

Science & Technology in the Arab Mainstream Media



WITH AN EMOTIONAL appeal to news organizations throughout the Region, the producers of the Al-Jazeera Technology Magazine *An Kathab* (عن كنب) called for journalists to raise their priorities for science and technology news. "Today, high-tech news is enormously important to viewers and readers anywhere in the world, but especially in the Arab world," reports Jay Tuck, CEO of Airtime Dubai Ltd. and Executive Producer of *An-Kathab*. "Science and technology are changing our daily lives at breathtaking speeds. No one is untouched by it. Yet they still do not receive the attention they deserve in mainstream media."

At the press conference, which was co-sponsored by Airtime Dubai and the Dubai Press Club, speakers highlighted the need for more intense reporting on scientific issues. Prize-winning German producer Holger Douglas, General Manager of Douglas Film, believes, "science news is urgent news, relevant to people in all walks of life. Often, they are far more relevant to audiences than many of the conventional news stories emphasized every day in the mainstream media".

As a guest speaker, Dr. Peter Goepfrich, official delegate of the German Industry & Commerce office in Dubai stressed on the fact that most of our current scientific knowledge had originated historically from the Arab World and the Andalus era and is also related to Islamic culture. Therefore, it is logical to reach out to the Arab world and make this leadership in scientific findings, medical breakthroughs and mathematical genius alive again.

An Kathab (عن كنب) on Al-Jazeera is a thirty-minute television magazine on high-technology.



Not a games and gadgets show, it concentrates on major high-tech scientific breakthroughs and discoveries and how they will affect our daily lives. Airtime Dubai holds cooperation agreements with M.I.T., Harvard University, Cleveland Clinics, Max-Planck and Fraunhofer Institutes in Germany and many other of the leading research institutes of the world.

"The speed of change in today's world is accelerating daily. If you look back at the technology we had five or ten years ago, it seems ancient. We have all been changed by it," Tuck reminds. "Every profession is undergoing constant change through new discoveries and innovations. Those who adapt will thrive. Those who don't pay attention to technology will soon be left behind."

In their program for Al-Jazeera, Tuck and Douglas include regular reporting on professions and

how they are being transformed. Surprisingly, this is also true even for the simplest jobs.

- Modern house painters in Europe need to know how to use lasers for measurement, calculating paint quantities down to the last drop, and how to use computer scanners to match new colors with old.
- Modern farmers are saving thousands of dollars using GPS satellite navigation to distribute seed evenly across their fields. Mobile chemical laboratories determine which areas of a field need additional fertilizer, and automatically dispense accordingly. Automated harvests reduce wastage.
- Modern ship mechanics work with satellite guided maintenance & repair systems which oversee their machines, and even send spare parts to the next harbor. ◀

