cultural stereotypes.

In the third article, Aziz Douai of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology in Canada offers insights from extensive focus group interviews conducted among the viewers of the American-sponsored TV network *Al-Hurra* in Morocco. The audience-based evidence suggests that *Al-Hurra* faces a huge challenge: to achieve its stated goals, it needs to be a credible media voice in a crowded marketplace of ideas; to be credible, the broadcaster has to reconsider its audiences' needs and perceptions, and better engage with the Arab "Street."

In the fourth article, Naila Hamdy of the American University in Cairo and Phil Auter of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette conducted a comparative study that examined concerns in both the media industry and in media education brought up by media convergence in the U.S. and pre-revolution Egypt. Media educators in both the U.S. and Egypt believe that curricula should meet the demands created by the advent of convergence. However, U.S. educators believe that most plans of study have addressed these changes whilst this has not been the case in Egypt.

In the fifth article, Justin Martin of the University of Maine conducted a survey to assess the professional efficacy among Arab American journalists and editors working at news organizations in the United States. Results suggest that, overall, Arab American journalists demonstrate high levels of professional efficacy, expressing strong confidence in their journalistic capabilities, and in their abilities to affect public opinion and to inform their audiences of important current events. In the sixth and final article, Alia Yunis and Gaelle Picherit-Duthler of Zayed University examined the growing higher education visual communications education and programs in the United Arab Emirates in light of the cultural, social and financial opportunities and constraints that are a part of the UAE.

The English section also includes one review for the book titled: *Islam Dot Com: Contemporary Islamic Discourses in Cyberspace*. This book, which was co-authored by Mohammed el-Nawawy of Queens University of Charlotte and Sahar Khamis of The University of Maryland and reviewed by Stuart Allan of Bournemouth University in the UK, investigates the Habermasian concept of the public sphere as it applies to the discussion forums on three mainstream Islamic websites.

This issue's Arabic section includes two articles. In the first article, Ahmed Farouk Ramadan from Sharjah University investigated the utilization of electronic and Internet resources in learning public relations at the university level in Egypt and the United Arab Emirates.

In the second article, Nashwa El-Shalakany from the Canadian International University in Egypt looked into the role of televised talk shows in political mobilization in Egypt. The study recommended developing these talk shows, particularly after the January 25 revolution in Egypt.

The Arabic section also includes one review for the book titled: *Media and the Disintegration of Social Norms in the Arab Region*. This book, which was authored by Abdel-Rahman Azzi of Sharjah University and reviewed by Naseer Boali, also from Sharjah University, provides evidence of how the Arab media can play a role in enhancing or inhibiting the socio-cultural norms in the Arab region.

We hope that the readers will enjoy this issue, and we would like to thank all the JMEM editorial board for their continuous support and encouragement.

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