Arab Social Media Report

كليــة دبــي لإدارة الحكومــية
DUBAI SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

The Arab Social Media Report series aims to inform a better understanding of the impact of social media on development and growth in the Arab region by exploring the following questions:

- What are the penetration trends of social networking services in the Arab region?

- What is the growth rate, and what is the demographic and gender breakdown?

- What factors affect the adoption of these platforms in different Arab countries (e.g., income, youth population, digital access, Internet freedom, etc.)?

- What is the impact of these phenomena on citizen engagement and social inclusion?

- What is the impact of the new social dynamics influenced by social media on innovation and entrepreneurship in Arab societies?

Ultimately, we hope that the report findings shed light on the role social media plays in the societal transformations taking place in the Arab world.

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Transforming Education in the Arab World: Breaking Barriers in the Age of Social Learning

Overview

With the growing economic and developmental challenges in the Arab region, innovative approaches are critically needed by governments, the private sector and civil society organizations in order to adapt to pressing social, economic and political transformations. Technology has always been as a key enabler for better development, governance and, more recently, with the growth of social media usage in the Arab region, for inclusive policy formulation. The exponential penetration rates and the creative adoption of social media in the Arab region have opened new horizons for multifaceted innovations by individuals, developmental uses by government entities and unleashed new social trends by different forces in Arab societies. Social media technologies today are increasingly being acknowledged by different Arab government organizations as core enablers for inclusive policy formulation and better service delivery on an institutional level.

The Arab Social Media report Series has explored the growth and usage trends of social media in the Arab region in depth since 2011. The series has become the key source of quantitative research on social media's growth and usage trends in the Arab world. Additionally, we conducted numerous exploratory qualitative surveys to get an in-depth assessment of regional perceptions and actual usage and impact of social media in Arab societies. The findings of the series revealed new transformations in areas varying from impact on social and cultural changes, youth and women's empowerment, government adoption, entrepreneurship and employment, freedom of expression, media consumption behaviors and the role in popular civic movements. In this fifth issue of the report, we focus on impact of social media use on education in the Arab region.

The Arab region suffers from extensive educational challenges in terms of quality, access and relevance. Education is a core area where social networking technologies have become largely institutionalized with an established critical mass of users. With the emergence of concepts such as 'social learning', 'intelligent decision making networks' and 'massive open online courses', educators, students and educational institutions are increasingly relying on social media tools to create innovative approaches to education, capacity building and knowledge transfer. Social media technologies are already playing a growing role in formal and informal education, on-demand training and capacity building.

For this report, we conducted a large regional survey to explore the multifaceted impact of social media use in education in the Arab region. For schooling, social media is increasingly viewed as a key enabler for innovation and collaboration with unprecedented capabilities for mass knowledge transfer and peer-to-peer learning, as well as an empowering educational facilitator for students with special needs and a channel for reaching remote and rural groups. At higher education levels, social media is creatively being used as a channel for transfer of innovations, an enabler for massive research networks, a remote learning tool, and a facilitator for communities of expertise and practice with abilities to break down informational silos and hierarchies. Even at the level of fresh graduates, social media is playing a critical role in enabling new employment opportunities, entrepreneurship potential and more importantly, aligning vocational training with skills needed in the market. The report also concludes with a series of mini case studies on social media utilization in education at the different levels.

In addition to the regional survey, this edition of the report continues to provide regional statistics on social networking platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube and Google+. The findings of the regional survey provided here aim to measure impact of social media users in the Arab World on education; a topic that is closely linked with several critical policy and developmental questions in the region.

1. Introduction

Information technology has been a key educational companion since the early 1980s. Soon after, academic and professional institutions started offering graduate and degree courses completely online. Such endeavors however remained small in scale at the early days of the internet. Today, large-scale online education networks, courses, and resources are commonplace in educational environments globally[1]. Advances in technology are providing expanded opportunities for student communication, interaction and collaboration and leading to emerging transformations in methods of learning and education. While experiments with online education through the World Wide Web have been taking place for two decades, the introduction of social networking technologies in the classroom is a quickly growing trend that is introducing new innovations in when, how and where students learn.

Social Media in Educational Environments

The interactive, participatory, and open nature of social networking technologies presents a number of opportunities for learning and innovation. Social networking tools are already facilitating unprecedented innovative educational practices that center around collaboration and information sharing. One of the key established advantages of social media tools is in facilitating peer learning and emphasizing the importance of learning from one's peers and network through massive social interaction. Unlike previously existing technologies, social networking platforms, are able to break down barriers of time, space and informational hierarchies to enable real-time interactions and broader, more impactful and targeted information sharing. Such characteristics make social media a promising teaching and learning tool that has the potential to assist in overcoming some of the challenges facing educational institutions and providers in the Arab region. However, the introduction of new technologies always brings about new transformational challenges until a maturity level is reached. This has been the case with the introduction of social media platforms in different environments. Similarly, the introduction of social networking technologies in educational environments has also brought about emerging challenges for educators, students, parents and educational institutions, as suggested in our findings. These emerging problems are related, but not limited, to the open social nature of interactions on social media. However, such problems are dwarfed by the challenges education in the Arab region has been suffering from for decades.

Educational Challenges in the Arab Region

The Arab region faces some of the most glaring challenges to educational attainment in the world. While few Arab countries have achieved near universal literacy rates, many students even in these countries still lag behind global standards in basic educational attainment. Additionally, the region suffers from a skill gap that leaves much of its youth unable to utilize their educations in the labour market.

According to the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in 2013 there were still five million children of primary school age out of school in the Middle East and North Africa, the highest numbers of which are in Yemen and Morocco. Even when children are attending school, many countries in the region are unable to provide them with adequate education. For example, many children in the region attend schools that do not teach them basic skills; a problem most prevalent in Tunisia and Algeria.

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[1] Harasim, Linda. "A History of E-learning: Shift Happened." International Handbook of Virtual Learning Environments. Dordrecht: Springer, 2006. 59-94. Print

Such problems continue into students' secondary and tertiary educations. For example, the region has 3.7 million adolescents not attending school. Even countries with relatively advanced educational infrastructure, such as the UAE, suffer from high drop-out rates amongst young males. On a more alarming level, the Arab states suffer from the widest education gender gap in the world, a gap that is only comparable to that of sub-Saharan African states. Even in Arab countries which have seen a larger number of young women than young men graduate school and attend university, such as many GCC countries, women and girls in the region still face multifaceted barriers to enrolment in schools and universities.

Such inequalities are intensified by poverty, conflict and geographical location. Poor and rural children in the Arab World are less likely to attend school than children of wealthier urban families. Ongoing conflict and instability have aggravated many of these problems and rendered many children in conflict ridden countries such as Syria, Iraq or the Sudan unable to go to school at all. Others in countries that have experienced variant levels of instability due to protests, revolutions and civil war have repeatedly faced short or long periods of interruption in their schooling, which have severely affected their learning process.

These inadequacies in the education system have left many young Arab people without the basic skills needed for employment. The situation is particularly dire for the poor whose basic skills are often so lacking as to make it near impossible to secure employment that pays a decent wage in the future. A broken education system such as this continues the cycle of poverty and ensures that poor children in many Arab countries will never find their way above the poverty line[2].

Even when students reach secondary education or graduate college or university, they are still lacking in soft and transferrable skills in demand in today's labour market. Many young women and men have not been properly equipped with problem solving, critical thinking or communication skills due to the rote learning approach prevalent in secondary school and university curricula. Additionally, there is a mismatch in the skills in demand in the labour market and those offered by young women and men who are lacking in technical and vocational skills. This has made many unable to secure employment in fields of their choosing[3].

Can Social Media Help?

Social networking technologies are already creating opportunities for peer learning, discussion, debate, large-scale feedback, information sharing and innovation in educational environments. It is helping students at different levels to learn crucial communication and critical thinking skills as well as augments their learning with extracurricular information from peers within and outside their networks. Because social networks are structured in informal contexts, learning within them has a tendency to be less structured, spontaneous, self-directed than formal learning[4]. Teachers are using social networking technologies to assist them in their teaching where they are able to engage students through the technologies that they are most familiar with thus bridging the gap between students' home, social environments and their learning environments.

If utilized properly, social media can facilitate distance and extra-curricular learning and enable students to learn outside of the classroom in an engaged way. If provided in a standardized fashion on a national level, this can help students who do not have access to adequate schooling to supplement their studies with high quality tools. Furthermore, students whose educations are interrupted regularly will also be able to access information that can bridge the gap and make transition back to school easier.

While technology, the internet and social media create many promising opportunities for education, they are not sufficient for assisting students who live in poverty in urban and rural areas if they cannot access the internet or social media platforms. This is especially important in the Arab world where the poor are most burdened by inadequacies in the education system. In order for social media to reach its potential in affecting change and filling such educational needs for those who need solutions most, barriers created by the digital divide have to be tackled and the internet must be made more accessible for the sections of the population who cannot afford it. For those who can, social media has become common place and can act as a tool that improves the efficacy of learning and assists teachers, parents, academics, students and educational institutions. It is important to stress however that, like all technologies, social networking technologies are neutral tools, and will be effective –or counter-productive- based on how they are utilized. To reach social media's potential in educational environments, the prerequisites include reforms in curricula, technological infrastructure, educational institutions and national policies.

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[2] 2013 UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report and UNDP/MBRF Arab Knowledge Report reports.

[3] For more information on unemployment and skill gaps in the Arab world please see the UNDP/MBRF Arab Knowledge Reports and the UNDP Arab Human Development Reports

[4] Wood, Eileen. "Learning in the Digital Age with SNSs: Creating a Profile." Social Media Tools and Platforms in Learning Environments. By Amanda Nosko. Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 2011. 399-418. Print.

[4] Newsroom.fb.com/Key-Facts

Social Media Usage Trends in the Arab World Today

In addition to exploring specific topics surrounding the use of social networking services and platforms in governance, social initiatives and development, the Arab Social Media Report continues to map social media growth in the Arab region and reports on social media growth globally.

Social media has been growing exponentially in the Arab World since 2011 and this year is no different. Facebook users have continued to grow in most Arab countries, though GCC countries have shown signs of slower growth. Globally, Facebook now boasts 1.11 billion monthly active users[5] (this includes companies, brands, and even governments), with 79% of Facebook's active users are outside the U.S. and Canada. Twitter has also seen exponential growth globally, surpassing 500 million users as of March 2013, of which 288 million are active users[6]. LinkedIn too has seen growth in users this year. As of January, LinkedIn had 200 million members[7], with the majority (64%) of users reside outside of the US. LinkedIn users span over 200 countries and use the platform in 19 languages. In the Arab world, growth of social media usage has been equally strong with countries like Egypt more than doubling in Facebook user numbers; and Saudi Arabia and the UAE users growing over 50% according to our research.

Other social media sites are also exhibiting growth globally. Google+ now has 500 million users, with 235 million daily active users sharing over 1 billion items every day. Google+ users have grown by 195% globally. Similarly, YouTube is growing worldwide, with 72 hours of video uploaded to YouTube every minute and over 4 billion hours watched every month. In the Arab region, 285 million videos are viewed every day and more than two hours of video are uploaded every minute, putting it in the number 2 spot for video views in the world. Saudi Arabia leads the region with the most playbacks followed by Egypt, Morocco and the UAE. In Saudi Arabia, 50% of all views are from mobile devices, while 40% of all views in the UAE are.

2. Social Media in the Arab Region: Impact on Schooling, Up-skilling and Educational Reform

The Arab Social Media report series aims to explore social media trends in the region and to analyze their impact on the social, economic and political lives of citizens and residents of Arab countries. So far, the series has contributed to the knowledge we have gleaned about the new and innovative ways in which social media is being used to drive economic and social change. This issue of the report will tackle the topic of social media and education, particularly exploring the impact that social media has had and its potential on education systems, life-long learning and upskilling in the Arab region. Users between the ages of 15 – 29 continue to drive social media growth in the region constituting the large majority of users of Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

To explore this topic a regional online survey was administered in 22 Arab countries The survey examined the following topics: satisfaction with and quality of education systems, technology and social media use in the classroom, satisfaction with higher education, perceptions about social media use in the classroom, willingness to participate in skills development initiatives, and education reform. This report describes only a fraction of the information and data that was gathered in this exhaustive survey and focuses on the perceptions of students, teachers and parents regarding social media use in education and the ways in which it is already utilized by educators. [8]The main findings are elaborated in the following sections.

2.1 Education in the Arab region

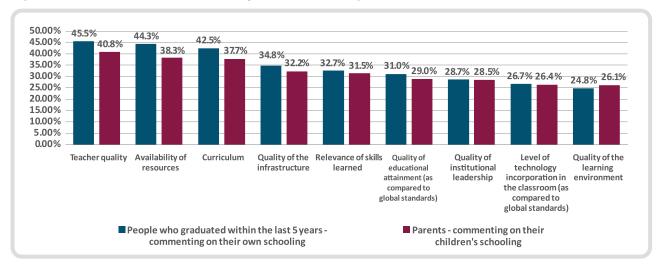### 2.1.1 Technology incorporation within schools:

The research surveyed two groups of respondents: those who had graduated from their highest level of schooling within the past five years, and those who currently have children in school, to rate their satisfaction with different aspects of their (and their children's) respective schooling experiences. Generally, there wasn't a high level of satisfaction across all aspects of schooling for both groups, and the differences in responses between the two groups were minimal, with slightly higher rates of satisfaction for recent graduates. Qualitative data collected from respondents indicated that many respondents find that the schooling they and their children receive is outdated, under-resourced and not comparable to international standards. Although the rating was relatively low, "teacher quality" ranked the highest at 46% for recent graduates and 41%

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[6] http://www.globalwebindex.net/twitter-now-the-fastest-growing-social-platform-in-the-world/

[7] http://blog.linkedin.com/2013/01/09/linkedin-200-million/

[8] The larger survey and research findings on "Technology and Education in the Arab World" will be published in 2013 by the DSG Governance and Innovation Program. For more details contact the authors on socialmedia@dsg.ac.ae

for parents with children in school. Satisfaction with the level of "technology incorporation" was one of the lowest ranked for both groups, at just over a quarter of the respondents claiming to be satisfied (Figure 1). Delving further into that particular aspect of schooling (both for recent graduates and parents with children in school) by looking at their breakdowns along public and private schooling lines, the survey found that people in public schools (and people with children in public schools) were less satisfied with the level of technology incorporation in the classroom than those in (or with children in) private schools (Figure 2 and 3).

Figure 1: Level of satisfaction with aspects of schooling

Legend:
- People who graduated within the last 5 years - commenting on their own schooling
- Parents - commenting on their children's schooling

Figure 2: Level of satisfaction with technology incorporation in the classroom (People who graduated within the last 5 years)
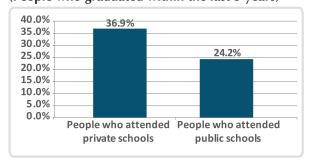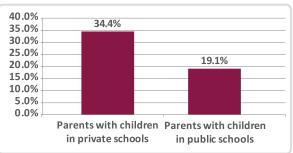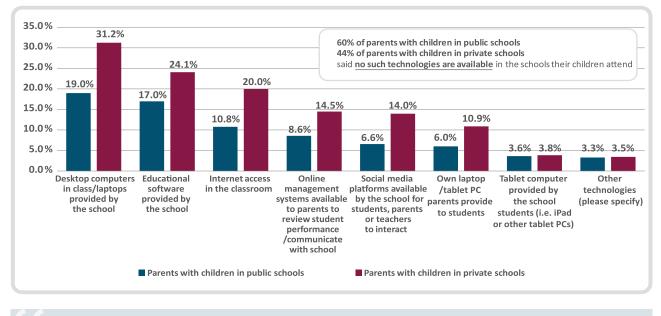

Figure 3: Level of satisfaction with technology incorporation in your children's classrooms (Parents)
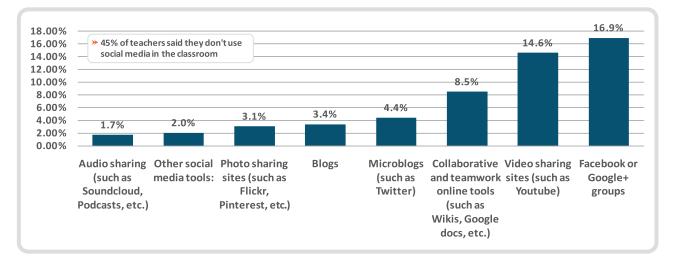

Narrowing in on children currently in school, the survey also asked parents about the types of technology available in their children's schools. More than half said their children's schools did not have any technologies available in their classrooms. Just under a quarter had school-provided desktops and laptops, and 10% used social media platforms in the classroom. Again, this differed along the public and private school lines, with private schools having more access to technologies across the board. Around 44% of private school students had no technologies available in the classroom, while 60% of public school students did (Figure 4). Despite a clear lack in technology in the classrooms of almost half of respondents' children, there was a desire for technology to be incorporated into primary and secondary education. Many respondents cited practical reasons, such as reducing the burden of carrying books and increasing access to information, but also a need to raise schooling standards to a level that is globally competitive. When asked what kinds of technologies should be used in primary and secondary classrooms many respondents said they would like to see the internet, laptops and tablets introduced.
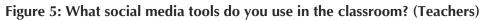
Figure 4: Are any of these technologies available in the school(s) your children attend?

60% of parents with children in public schools
44% of parents with children in private schools
said **no such technologies are available** in the schools their children attend

Desktop computers in class/laptops provided by the school: 19.0% / 31.2%
Educational software provided by the school: 17.0% / 24.1%
Internet access in the classroom: 10.8% / 20.0%
Online management systems available to parents to review student performance /communicate with school: 8.6% / 14.5%
Social media platforms available by the school for students, parents or teachers to interact: 6.6% / 14.0%
Own laptop /tablet PC parents provide to students: 6.0% / 10.9%
Tablet computer provided by the school students (i.e. iPad or other tablet PCs): 3.6% / 3.8%
Other technologies (please specify): 3.3% / 3.5%

■ Parents with children in public schools ■ Parents with children in private schools

> **We live in the age of technology. Modern technologies should be incorporated into schools and universities**
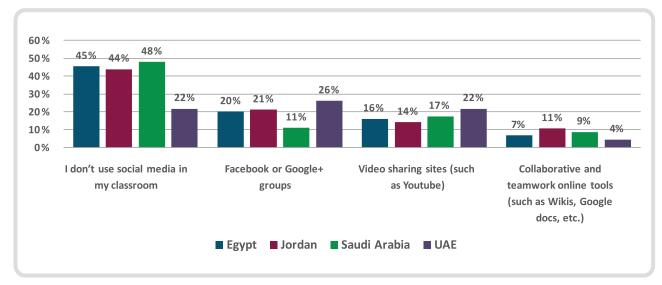> **- Survey respondent**

While only 10% of respondents said their children had access to social media platforms at school, about 55% of the teachers surveyed said they used them in the classroom, with Facebook and Google+ groups being the most used, followed by video sharing sites, such as Youtube, and collaborative internet tools such as Wikis and Google Docs (Figure 5).

Figure 5: What social media tools do you use in the classroom? (Teachers)

➤ 45% of teachers said they don't use social media in the classroom

Audio sharing (such as Soundcloud, Podcasts, etc.): 1.7%
Other social media tools: 2.0%
Photo sharing sites (such as Flickr, Pinterest, etc.): 3.1%
Blogs: 3.4%
Microblogs (such as Twitter): 4.4%
Collaborative and teamwork online tools (such as Wikis, Google docs, etc.): 8.5%
Video sharing sites (such as Youtube): 14.6%
Facebook or Google+ groups: 16.9%

Breaking this down among some of the countries with high response rates and high social media usage, we took a look at how teachers in Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE used social media in the classroom. Similarly to the regional average, Facebook and Google+ groups were the most used, followed by video sharing sites (with the exception of Saudi, where the largest percentage of teachers relied on video sharing sites like YouTube). The UAE also had the largest percentage of teachers who use social media in the classroom, at 78% compared to an average of about 46% for the remaining countries (Figure 6).
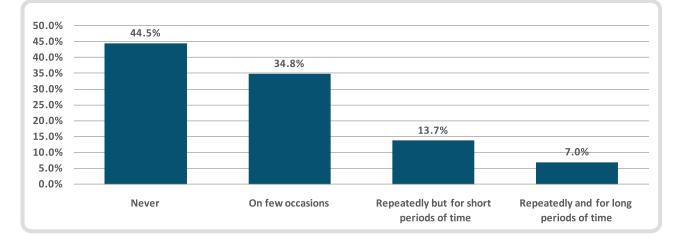
Figure 6: What social media tools do you use in the classroom? (Teachers)

When asked how they used social media in the classroom teachers indicated using them in a number of creative ways. Several teachers indicated that the internet and social media helped them to supplement their teaching and curricula as well as provide useful tools for student projects and to encourage active participation.

> " **Teachers said that they used social media to search for information on the internet, to create Facebook groups in which students could participate in shared discussions, to create parent-teachers groups or to share expertise with other teachers.** "

2.1.2 Conflicts and Children's Education

While the lack of access to technology in classrooms in the Arab region is a pressing issue in children's schooling today, the survey confirmed that conflict and instability in many parts of the Arab world over the past two years (whether ongoing on sporadic) has also had a severe negative effect on schooling. In questions specifically addressed to respondents in 13 Arab countries affected by political instability, sporadic violence or large scale civil wars[9], 56% said that their children's schooling had been interrupted by the conflict within their countries, with over 20% stating that the interruptions happened repeatedly (Figure 7). Meanwhile, 68% of these respondents said that online resources would have helped their children catch up on material lost due to schooling interrupted by said conflict (Figure 8)

Figure 7: In the past 2 years, has your or your child's education been interrupted due to political events or armed conflict in your country of residence?

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[9] The countries classified as having experienced conflict or instability are: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Bahrain, Kuwait and Yemen

Qualitative data reflected this with many respondents telling harrowing stories of migration or lives interrupted. Many indicated that they or their children have faced obstacles to their schooling due to instabilities in their countries and though a majority of respondents (as indicated above) believe that online resources could help in times of instability many saw that disruptions in electricity and internet access and other resources in addition to infrastructural damage due to violence may make access to even online sources difficult for many.

Figure 8: Do you think that online schooling resources can help/could have helped you or your child catch up on the material that was lost due to interrupted schooling?*

56% of respondents in 13 Arab countries affected by instability, violence or civil wars, said that their children's schooling had been interrupted by the conflict. 68% of them said that online resources would have helped their children catch up due to school interruptions.

2.2 Benefits and Drawbacks of Technology and Social Media Use in Classrooms: Regional Perceptions

While there are clear limitations in availability of technologies in the classroom across the Arab region today, there is an equally pronounced understanding and appreciation among survey respondents of the potential benefits of technology and social media for education, as well as a willingness to promote the uptake of these technologies in the classroom and take advantage of them should the opportunity arise. This held true across various segments of respondents, whether they attended public or private schools, or whether they lived in countries with high or low Internet penetration rates.

> **Although the availability of and access to technology and social media varied amongst respondents, the perception of its usefulness in the classroom - and necessity, even – was strongly evident.**

2.2.1 Online resources and technologies in the classroom

The use of various technologies and online resources in the classroom was viewed positively by respondents; specifically 67% of all survey respondents said they would take advantage of online learning resources in their academic institution if they were made available. (Figure 9). Responses varied regarding the use of specific types of technologies by school-going students. The use of collaborative web tools such as Google Docs and Wikipedia (at 79% of responses), and the use of computers, laptops and tablets (at 77% of responses) ranked the highest, while the use of social networking websites in the classroom, while agreed upon by a large minority, ranked the lowest at 39%. Interestingly, the findings indicated that students agreed with teachers and parents on what they should be allowed to do in the classroom, and had similar responses across the board (Figure 10).

Figure 9: Would you take advantage of online learning resources at your school or academic institution if they were available?
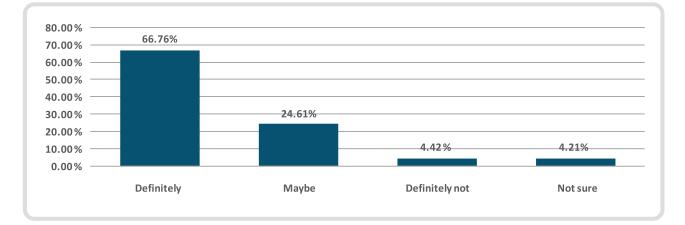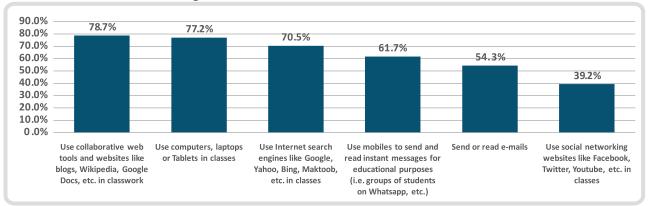
Figure 10: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: School-going students should be allowed to do the following in the classroom

2.2.2 Social Media Use in the Classroom

The survey further tackled people's perceptions of social media and its effect on various aspects of education and schooling, such as student performance, teacher quality, mentorship, the learning environment, access to information and knowledge sharing, and building skills and competencies, among other focus areas. The following sections present the findings on perceived advantages and benefits, as well as drawbacks of social media and education.

Benefits:

Generally, respondents expressed a high level of agreement on the benefits of social media in education. Between 80-83% of respondents agreed that social media could enhance students' competencies in several areas, including: Technological competency, creativity, collaboration, research skills, soft skills, communication skills and job skills. More specifically, 82% agreed that social media would be useful for the integration of students with special needs within the education system, enabling them to better express themselves, interact with teachers as well as with other students as peers.

> **82% agreed that social media would be useful for the integration of students with special needs within the education system, enabling them to better express themselves, interact with teachers as well as with other students as peers.**
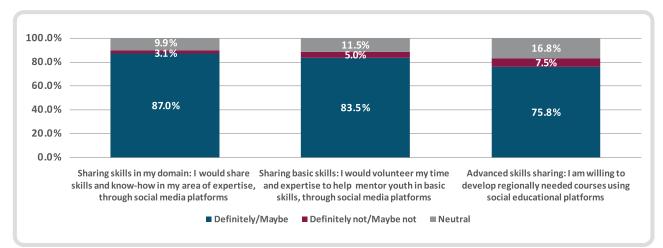
Moreover, 70% of respondents viewed social media as a tool that can enhance the learning experience, whether in the classroom by promoting more interactive discussion, or by creating opportunities to learn remotely through distance learning. Specifically, 65% said social media could help better engage students in the classroom, while 74% said it could also bridge the gap between at-school and at-home learning by engaging students' parents through social media. Meanwhile, 60% said that social media could cut down on the costs of traditional educational practices, while 66% said it could reduce the time needed to perform educational processes inside and outside the classroom.

Figure 11 below offers a holistic view of respondents' perceptions of the benefits of social media in tackling various issues such as enhancing student and teacher performance, increasing accessibility and reducing drop-out rates.

Figure 11: To what extent do you agree with following statements: Using interactive social media tools can contribute to addressing the following issues

One of the key universal features of social media is its capacity to create opportunities for collaboration, sharing and mentoring. Figure 12 below illustrates the level of willingness of a subset of the respondents (people with at least a Master's degree and 5 years of work experience) to share their skills and expertise with students. Factoring in the 'maybe' responses shows a readiness in the region to use social media for mentoring and skills- sharing.

Figure 12: Mentorship & sharing skills through social media: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Drawbacks:

Despite the largely positive perceptions of social media's impact on education among survey respondents, there is also a high level of awareness of disruptive and potentially negative aspects of social media use in the classroom. Around half the respondents felt that social media could be a distraction for students in the classroom, and that it could be used for inappropriate behavior such as bullying and harassment. For this – and across most questions - teachers, parents and students again all seemed in agreement with their responses, as Figure 13 illustrates.
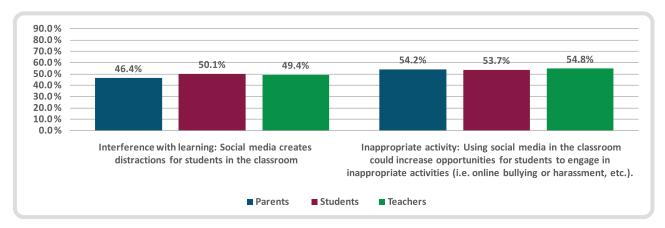
Figure 13: To what extent do you agree with the following statements about social media and education?

Qualitative information gathered from respondents reflected our survey findings. Though respondents were generally held positive views about using social media in the classroom many qualitative responses from parents, students and teachers showed a tempered view that encouraged incorporating social media in teaching but also acknowledged a need for parental and teacher supervision as well as awareness raising amongst students and parents.
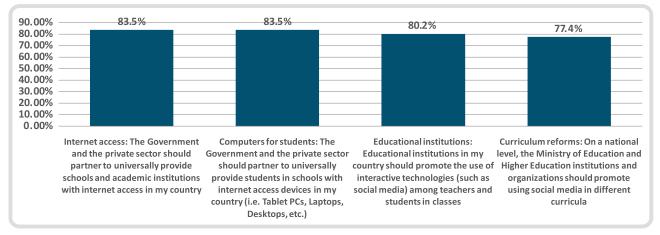
> " In education, "social media is a double-edged sword" - Survey respondent "

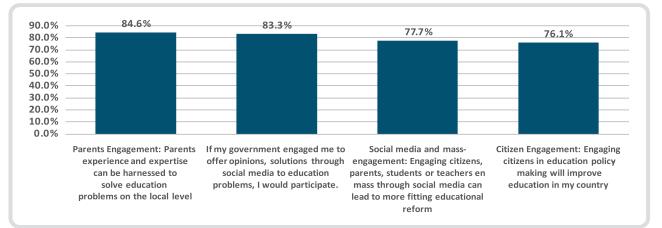## 2.3 Social Media and Educational Reform:

Given social media's abilities in facilitating engagement and inclusive informational feedback, the high level of agreement across different segments about the benefits of social media use in the classroom; and given the relatively low sense of satisfaction with schooling across the board, the integration of social media in educational reform becomes a logical next step. The survey polled respondents on their views about social media and citizen engagement in educational reform. A majority of respondents (84%) believed that governments and private sector should collaborate to provide universal Internet access (and access devices) in the classroom, while a slightly smaller percentage (77%) agreed that the use of social media should be integrated into curriculum reform (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Internet access, social media and educational reform: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Furthermore, respondents agreed that educational reform should incorporate social media to engage governments and citizens (including parents) in the process. In fact, 83% said they would engage with governments – through social media - on educational issues, if the opportunity arose (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Government-citizen engagement and educational reform: To what extent to you agree with the following statements?

2.4 Key Findings & Conclusions:

Positive views of social media usage in education – with an awareness of drawbacks: The findings clearly suggest a high level of agreement among respondents on the benefits of social media for education in several areas: positively impacting student performance and teacher quality; promoting knowledge and skill sharing; enhancing students' competencies; providing access to information and remote learning possibilities; creating better educational opportunities for students with special needs, collectively engaging students, parents and teachers; and reducing the time and cost of educational processes. However, this highly positive perception was tempered with a counter-perception towards potential negative uses of social media in educational environments.

Educational 'special needs' and social media: While social media is seen to address several of the more standard issues and problems facing schooling and education in the Arab region today, such drop-out rates, teacher quality and student performance, it is worth noting that is also perceived to be useful for addressing educational issues that arise from special needs and irregular situations. A majority of respondents felt that the usage of social networking technologies could help integrate students with disabilities in the classroom and allow them to be more expressive, interactive and more importantly feel as peers in educational systems.

Social media as an equalizer: The findings of surveys published in previous editions of the Arab Social Media Report all suggest that social media has an inherent ability to bridge informational silos and create information flows between segments in society that do not necessarily have informational channels connecting them in real life. In this survey as well, different subsets of respondents with varying levels of access to technology and the internet, different schooling - and even parents, teachers and students - all have similar views and responses when it comes to the impact and potential of social media for enhancing the educational experience and contributing to educational reform. This is consistent with previous findings of the Arab Social Media Report series, where social media was seen as an equalizer across gender and demographic groups that would normally not be in such agreement on non-social media related issues. However, it still remains to be seen whether this 'equalizing' effect is the result of social media use, or whether it is has more to do with the typical profile of a social media user.

Interruptions in schooling and social media: A large percentage of people who have witnessed conflict in the past two years in the Arab region – and consequently have had their schooling or their children's schooling interrupted – believed that online resources would be helpful in catching up on lost material and classes. They also viewed social media as a potential enabler for class-like interaction, collaboration and information flows between affected students, other students and educators.

Mentorship, skill and knowledge transfer and social media: A large majority of respondents who have a relatively advanced level of experiences (people with 5 or more years of working experience or with high level of education) expressed that their will to utilize social media channels to share and transfer their knowledge and experiences to others in society through social media. The strong growth rates of social media and such clear willingness of 'experts' indicate that technology in general and social networking technologies in particular may become a facilitator and channel of a much needed knowledge transfer initiatives in society driven by economic and job market needs.

Social media and educational reform: Not only were respondents in agreement about the benefits of social media for education, but they also strongly believed that it should be incorporated into educational reform on two levels: as an educational tool to be integrated in the classroom and in educational initiatives, and as an engagement tool for participatory policymaking around educational issues. Universal access to Internet and technology (provided by government and private sector) was seen as one of the key issues of educational reform.

3. Mapping Social Media in the Arab World: Facebook in Q1 2013

This edition of the Arab Social Media Report continues to explore social media usage trends in the Arab Region with a focus on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. This section will provide an update on Facebook usage in 2013 and since the publication of the last edition of this report (Figure 16 and 17). As with previous editions, the numbers presented here were collected periodically between June 2012 and May 2013. These were collected for all Arab states. Demographic information such as age and gender of users was also collected. The following represent the report's key findings:

Facebook in the Arab World: A Snapshot

- The total **number of Facebook users** in the Arab world as of end of May 2013 is **54,552,875** up from 45,194,452 in June 2012.

- By May 2013 the country **average for Facebook penetration** in the Arab region was over 15% up from 12% in June 2012

- The percentage of **female users** has remained **static (at 33.4% in May 2013),** having fluctuated slightly between 33.4% and 34% in the past two years. This is still significantly lower than the global average of roughly 50%

- The percentage of **youth users** has decreased slightly due to slow and steady uptake amongst users aged 30 and above. As of May 2013 the percentage of users **below the age of 30 was 68%.**

- The **UAE** continues to have the **highest Facebook penetration** rate in the region with **Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar and Tunisia** trailing behind.

- **Egypt** continues to constitute more than **one quarter of all Facebook users** in the region and has had the **highest number of new Facebook** users since January 2013 with an increase of over 1.5 million users.

Figure 16: Number of Facebook Users in the Arab Region between June 2010 and May 2013 (Top 10 Facebook populations)
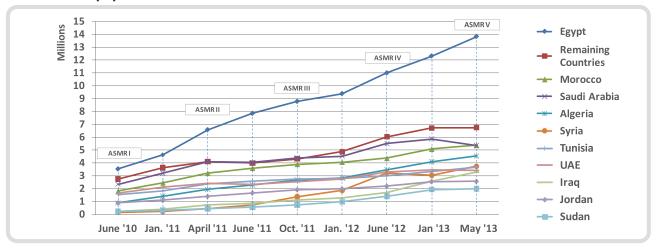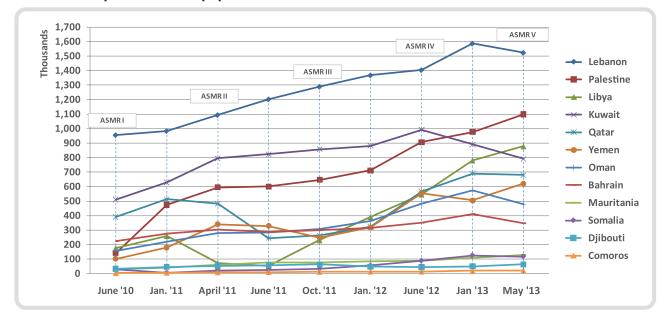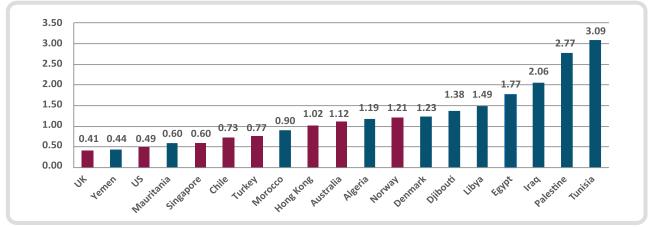

Figure 17: Number of Remaining Facebook Users in the Arab Region between June 2010 and May 2013 (excl. Top 10 Facebook populations)

A comparison of Facebook uptake in the top ten countries in terms of Facebook penetration worldwide and Facebook uptake in the Arab World shows that users in Arab countries are still adopting Facebook at a higher rate than the world's top ten. Tunisia, Iraq, Egypt, Libya and Djibouti have seen more increase in their Facebook users this year than Denmark, Norway, Australia, the United States and the UK. Uptake in Iraq, Djibouti and Tunisia has increased since the last edition of this report was published while uptake in countries like Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and the UAE has dropped considerably (Figures 18, 19 and 20).

Figure 18: New FB users in between Jan 7 and May 1, 2013 (% of population*)

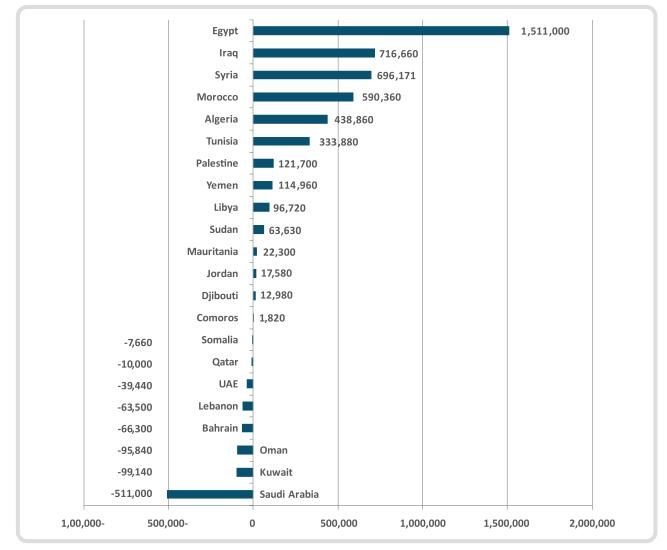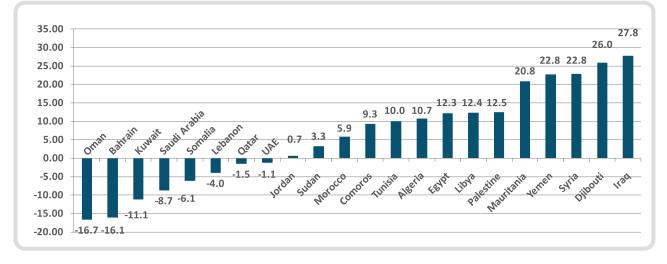* 2013 populations, from United Nations ILO Department of Statistics, http://laborsta.ilo.org/

Figure 19: Number of New Facebook Users in the Arab Region (Between Jan. 7 and May 1, 2013)

Figure 20: Growth in no. of FB users between Jan. 7 and May 1, 2013 (%)

Growth in Facebook usage has continued in most Arab countries; however, there is a noticeable dip in users in the GCC countries: Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE. All of the GCC countries have lost Facebook users, but some have lost more users than others. Oman, Saudi, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have seen the most considerable decline in usage. This decline became noticeable at the start of 2013 and continues on until May 1st 2013. One possible explanation for this is the heightened regulation and in some cases censorship on social media usage since 2013[10]. Other factors that may have contributed to this drop include the many new social media platforms emerging in the region filling local needs for relatively large segments of society, coupled of a certain level of saturation in largely mature countries in terms of internet usage and penetration (see Figure 21).
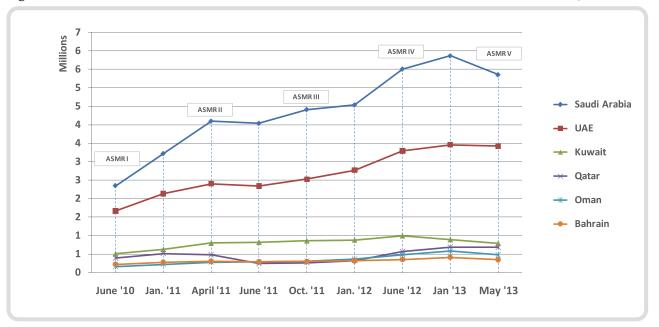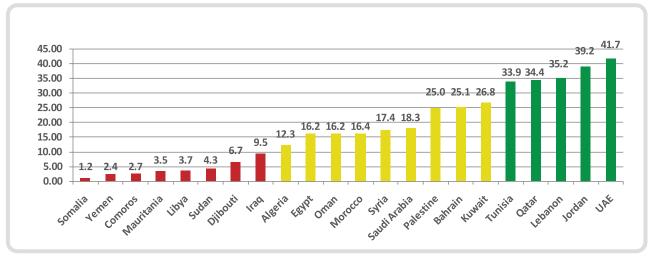
Figure 21: Number of Facebook Users in the GCC Countries between June 2010 and May 2013

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[10] *See http://www.insidefacebook.com/2011/05/18/facebook-traffic-across-the-middle-east-egypt-pakistan-make-gains-saudi-arabia-loses-users/*
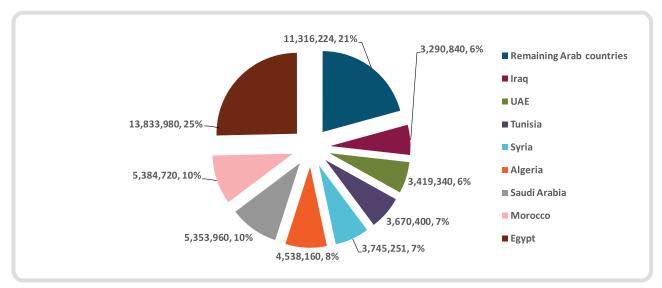
Facebook Penetration in the Arab World

Figure 22: Facebook User Penetration* in the Arab Region (May 2013)

* 2013 populations, from United Nations ILO Department of Statistics, http://laborsta.ilo.org/.
Additionally, Sudan population numbers do not reflect the changes the country went through in January 2011

1. **High Penetration:** These countries' Facebook user penetration rates indicate persistent growth and a pervasive use of Facebook in their societies. (Facebook penetration between 30% and above)

2. **Emerging countries:** These countries' Facebook user penetration ranges from 10%-30%, indicating a medium penetration of Facebook users.

3. **Developing users:** These countries have low rates of Facebook user penetration, ranging from less than 1% to just under 10%, indicating room for growth

The UAE continues to top the region in terms of Facebook penetration with over 41% penetration. Jordan trails behind the UAE only slightly with a 39% penetration. Lebanon, Qatar and Tunisia are also top performers with over 30% Facebook penetration. The rest of the GCC countries are within the Emerging Countries penetration bracket, with some at the high end though they have still not made it past the 30% penetration mark. Qatar and Tunisia are two countries which managed to move up into High Penetration bracket while Kuwait dropped down into emerging countries bracket with the drop of Facebook users in the country (Figure 22).
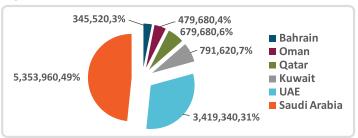
Figure 23: Number of Facebook Users and Percentage of Users in the Arab Region (May 2013)

Legend:
- Remaining Arab countries
- Iraq
- UAE
- Tunisia
- Syria
- Algeria
- Saudi Arabia
- Morocco
- Egypt

Values shown: 11,316,224, 21%; 3,290,840, 6%; 13,833,980, 25%; 3,419,340, 6%; 5,384,720, 10%; 3,670,400, 7%; 5,353,960, 10%; 3,745,251, 7%; 4,538,160, 8%

Egypt still has the largest portion of Facebook users in the Arab world followed by Morocco and Saudi Arabia. The UAE, though much smaller in terms of population takes a big piece of the pie with over 3.4 million users in the country (Figure 23 and 24).
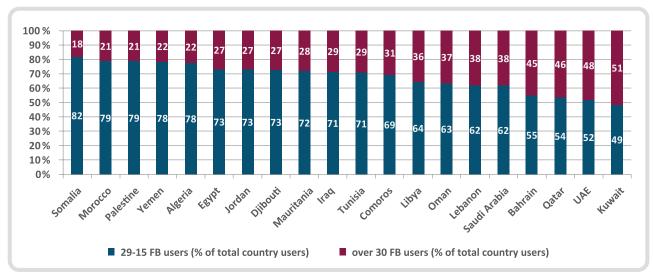
Demographic and gender breakdown of Facebook Users

On average, youth make up 68% of users in the region. This is a slight change in the demographic trend observed over the past two years. In June of 2012 youth still made up 70% of Facebook user , this is now changing as we see slow uptake by users over the age of 30. Across the board, usage

Figure 24: Breakdown of Gulf Facebook users (%)

Values shown: 345,520, 3%; 479,680, 4%; 679,680, 6%; 791,620, 7%; 5,353,960, 49%; 3,419,340, 31%

Legend:
- Bahrain
- Oman
- Qatar
- Kuwait
- UAE
- Saudi Arabia

amongst this age group has increased by about 1-3% in all Arab countries (with the exception of Somalia and Comoros). Users over the age of 30 are now more than 50% of Facebook users in Kuwait and almost 50% of users in UAE, Qatar, and Bahrain. This indicates a maturity of usage trends among these countries, as usage is shifting towards users in upper age group brackets who tend to have more professional usage trends than the younger groups (Figure 25).

Figure 25: Breakdown of Facebook Users by Age in the Arab States

Country	29-15 FB users (% of total country users)	over 30 FB users (% of total country users)
Somalia	82	18
Morocco	79	21
Palestine	79	21
Yemen	78	22
Algeria	78	22
Egypt	73	27
Jordan	73	27
Djibouti	73	27
Mauritania	72	28
Iraq	71	29
Tunisia	71	29
Comoros	69	31
Libya	64	36
Oman	63	37
Lebanon	62	38
Saudi Arabia	62	38
Bahrain	55	45
Qatar	54	46
UAE	52	48
Kuwait	49	51

* Excluding Syria and Sudan. Due to US imposed technology sanctions on both countries, no data on demographic breakdown of Facebook users could be obtained.

The gender break down of Facebook users in the Arab world has remained constant amongst almost all Arab countries. On average females make up 33% of Facebook users. This continues to be lower than the global average where females make up 50% of users. Lebanon continues to be the most gender balanced of the Arab countries followed by Tunisia, Jordan, Palestine and Morocco (Figure 26).
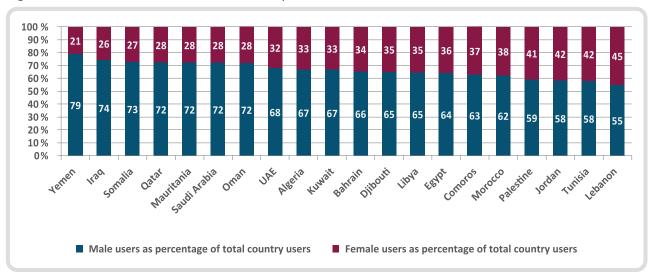
Figure 26: Breakdown of Facebook Users by Gender in the Arab States

* Excluding Syria and Sudan. Due to US imposed technology sanctions on both countries, no data on gender breakdown of Facebook users could be obtained.

Language Breakdowns

Arabic continues to grow as a prefered language used by Facebook users in the region. However, languages other than Arabic and English are also witnessing growth in the Arab region. With the introduction of new languages on Facebook and other social media platforms, there is a natural migration towards local language interfaces that Facebook has provided over the past year. In countries with sizable expatriate communities such as the GCC the introduction of new interfaces with languages spoken by large segments among the populations meant that large portions have shifted to using such interfaces, contributing to the drop of using both Arabic and English interfaces (Figure 27).
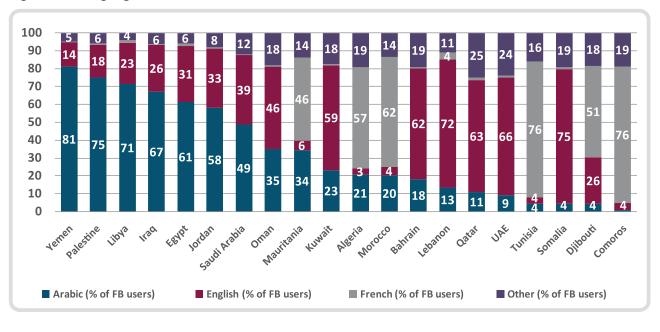
Figure 27: Language Interface Preference for Facebook Users (2013) % of total FB users

4. Mapping Twitter in the Arab World – Q1 2013

The total number of active Twitter users and tweet volume in each of the 22 Arab countries (plus Iran, Israel and Turkey) in the month of March 2013 was estimated using a Twitter API (application programming interface) specially developed for this research. The methodology used is detailed in Annex 1. Briefly, it consists of sampling a certain number of Twitter users in each country captured across the month of March 2013, and using this sample to extrapolate and estimate the active Twitter population. The volume of tweets and top trends throughout March 2013 were also estimated.

Twitter in the Arab World: A Snapshot

- Total number of active Twitter users in the Arab world reached 3,766,160 users as of March 2013.

- The country with the highest number of active twitter users is Saudi Arabia with 1.9 million users which accounts for over half of all active twitter users in the Arab region.

- The estimated number of tweets produced by twitter users in the Arab world in March 2013 was **335,792,000** tweets or **10,832,000** tweets per day.

- Saudi Arabia alone, produced almost half (47%) of all tweets in the Arab world, while Egypt produced 12% and the UAE produced 11%.

Twitter penetration and uptake in the Arab region

The total number of active Twitter users in the Arab world has reached 3,766,160 users as of March 2013. As officially defined by Twitter, an "active user" is someone who logs in (but does not necessarily tweet) once a month. The country with the highest number of active twitter users is Saudi Arabia with 1.9 million users which accounts for over half of all active twitter users in the Arab region and double the number of users in the country with the second highest number of active users, Egypt. Saudi Arabia as by far seen the greatest number of new twitter users this year with over 1,069,709 Twitter newcomers, amounting to a 128% growth, while Egypt has seen over 75% growth. The UAE, despite its relatively small size and population has 401,000 active twitter users, the third highest number in the region. This represents a growth of over 52% (Figures 28 and 29).

Figure 28: No. of Active Twitter Users in the Arab Region (Average number for March 2013) - Countries with over 50k users
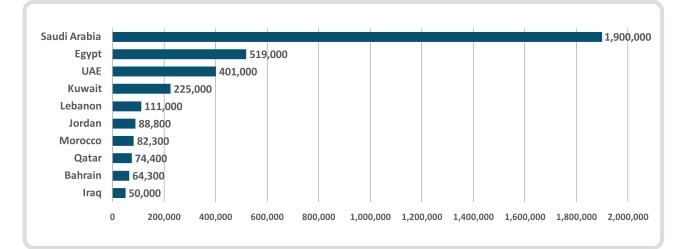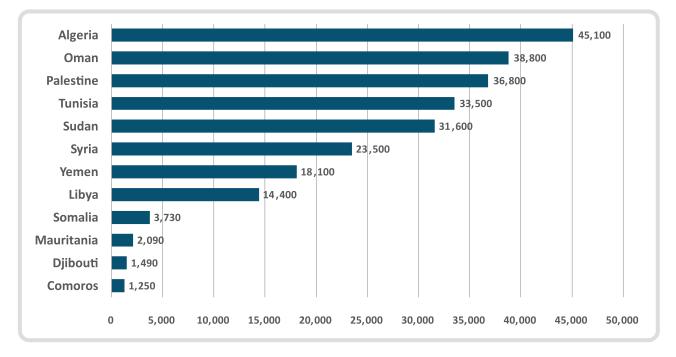
Country	Users
Saudi Arabia	1,900,000
Egypt	519,000
UAE	401,000
Kuwait	225,000
Lebanon	111,000
Jordan	88,800
Morocco	82,300
Qatar	74,400
Bahrain	64,300
Iraq	50,000

Figure 29: No. of Active Twitter Users in the Arab Region (Average number for March 2013) - Countries with under 50k users

Country	Users
Algeria	45,100
Oman	38,800
Palestine	36,800
Tunisia	33,500
Sudan	31,600
Syria	23,500
Yemen	18,100
Libya	14,400
Somalia	3,730
Mauritania	2,090
Djibouti	1,490
Comoros	1,250

Despite massive Twitter growth in Saudi Arabia, the country does not have the highest Twitter penetration rate in the region. Kuwait, a much smaller country, has the highest penetration rate at 7.6%. In general, GCC countries have the highest penetration rates in the region. Jordan and Lebanon are the only non-GCC countries with penetration rates above 1%. Mauritania, Somalia, Yemen and Syria, Algeria and Iraq remain the countries with the lowest Twitter penetration rates (Figures 30 and 31).

1. **High Penetration:** These countries' Twitter user penetration is above 5%, indicating a high use of Twitter in their societies relative to other Arab countries.

2. **Emerging countries:** These countries' Twitter user penetration ranges from 1%-5%, indicating a medium penetration of Twitter users relative to other Arab countries.

3. **Developing users:** These countries have Twitter user penetration rates are under 1%, indicating room for growth.
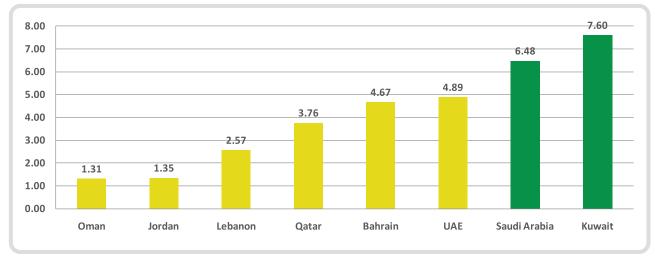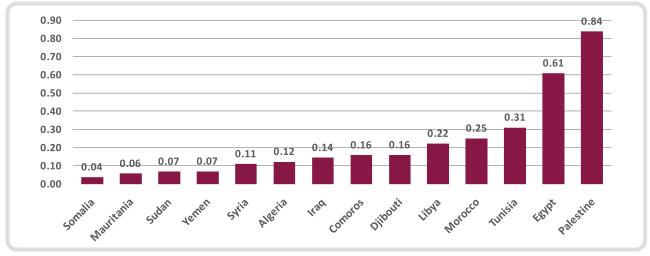
Figure 30: Twitter Penetration* in the Arab Region (more than 1%) - March 2013

Country	Penetration
Oman	1.31
Jordan	1.35
Lebanon	2.57
Qatar	3.76
Bahrain	4.67
UAE	4.89
Saudi Arabia	6.48
Kuwait	7.60

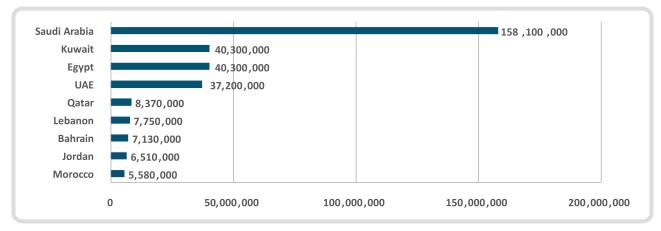* 2013 populations, from United Nations ILO Department of Statistics, http://laborsta.ilo.org/

Figure 31: Twitter Penetration* in the Arab Region (less than 1%) - March 2013

* 2013 populations, from United Nations ILO Department of Statistics, http://laborsta.ilo.org/

The volume of tweets from each country was estimated during the month of March 2013, and calculated as a percentage of total tweets in the Arab region over this time period.

The estimated number of tweets produced by twitter users in the Arab world in March 2013 was 172,511,590 tweets or 5,564,890 tweets per day. Unsurprisingly, countries with the highest numbers of active twitter users account for the majority of tweets. Saudi Arabia alone, produced almost half (47%) of all tweets in the Arab world, while Egypt produced 12% and the UAE produced 11%. (Figures 32, 33, 34)

> **Saudi Arabia alone, produced almost half (47%) of all tweets in the Arab world,
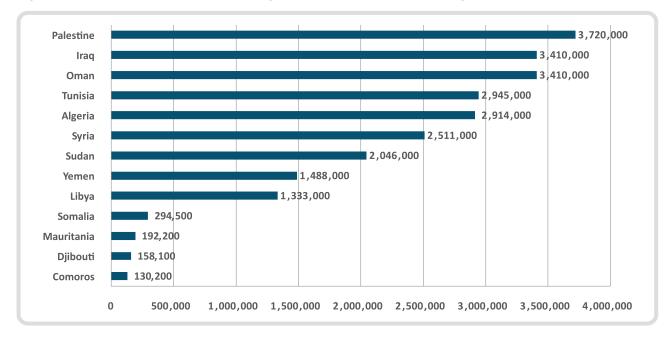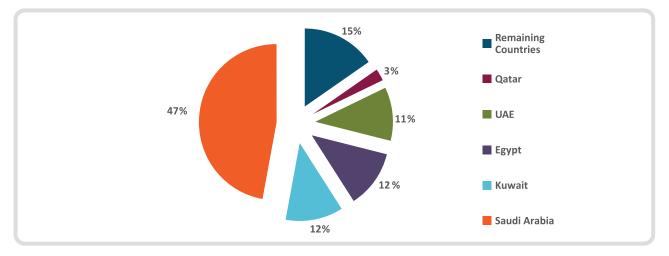> while Egypt produced 12% and the UAE produced 11%**

Figure 32: No. of Tweets in the Arab region - (over 5 million) during March 2013
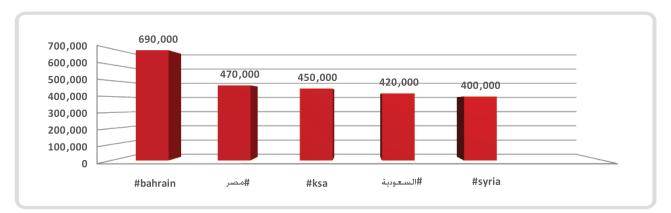
Figure 33: No. of Tweets in the Arab region - السعودية (under 5 million) during March 2013

Country	Tweets
Palestine	3,720,000
Iraq	3,410,000
Oman	3,410,000
Tunisia	2,945,000
Algeria	2,914,000
Syria	2,511,000
Sudan	2,046,000
Yemen	1,488,000
Libya	1,333,000
Somalia	294,500
Mauritania	192,200
Djibouti	158,100
Comoros	130,200

Figure 34: Breakdown of Tweets in the Arab Region (during March 2013)

- Remaining Countries — 15%
- Qatar — 3%
- UAE — 11%
- Egypt — 12%
- Kuwait — 12%
- Saudi Arabia — 47%

Twitter Usage Trends in the Arab Region

The top trends for each country were estimated during the month of March 2013. Across the region, the top five trending hashtags are illustrated in Figure 35.

Figure 35: Top Twitter Trends in the Arab Region (Number of mentions - Mar 2013)

Hashtag	Mentions
#bahrain	690,000
#مصر	470,000
#ksa	450,000
#السعودية	420,000
#syria	400,000

As for the language in which tweets are produced, Arab tweets account for over 76% of all tweets in the Arab world. This represents a growth of over 10% in the number of Arabic tweets since March 2012. The high number of new users in Saudi Arabia may have contributed to this growth, where 90% of tweets are produced in Arabic. Over 50% of tweets produced in other countries which have seen strong growth of users, such as Egypt the UAE, are also in Arabic. This growth also contributed to the 5% drop in English tweets (Figures 36 and 37).

Figure 36: Percentage of Tweets in the Arab Region by Language (March 2012 and March 2013)

Figure 37: Percentage of Tweets in Arabic - Top 5 Twitter Populations (March 2012 and March 2013)

Tweeting the Government

A report produced by the Governance and Innovation Program in February of 2013 highlighted the social media uptake by government entities in the UAE[11]. As a way to further explore this trend, we investigated the tweets produced by selected government entities in the region and the number of tweets that mention these government entities. Particularly, this section will report on the language in which tweets by government or at government are produced. These estimates were calculated by collecting every tweet produced by the select government accounts in the region and every tweet produced that mentioned that government account (e.g. @MoF, @MoE, @MoI etc.).
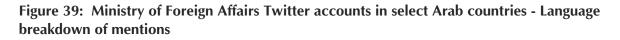
Ministries of Foreign Affairs

By and large, ministries of foreign affairs in the region tweet in Arabic. The only notable exceptions to this are in the UAE and Bahrain where 35% and 45% of tweets respectively are produced in English (Figure 38).
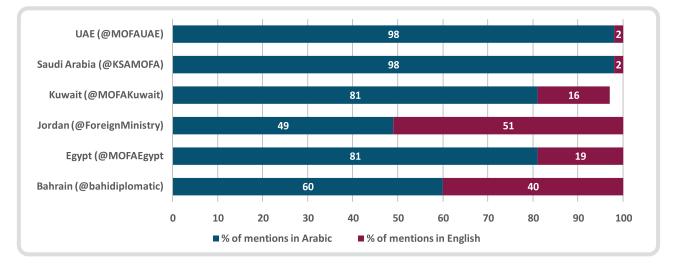
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[11] New Frontiers for Citizens Engagement: Impact of Social Media on Government Services in the UAE – available in www.ArabSocialMediareport.com

Figure 38: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Twitter accounts in select Arab countries - Language breakdown of tweets

Country	% of tweets in Arabic	% of tweets in English
UAE (@MOFAUAE)	65	35
Saudi Arabia (@KSAMOFA)	100	
Kuwait (@MOFAKuwait)	97	3
Jordan (@ForeignMinistry)	91	9
Egypt (@MOFAEgypt	97	3
Bahrain (@bahidiplomatic)	54	45

Tweets mentioning ministries of foreign affairs were primarily in Arabic. For example, 51% of mentions of the Ministry of Affairs in Jordan were in English, while only 9% of its tweets were (Figure 39).

Figure 39: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Twitter accounts in select Arab countries - Language breakdown of mentions

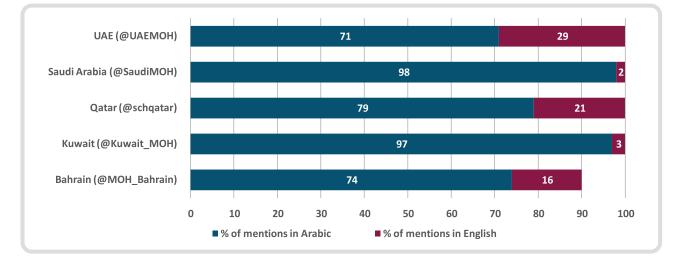| Country	% of mentions in Arabic	% of mentions in English
UAE (@MOFAUAE)	98	2
Saudi Arabia (@KSAMOFA)	98	2
Kuwait (@MOFAKuwait)	81	16
Jordan (@ForeignMinistry)	49	51
Egypt (@MOFAEgypt	81	19
Bahrain (@bahidiplomatic)	60	40

Ministries of Health

Similar to other government accounts, ministries of health in the region primarily tweet in Arabic with the exception of those in Qatar and the UAE. This is especially true in Kuwait where the Ministry of Health tweets only the in the Arabic language (Figure 40).

Figure 40: Ministry of Health Twitter accounts in select Arab countries - Language breakdown of tweets
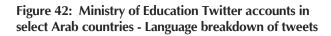

The proportion of Arabic to English mentions was similar to the proportion of Arabic to English tweets by the ministries (Figure 41).

Figure 41: Ministry of Health Twitter accounts in select Arab countries - Language breakdown of mentions

Ministries of Education

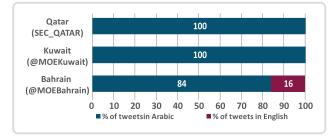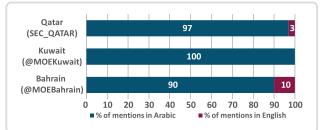As with the ministries of health, the ministries of education tweet primarily in Arabic (Figure 42).

Figure 42: Ministry of Education Twitter accounts in select Arab countries - Language breakdown of tweets

Figure 43: Ministry of Education Twitter accounts in select Arab countries - Language breakdown of mentions

Tweets mentioning the ministries of education are produced primarily in Arabic (Figure 43). For example, in Kuwait, 100% of tweets mentioning the Ministry of Education were produced in Arabic.

Mapping LinkedIn in the Arab World – Q1 2013

LinkedIn in the Arab World: A Snapshot

- The total number of LinkedIn users in the Arab world stand at 4,716,515 as of May 2013. This is up from 4,294,484 in June 2012.

- As of May 2013, the average LinkedIn penetration amongst Arab countries was about 6% up from 2% in June 2012.

- As with Facebook, the ratio of female to male LinkedIn users in the Arab world is well below the global average. As of May 2013 female LinkedIn users constitute about 26% of LinkedIn users. This is down from 28% in June 2012.

- Users below the age of 35 still constitute the majority of LinkedIn users in the region. As of May 2013 60% of LinkedIn users were between the ages of 18-35.

- Oman has shown a significant shift in its age demographics since last year with 69% of users now above the age of 35 up from only 11% in June 2012.

As of May 2013 there are over 4.7 million LinkedIn users in the Arab world up from 4.1 million users in January 2013. LinkedIn penetration has increased across the board (with the exception of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco) since June of 2012. The strongest increase was seen in the UAE and Qatar with increases of approximately 4% and 3% respectively. LinkedIn penetration remains highest in the UAE as does Facebook penetration (Figures 44 and 45).
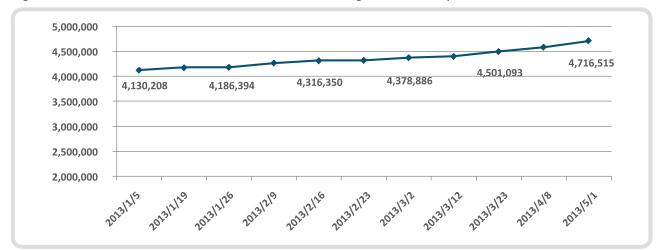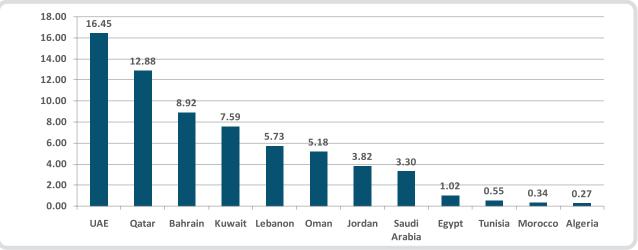
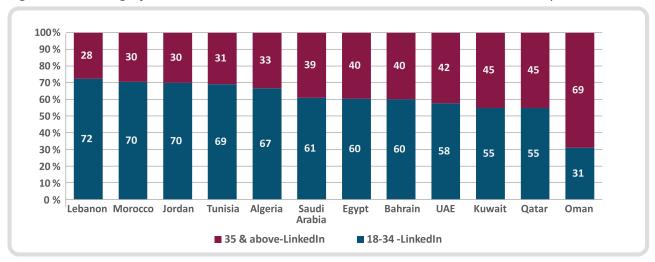**Figure 44: Number of LinkedIn Users* in the Arab Region (Jan - May 2013)**

* Combined Total for: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and UAE

Figure 45: LinkedIn Penetration - May 2013 (% of population)

Demographic breakdown

Youth make up the majority of LinkedIn users though the ratio of youth to users above the age of 30 is much lower amongst LinkedIn users than Facebook users. Oman has shown a dramatic shift in the age demographics of its LinkedIn users. While 89% of LinkedIn users in Oman were between the ages of 18 and 34 in June 2012, only 31% of these users are in that age group in May 2013. Age demographics in the remaining Arab countries have also shown a slight increase in users above the age of 35 since 2012. On average, 60% of LinkedIn users in the Arab world are below 35 years of age (Figure 46).

Figure 46: Demographic Breakdown of LinkedIn Users in Select Arab Countries (May 2013)

As with Facebook the gender ratio on LinkedIn is well below the global average. About 26% of LinkedIn users in the Arab World are Female compared to a global average of 43%. Lebanon continues to be the most gender balanced in terms of LinkedIn users followed by Morocco, Jordan and Tunisia. The percent of female users in Jordan has increased by 4% making it more gender balanced than Tunisia and Algeria which previously outranked it. Algeria and Tunisia have both seen a decrease in their female users.

A comparison of the penetration of difference social networks in the Arab world shows that Facebook remains the most popular social media platform in the Arab world. Despite the strong growth Twitter remains the platform with the least penetration rates in the region. LinkedIn has a long way to go before it achieves comparable penetration levels. The UAE remains on the top of the list in terms of both Facebook and LinkedIn penetration (Figure 47).
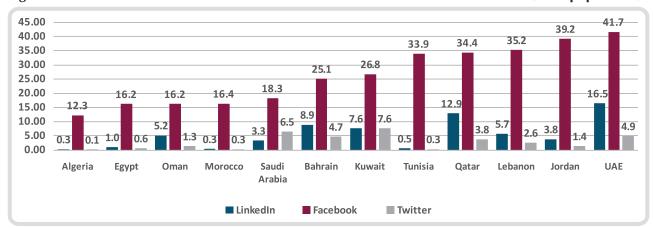
Figure 47: Penetration of Social Media Sites in Select Arab Countries - March 2013 (% of population)

A Snapshot of Google+ and YouTube in the Arab Region

- Google+ has 500 million users, with 235 million daily active users sharing over 1 billion items every day.

- YouTube is growing worldwide, with 72 hours of video uploaded to YouTube every minute and over 4 billion hours watched every month

- In the Arab region, 285 million videos are viewed every day and more than two hours of video are uploaded every minute, putting it in the number 2 spot for video views in the world.

- Saudi Arabia leads the region with the most playbacks followed by Egypt, Morocco and the UAE. In Saudi Arabia, 50% of all views are from mobile devices, while 40% of all views in the UAE are.

Regional Overview of Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn

- Facebook has continued to see growth in many countries in the region, but for the first time since the publication of this series we are seeing some large dips in some countries, including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, and the UAE.

- Female participation in Facebook remains well below the global average at 33.4%.

- Percentage of Facebook users between the ages of 15 and 29 has decreased by 2% now constituting 68% of all users. While youth still drive Facebook growth, we are seeing slow uptake by users above the age of 30.

- Twitter user growth in Saudi Arabia has been exponential with over 128% growth.

- Overall, the number of Twitter users in the region has increased by over 79%. Jordan and Oman are now classified as emerging countries according to the ASMR when they were previously developing. Similarly, Saudi Arabia has become a high penetration country.

- LinkedIn usage has increased by almost 10% in the last year

- As with Facebook, the ratio of female to male LinkedIn users in the Arab world is well below the global average. As of May 2013 female LinkedIn users constitute about 26% of LinkedIn users.

- Users below the age of 35 still constitute the majority of LinkedIn users in the region at 60% of all users.

Annex 1
Methodology

Facebook data

The number of Facebook users in all 22 Arab countries, in addition to Iran, Israel and Turkey, was collected periodically between June 26, 2012 and May 1, 2013, with breakdowns for men and women, and in the following age brackets—youth (15-29), and adults (30 and over).

Raw data on for all Arab countries was collected and aggregated based on Facebook's official data (Group A), excluding Syria, Sudan and Iran (Group B), for which data was extracted from a source other than Facebook. Due to US imposed technology export sanctions, no data on the number of Facebook users in Syria, Sudan and Iran is available. The actual numbers of Facebook users in Syria and Iran (in November 2007 and June 2008, respectively) were located through online research; no such data for Sudan was found. For that reason, all Facebook data on Sudan in this report was estimated using the daily growth rate of Arab users (calculated from the Group A countries over two different periods for different reports - between January 5 and April 5, 2011 and between January 3 and April 3, 2012). This rate was used to calculate the number of users in group B, for consistency's sake, to ensure a smaller error margin than using the growth rates of similar countries for each individual country.

For Syria, specifically, after February 7, 2011, when social media sites were no longer banned in the country, a different daily growth rate was used to reflect the ensuing surge in growth number of Facebook users. This rate was based on the average daily growth rate in Yemen, which has a similar ICT and socio-economic indicators as Syria and witnessed an uprising influenced by Facebook and other social media networks as well. In addition, a one-off factor was added to the calculation of the Syria growth rate after lifting the ban on social media website on February 7, 2011. This was estimated based on the surge in number of Facebook users in Egypt after a similar Internet ban was lifted on 2nd February 2011. In order to maintain accuracy, the average daily growth rate for Yemen was recalculated at several points in time and applied to generate the number of Syrian Facebook users.

It should be noted that for all charts in this paper, the numbers of Facebook users in Syria, Sudan and Iran are estimates, while the numbers for remaining countries were compiled based on official Facebook data.

Twitter data

TThe number of Twitter users, number of tweets, and top trends in all 22 Arab countries, in addition to Iran, Israel and Turkey, was estimated in the month of March 2013 by sampling 733,000 Twitter users and 2.47 million tweets. The study was conducted using a specially developed Twitter API. Additionally, data related to government Twitter accounts were collected during the month of May 2013. Historical data from was also collected in March & April 2013.

Two sampling methods were used:

1. Trend & volume data was collected by sampling 1% of the whole of Twitter traffic, and filtering for location.

2. Users were sampled by randomly inspecting user ID numbers. This allows for finding information on both active and inactive users.

The population estimates come from combining these two data sources (sample (2) gives a picture of user behavior, which helps assess the fraction of the population that was picked up in sample (1)). An estimated correction was applied for un-locatable users.

Data collection was done by filtering the Twitter sample stream (which provides 1% of all tweets as they happen) for tweets from the right country. An unbiased distribution of tweet frequency was obtained by random sampling of the user space.

Geo Location (identifying the country from a location) was done by filtering tweets with location information using a mixture of Yahoo and Google's geolocation services, plus a local database & some extra clean-up for mistakes by one of these services.

Population estimation was done by estimating the probability of seeing a given user appear in the stream, given the sampling period, tweet-frequency distribution, and the stream behavior (witnessed in the 1% sample of tweets; assumed unbiased). A second correction was applied for un-locatable users.

LinkedIn data

The number of LinkedIn users in 12 Arab countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the UAE, was collected periodically between June 26, 2012 and May 1, 2013, with breakdowns for men and women, and in the following age brackets: 18-24, 25-34, 35-54, 55 and above. Due to changes in the examined platform analysed here, estimated number of users from several countries substantially differ from previous report findings. This could be due to changes, or corrections, in the criteria of geo-locating users by the platform itself. Attempts by the authors to examine the changes in the criteria with the platform where not successful, however, our analysis suggest that the current number in the Arab countries examined are more geographically representative.

Regional Survey on Social Media and Education

The regional online survey was administered in 22 Arab countries and ran from March – May 2013. Respondents numbered a total of 3804. Around 25% of respondents were female while 75% were male. Around 43% of respondents were between the ages of 18-29, 32% were between the ages of 30 – 39 and 24% were above the age of 40. Around 43% of respondents said they have children while 57% did not.

The largest number of responses came from Egypt (27%), Saudi Arabia (17%), Jordan (12%), Algeria (8%), the UAE (6%) and the Morocco (6%). Residents from countries that have recently experienced short or long periods of polticail instability, civil strife or conflict were asked questions regarding the use of the internet and social media for education during times of instability; these countries are: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Bahrain, Kuwait and Yemen.

Annex 2

Case Studies

Case Study 1: Beyond the Lecture Hall: Leveraging Social Education at University Level - CoursePeer

Universities are exploring new opportunities made available by educational and social technologies to offer broader and deeper knowledge transfer. Such technologies when available are used to serve fundamental pedagogical mandate. Meaningful learning occurs when technology engages learners in: a) Supporting Knowledge Construction, not Reproduction; b) Enabling Conversation, not Reception; c) Articulation, not Repetition; d) Reflection, not Prescription; and e) Providing opportunities for Collaboration, not Competition[12].

Building on these concepts, "Social Learning" and "Intelligent Decision-Making Networks" are two emerging areas of research and development for educational institutions willing to explore technological advances for better learning opportunities. CoursPeer[13], a start-up founded in September 2012 by a group of young university students and funded by the University of Toronto, MaRS Innovation and the Canadian Government, has been directing its research & development efforts towards these areas. The intersection of these two areas could be particularly of interest for academic institutions as it could foster the creation of 'intelligent communities', allowing for more powerful knowledge transfer mechanism. Such technologies can also provide these institutions with tools to link their educational activities with defined standards with monitoring capabilities to improve their policies around knowledge management and education.

CoursePeer's main product the "Social Learning Cloud", is a software-as-a-service Learning Management System (LMS), has seen adopted by a 100 new instructors per month since launching, and now serving thousands of students from 30 leading academic institutions, including eight universities in the Arab world. The platform supports formal and informal learning needs, on-demand training by government and professional associations, as well as massive open online courses (MOOC). The Inverted Classroom is one of the models supported by CoursePeer, relying on social media and video-delivery techniques to bring students engaging active learning exercises, through: a) delivery of pre-class videos and documents which embed "test yourself" quizzes; b) acting as a social networking community platform; and c) Providing analytics to the instructor on interactions, sentiment, engagement, behaviors and content consumption. Data collected by CoursePeer suggest that courses that have relied on this model have seen larger amounts of interactions, and seen higher averages of social media content sharing.

A patented assessment, data collection and analytics dashboarding platform is used by courses to provide an accreditation system for instructors and evaluators to monitor outcomes with the objective of building rubrics and activities that map into national and international standards. Not limited to academic institution, the platform is also being used as a training management solution by corporates. In less than a year since establishment, the University of Toronto Annual Research report highlighted CoursePeer as one of the opt 12 research innovations of the year.

Case Study 2: Building a Social Network of Educational Resources - Tahrir Academy

With video sharing witnessing strong growth in the region, Tahrir Academy was established as an online initiative aiming to build a library of educational videos in a myriad of subject areas. The platform is aimed at children aged 3–18 and youth aged 18-35. The initiative develops and makes available learning material in an innovative way in order to help the target groups develop critical thinking and problem solving skills. The core objective is to drive the audience to reach better understanding of materials rather than rely on rote memorization[14].

Tahrir Academy relies on a group of volunteers from schools, community coops, universities and youth groups to provide teaching materials and create videos. Additionally, the Academy builds partnerships with universities and other non-profits and research centers for the production of specialized courses. For example, it has established partnerships with Injaz Egypt, the American University of Cairo and House of Wisdom Center for Strategic studies for the preparation of courses on entrepreneurship, physics and economics respectively[15].

[12] Meaningful Learning with Technology, 4th Ed., Pearson, 2012

[13] CoursePeer.com

[14] http://www.tahriracademy.org/about.php

[15] http://www.wamda.com/2013/04/tahrir-academy-looks-to-revolutionize-education-in-egypt

The platform utilizes existing social networking channels such as YouTube to reach its desired audience. The videos are uploaded into playlists that are organized by subject matter and function as a series. Each video builds off of the information provided in the previous one and acts as a session. The videos are typically short and employ animation and creative videography, depending on the targeted group.

While there are similar, more developed, rich learning platforms online, such as Khan Academy, Coursera, universityX and others, they are inaccessible to people who are uncomfortable with the English language or whose primary language of education is Arabic. Tahrir Academy stands out as a platform with entirely Arabic material and videos. These are presented by experts, who use culturally relevant examples and demonstrations that are derived from the environments of the targeted learners, thus overcoming many linguistic and cultural barriers. The initiative sends a strong message that their material is aimed at Arab learners and that their goal is to reach as many of them as possible. Since its inception, Tahrir Academy has developed more than 150 videos[16] and attracted over 3 million viewers and 34,000 subscribers.[17]

Case Study 3: From Social Education to Employment Network - Bayt.com

Linking education with market needs is a critical economic and developmental question in the Arab world. One of the key criticisms of educational systems in the region is its inability to equip graduates with skills and capacity for the job market. With more than 125 million Internet users in the Arab region[18], social media is increasingly viewed today as a facilitator of access to information about jobs and employment opportunities as well a tool for entrepreneurs and virtual job market. Research conducted by the Dubai School of Government, in collaboration with SAP MENA, showed that youth in the region increasingly rely on social media to find their next job. Additionally, Social media is also perceived as a tool to assist in up-skilling for youth through supporting the attainment of entrepreneurial skills[19].

Bayt.com is a regional example of a 'virtual' job market where individuals are able to access employment information and opportunities. Founded in 1999, Bayt.com aims to connect job seekers with employers across the Arab region. It allows employers and businesses to post job opportunities on the website and job seekers to create and manage their profiles and CVs online. With a network of millions of users, Bayt.com uses information freely provided by its users to offer job market information on average salaries for popular jobs and a real-time look into what are in demand in the labor market, job reports and career path analyses. Such information derived from a large network functioning in a virtual job market is a key input for graduates and educational institutions alike in designing capacity building programs, job market skill sets and educational materials.

While Bayt.com was established prior to the social media revolution, it increasingly incorporating social media characteristics of being user-generated and interactive. The Site allows users to generate their own profiles and content and communicate with one another directly. Users are also able to create own content and make it public. Users can connect with other social media platforms in order to search for jobs in companies in which their friends work, where they can recommend job seeker for the company. Bayt.com also facilitates virtual job fairs between employers and job seekers. These virtual gatherings enable Job seekers to interact with potential employers within a virtual environment.

With a large database of market driven information, platforms such as Bayt.com are able to build communities of practice using social networking technologies, which allows professionals to learn from one another while enabling professional up-skilling and education opportunities.

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[16] http://www.youtube.com/user/tahriracademy/videos?flow=list&live_view=500&sort=dd&view=0

[17] http://www.youtube.com/user/tahriracademy/about

[18] ALSHAER, S. & SALEM, F. 2013. The Arab World Online: Trends in Internet Usage in the Arab Region. The Governance and Innovation Program. Dubai, Dubai School of Government.

[19] MOURTADA, R. & SALEM, F. (2012) Social Media, Employment and Entrepreneurship: New Frontiers for the Economic Empowerment of Arab Youth? The Governance and Innovation Program. Dubai, Dubai School of Government.

Annex 3

Additional Data

The content of Annex 3 is available exclusively for members of the ASMR community online on the ASMR website:

www.ArabSocialMediaReport.com

Join the Arab Social Media Report community online. Registration (at no cost) will give you access to the following datasets, in addition to unpublished charts:

Number of Facebook Users in the Arab Region between June 2010 and May 2013

Country	June '10	Jan. '11*	April '11*	June '11	Oct. '11*	Jan. '12	June '12*	Jan '13	May '13*

Facebook Users and Country Populations in the Arab World – May 2013

Country	Number of Facebook users (5/1/2013)	Population*	Facebook penetration (%)	Number of New Facebook users since 1/7/2013	Growth in number of Facebook users since 1/7/2013 (%)	New Facebook users since 1/7/2013 (as % of population)

Volume of Tweets and Twitter users in the Arab region Q1 - 2013

Country	Estimated Number of Twitter Users (Avg. through March, 2013)	Population*	Twitter penetration (Avg. through March 2013, 2012)	Estimated Twitter Volume (Avg. through March, 2013)

LinkedIn Users and Country Populations in Select Arab Countries – May 2013

Country	Number of LinkedIn Users (5/1/2013)	Population*	LinkedIn penetration (%)

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Internet and Mobile Subscription Rates in the Arab Region – May 2013

Country	Estimated Number of Twitter Users (Avg. through March 2013)	Twitter penetration* (%)	Number of Facebook users (5/1/2013)	Facebook penetration* (%)	Number of LinkedIn users (5/1/2013)	LinkedIn penetration* (%)	Internet users per 100**	Mobile subscriptions per 100**

Language Interface Preferred by Facebook Users* (as a percentage)

Country	Arabic (% of FB users)	English (% of FB users)	French (% of FB users)	Other (% of FB users)

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To Download All ASMR Reports:

http://www.arabsocialmediareport.com

About the Governance and Innovation Program

The Governance and Innovation Program at DSG conducts research and programmatic activities focusing on policies for government innovation and development through information technologies in the Arab states. The objectives of the program are aligned with regional objectives towards nurturing a culture of innovation in society, promoting participatory, inclusive and transparent government models; and enabling more responsive and efficient governance through effective adoption of information technologies.

The program works on three tracks:

1. **Policy and Scholarly Research:** Conducting research focusing on government policies and societal transformation through technological innovation in the Arab region.

2. **Policy Advisory:** The ultimate objective of the Program is to inform present and future Arab policy makers in assessing the impact of the ongoing transformations in their societies and governments; and to help develop locally fitting policies for future governance initiatives.

3. **Regional Development Activities:** The Program brings together regional and international networks of practitioners and scholars working in related areas through programmatic and educational activities, in order to encourage proactive regional knowledge sharing and bridge the gap between policy and research.

About the Dubai School of Government

The Dubai School of Government (DSG) is a research and teaching institution focusing on public policy in the Arab world. Established in 2005 under the patronage of HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai, in cooperation with the Harvard Kennedy School, DSG aims to promote good governance through enhancing the region's capacity for effective public policy.

Toward this goal, the Dubai School of Government also collaborates with regional and global institutions in its research and training programs. In addition, the School organizes policy forums and international conferences to facilitate the exchange of ideas and promote critical debate on public policy in the Arab world. The School is committed to the creation of knowledge, the dissemination of best practice and the training of policy makers in the Arab world. To achieve this mission, the School is developing strong capabilities to support research and teaching programs including

- applied research in public policy and management;
- master's degrees in public policy and public administration;
- executive education for senior officials and executives; and,
- knowledge forums for scholars and policy makers.