

New Media, New Politics?

From Satellite Television to the Internet in the Arab World

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In-Depth Reports

In the last decade, a revolution has swept through the Arab world. Long accustomed to exercising control over what their publics knew and when they knew it, Arab governments are finding that new technologies based on satellites and telecommunications have given rise to new kinds of regional media that are generally beyond those governments' direct control. The first technological leap was the international Arabic newspaper, written with datelines throughout the Arab world, edited in London, and printed remotely in major world capitals using satellite communications. Subsequently, Arab satellite-broadcast television stations that challenge traditional state monopolies sprung up. Over the last few years the internet has been making its way into the region. Although penetration remains quite low and the obstacles to its acceptance are high, the internet holds out the promise of allowing Arabs to dip into a vast sea of information that currently lies beyond their grasp.

In this Policy Paper, Jon B. Alterman, Soref research fellow, examines the changing nature of the news media and information technology in the Middle East and implications of this media revolution.

- **6 pages**

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