

Internet Governance Forum 2017

Workshop Report

Workshop #238

Session Title: Local Content: an opportunity for human, economic and social development and free flow of information in underserved regions; The MENA as an example

Date: 21 December 2017

Time: 11:50 – 13:20

Session Organizer: Abdelaziz Hilali & Roula Mikhael

Chair/Moderator: Tijani Ben Jemaa

Rapporteur/Notetaker: Olivier Crépin Leblond

List of Speakers and their institutional affiliations:

- Abdelaziz Hilali Professo rat the Rabat University, Morocco
AFRALO & NomCom at ICANN
- Roula Mickael MAHARAT Foundation: a Lebanese NGO working on freedom of
expression and media development, Lebanon
- Glenn Mcknight ISOC / IEEE / NARALO at ICANN, Canada
- Layal Bahnam Legal Expert / MARARAT Foundation, Lebanon
- Khalid Ibrahim Gulf Centre for Human Rights
- Marie Noémie Marques Orange, France

Key Issues raised (1 sentence per issue):

- Local content in local language is almost absent in the underserved regions
- In general, underserved communities are almost always content consumers, not producers.
- A focus should be made on local content in local languages
- Statistics about MENA Region:
 - Internet penetration: in the MENA region:
 - 498 million people living in 23 countries.
 - Digital Divides between:
 - Gulf Countries and the other ones,
 - social class
 - Men & Women
 - One third of top 50 Web Sites are not available in Arabic.
 - Growth of Internet users: +15% since Jan 2016.
 - Arabic language users has highest growth of 7247% from 2000-2017.
 - Nearly 50% of Arabic users prefer Social Media

- Alternative Digital Media content in Arabic language is facing Challenges.
- Living under political change & technological change.
- New platforms profit from the new political environment that allow for more freedom of expression.
- More progressive content in Arabic challenges existing political regimes, gives many points of view and challenges taboos – for example criticism of public figures, sexuality and societal issues.
- Good content is produced but not on a long term ongoing basis.
- Many challenges to quality media content:
 - Accessing reliable content to start with (sources)
 - Restrictive media
 - Access to Internet
 - Filtering and shutdown
 - Lack of media management skills
 - Lack of culture of innovation
- There is a need to find incentives to create local content.
- There is a need to perform capacity building.
- Promoting entrepreneurship in Youth to start projects.
- There is a need to find incentives to create local content
- The IEEE project on Humanitarian Technology includes a focus on Content Creation
- In MENA region, when it comes to redistribution of local content, the laws either do not exist or are not put in practice. They are more a formality than a tangible tool
- In some countries, the law is not in line with international standards. Government allowance of free-flow of information is the exception. Processes for request of information are too complicated (formalities).
- There is a lack of Interest in the region on working on Copyrighted Content
- Improvisation of Digital Communications appears to have helped with the creation of local content
- Governments should promote the creation of content
- Problem with having local content is affecting the work of online activists and of Civil Society
- There is a lack of Network Neutrality: ISPs are either run by Governments or by Entities that are Government controlled (filtering) which is a barrier for local content to be disseminated.
- Current climate of war is negatively affecting the freedom of expression and content creation
- Online activists speaking about public affairs and trying to defend people rights is considered as opposing/hostile content
- Local content is relying on an Enabling environment to be deployed in rural and underserved regions for a transformation of the local society
- Local content may be for learning, healthcare, agriculture, digital governance services etc.

- A Digital Broadband infrastructure is paramount to Local content creation and dissemination
 - To be cost effective, the necessary infrastructure should:
 - Be common or shared
 - Make use of Satellites where necessary
 - Use Adapted energy solutions (Solar, Wind, etc.)
- Local content is a challenge for developing countries on many levels
- Transformation of the state broadcasters of the past into dynamic production of online content in Europe
- Convergence of broadcasted content into professionally produced content
- EBU presented a report to UNESCO regarding the production of content from National Broadcasters
- In the MENA region, broadcasters are not ready to be in the online world
- There is a concern regarding the competing international good quality content
- The enabling environment may include copyright laws and e-payment systems
- The content generated in the MENA region is not used by its citizens, but collected by the others and processed for their interests.

If there were presentations during the session, please provide a 1-paragraph summary for each presentation:

Please describe the Discussions that took place during the workshop session (3 paragraphs):

Not only producing the content but also distribution of the content is important. Sometimes there is a lot of restrictions especially when digging deeper into topics. Talking about business models, more and more is done to promote the local content production and distribution.

There are hopes that a lot could be done for capacity building across the MENA region. E-payment helps a lot. There are many motivations that can be utilized for the data to be re-used. Intellectual Property and Copyright should be developed in the region. Being an e-consumer only is a real concern that needs to be addressed.

50 seconds of video clip is good – but not good enough to have a presence on the net. Local content in local language is very important for underserved communities because content produced by others wouldn't respond to the specific needs of these communities. Local content should cover Cultural & scientific production, as well as software applications. With IPV6 and the coming Internet of things, the need for applications to command and monitor these things remotely will be huge, and local applications will be an opportunity for underserved communities to enter the content industry

Please describe any Participant suggestions regarding the way forward/ potential next steps /key takeaways (3 paragraphs):

Gender Reporting

Estimate the overall number of the participants present at the session: 48

Estimate the overall number of women present at the session: 19

To what extent did the session discuss gender equality and/or women's empowerment?

- No, this wasn't discussed since the local content doesn't make any difference between men and women

If the session addressed issues related to gender equality and/or women's empowerment, please provide a brief summary of the discussion: N/A

Important remark:

We received on Tuesday 19 December 2017 a request from the "Best Practice Forum on Local Content" through the IGF Secretariat to merge our Workshop session with their one that is scheduled at the same time to avoid dividing the participants interested in local content. We accepted the request and stressed that the merged session shall be in the room assigned for our workshop (XXVII – E), and the BPF accepted (Wim degezelle).

We were surprised to see that the session has been displaced to room XII – A a few minutes prior to the beginning of the session. This made our workshop poorly attended because we made a reminder on Wednesday through all our lists insisting on the date, time and room number (XXVII-E).

The BPF took 40 minutes in the beginning of the session to present the forum and its ongoing work, and then our workshop started to last 50 minutes only while it was scheduled for 90 minutes.