

Press Release

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Great Potential in Online Markets of the Middle East and North Africa

In its "MENA Internet & B2C E-Commerce Report 2012", Hamburg-based secondary market research firm yStats.com analyzes the latest developments in the online markets of the Middle East and North Africa. In addition to general facts and figures about the MENA region, information is provided on the Middle East and especially the nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council. After detailing Internet use and B2C E-Commerce in 17 countries of the MENA region, the report features five top players and other player news.

In 2011, the highest number of Internet users in the MENA region was estimated to be in Egypt, followed by Morocco and Saudi Arabia. However, Internet penetration was the highest in Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Israel. Online shopping in the MENA region boomed especially as a result of group buying websites. In November 2011, as many as half of all Internet users in this region had already made purchases online, whereas almost two thirds of all Internet users researched products online. Online games and virtual currencies, followed by computer software and consumer electronics were the most popular B2C E-Commerce categories in the MENA region in November 2011.

Booming online markets in the Middle East

Aside from differing regional developments, the report focuses especially on the potential of online markets in the Middle East. In Saudi Arabia, Internet penetration and - as a result - B2C E-Commerce grew in 2012. Improved networks prompted an increase in Internet connections in the UAE and in B2C E-Commerce in Jordan. Between 2010 and 2011, B2C E-Commerce revenue increased by almost fifty percent in Bahrain and by almost two thirds in Kuwait. In Qatar, air tickets were especially popular by the end of 2011, and in August 2011, more than one quarter of all Internet users in Lebanon spent on average more than six hours per day on the Internet. Based on poll results, less than ten percent of all Internet users in Israel shopped online in 2011. B2C E-Commerce in Oman was curbed as a result of slow Internet connections. In early 2012, Internet was still slow and expensive in Yemen due to the state monopoly. In May 2011, more than one quarter of all Iraqis searched information on the Internet.

Continuing positive development of B2C E-Commerce in North Africa

Regarding North Africa, the "MENA Internet & B2C E-Commerce Report 2012" by yStats.com also highlights great potentials and regional differences. In North Africa, Internet penetration was the highest in Morocco; in line with this trend, the number of Internet connections and B2C E-Commerce revenue grew between 2010 and 2011 by almost three quarters. Furthermore, the number of online shops and credit cards increased. In February 2012, almost one quarter of all Internet users in Egypt shopped online or used the Internet to pay their bills. Meanwhile, Algeria saw only little online retail in early 2012, because cash transactions were still predominant there, while other payment options were hardly available. In 2011, people in Libya were still very afraid of B2C E-Commerce related scams.

Internet penetration rates and B2C E-Commerce vary widely from nation to nation across the MENA region, with fast and improved Internet connections however promoting the spread of B2C E-Commerce throughout the region.

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