

THE MOST POPULAR ACCOUNTS **IN THE** D)D)LII [1/4/\$5

MID-YEAR UPDATE: JANUARY TO JUNE 2022

BY NEW MEDIA ACADEMY

AUTHOR: DAMIAN RADCLIFFE



SUMMARY: MOST POPULAR ACCOUNTS BY MARKET

For the first time, this report brings together in a single chart the most popular accounts originating in MENA on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter.

Each of these platforms is explored in more detail in this report, but below we outline the account with the largest number of followers, likes and subscribers, across MENA as well as the region's four biggest markets: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

Featuring news and music channels, content creators, religious figures, politicians and sports stars, this chart shows the breadth of activity seen on different social media channels and the different ways in which users utilize them. Egyptian footballer Mohamed Salah is the only person to be featured twice. The Liverpool player, and captain of the Egyptian national team, has the most popular Instagram and Twitter account stemming from Egypt.



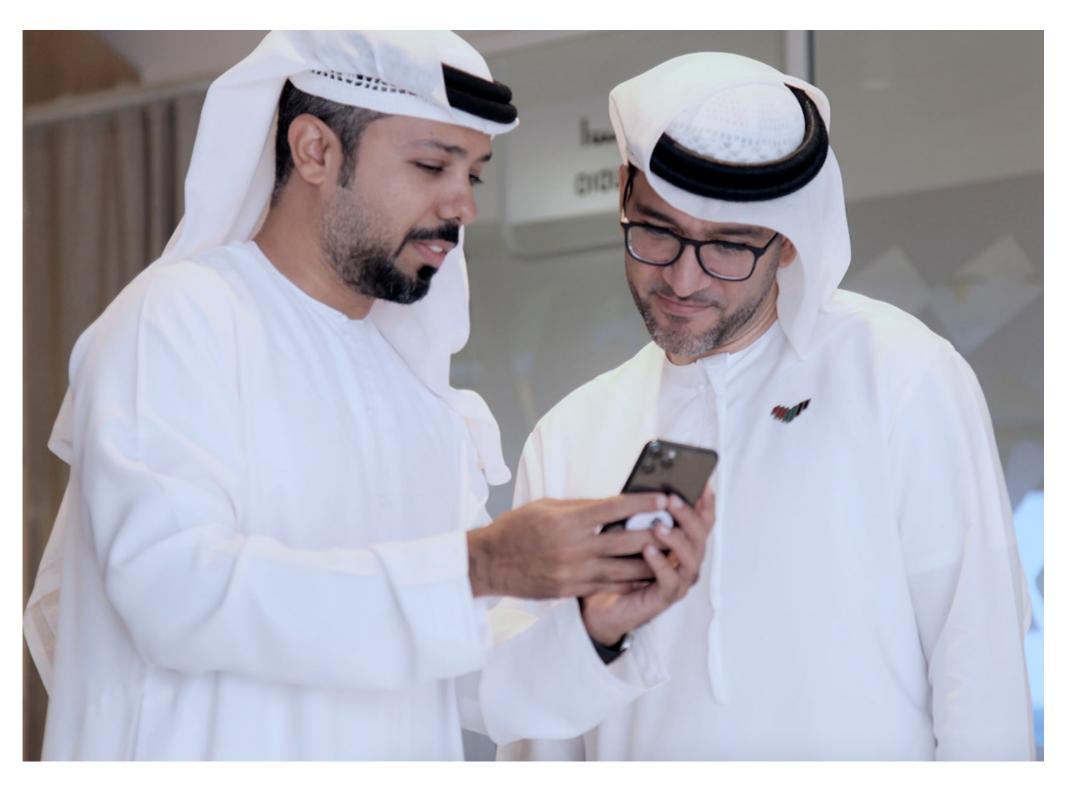


Image **via** New Media Academy.



TOP ACCOUNT BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN/ACCOUNT BASED

	MENA	EGYPT	SAUDI ARABIA	TURKEY	UAE
FACEBOOK	Supercar Blondie	Mustafa Hosny	Mohamed Al-arifi	Galatasaray SK	Supercar Blondie
	Celebrity/Automobiles	Preacher	Scholar	Football Club	Celebrity/Automobiles
	48.2M	35M	22.9M	12.1M	48.2M
INSTAGRAM	Gal Gadot	Mohamed Salah	Ahmad AlShugairi	Nusret Gökçe	Ahlam Alshamsi
	Actress	Footballer	TV Presenter and Activist	Celebrity Chef & Restraunter	Singer
	83.4M	51.7M	15.2M	46.8M	14M
YOUTUBE	AboFlah	Mohamed Ramadan	Mohammed Moshaya Al-Ghamd	netd müzik	Narins Beauty
	Kuwait	Actor and Singer	YouTuber/Content Creator	Digital Music Channel	YouTuber/Content Creator
	25.9M	14M	21.9M	22.6M	13.3M
TWITTER S	Al Arabiya Breaking News Channel 21.8M	Mohamed Salah Footballer 16.9M	Aid al-Qarni Preacher 20.5M	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Politician 19.1M	Al Arabiya Breaking News 21.8M

Table: MENA's Top Accounts by Country of Origin/Account Based, Data **via** Emplifi.









SUMMARY: MOST FOLLOWED AND LIKED ACCOUNTS





Looking in more detail at each of the four platforms covered in this report, below we have outlined - in one handy chart - the top five accounts originating in MENA on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter.

Using likes, followers and subscribers, further demonstrates the diversity of each social media platform, with none of the twenty-five accounts here appearing more than once.

Although content creators, brands and public figures are active on multiple social channels, they each tend to have a platform that their users are more likely to gravitate towards. This usage is typically shaped by the characteristics and functionality of each social network, and reinforces the notion that - when it comes to your digital strategy and footprint - there is no cookie-cutter model. One size does not fit all.



MENA'S MOST FOLLOWERS/SUBSCRIBERS

RANK	FACEBOOK	INSTAGRAM 🞯	YOUTUBE	TWITTER У
#]	Supercar Blondie UAE 48.2M	Gal Gadot	AboFlah Kuwait 25.9M	Al Arabiya UAE 21.8M
#2	Mustafa Hosny	Jacqueline Fernandez	netd müzik	Aid al-Qarni
	Egypt	Bahrain	⊂ Turkey	Saudi Arabia
	35M	57.5M	22.6M	20.5M
#3	Amr Khaled	Mohamed Salah	Mohammed Moshaya Al-Ghamd	Mohamad Alarefe
	Egypt	Egypt	Saudi Arabia	Saudi Arabia
	31.2M	51.7M	21.9M	19.5M
#4	Nancy Ajram	Huda Kattan	TRT Originals Urdu	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
	Lebanon	Iraq	Turkey	Turkey
	30.5M	50.7M	18.5M	19.1M
#5	Jerusalem Prayer Team	Nusret Gökçe (Salt Bae)	Al-Remas	Al Jazeera Arabic
	Israel	Turkey	Iraq	Qatar
	30.4M	46.8M	16.8M	19M



Table: MENA's MENA's Most Followers/Subscribers, Data via Emplifi.







MID-YEAR UPDATE | FACEBOOK

MOST FANS

As in 2021, the most followed Facebook account in the region remains **Supercar**

Blondie. With more than 48 million followers on Facebook alone, fans watch 500 million minutes of content focused on "the coolest cars, tech and gadgets in the world," on the platform each month.

Since launching the site in 2017, Australian-born Alex Hirschi has emerged in the past five years to become arguably the world's biggest female car and **automotive influencer**.

"Our mission is to entertain, as well as encourage a generation of women to lead in traditionally male-dominated industries," their website **notes**. "We always want to inspire a reaction of "How cool is that!"."



#5

JERUSALEN PRAYER TEAN

NAME,

36

#1

#2

#3

#4

Image: Supercar Blondie **via** Facebook.





TOP FIVE MOST LIKED FACEBOOK PAGES

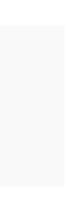
, R/	ANKING AND COUNTRY	FOLLOWERS	GROWTH SINCE END OF 2021	CHANGE IN POSITIO SINCE END OF 202
	Supercar Blondie Fl @SupercarBlondie UAE	48.2M	+3.9M	– NO CHANGE
	Mustafa Hosny f @MustafaHosny E gypt	35M	NO CHANGE	– NO CHANGE
	Amr Khaled f @AmrKhaled E gypt	31.2M	+0.1M	– NO CHANGE
	Nancy Ajram G @NancyAjram L ebanon	30.5M	NO CHANGE	UP FROM #5
	Jerusalem Prayer Team f1 @JerusalemPrayerTeam T Israel	30.4M	-0.3M	DOWN FROM #4

Table: MENA's Top Five Liked Followed Facebooks Pages, Data via Emplifi.











Interestingly, the top five Facebook accounts - in terms of page likes - in the region are the same at the end of June 2022 as they were at the end of 2021.

The top three accounts remain Supercar Blondie and the official pages for the Islamic preacher Mustafa Hosny (35 million followers) and the televangelist Amr Khaled (31.2 million). Meanwhile, the Lebanese singer Nancy Ajram moves up one place (to fourth, with 30.5m fans), swapping places with the **Jerusalem Prayer** Team (30.4m fans), which slips to fifth place.

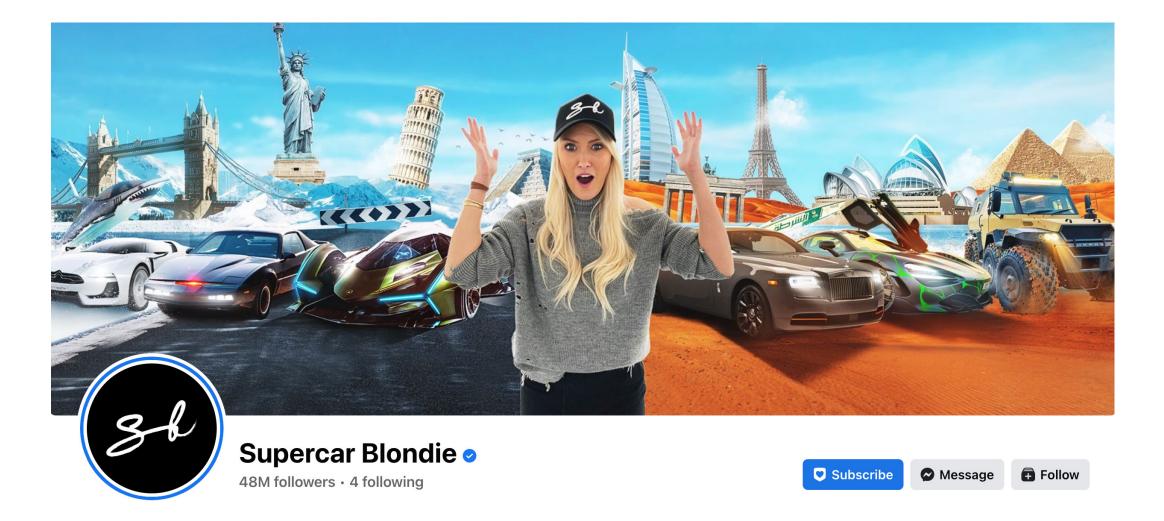


Image: Screenshot showing **Supercar Blondie's** Facebook page.







MOST INTERACTIONS

In contrast to the most liked Facebook pages in MENA, the first six months of 2022 saw a lot of change in terms of accounts with the most engagement. Three of the top five accounts on this list in 2021 (Mustafa **Hosny**, Egyptian newspaper **Youm7** and **Supercar Blondie**) were replaced by new entrants.

Leading the way is the page for Magicano which shares extensive content related to the Egyptian based football team Al Ahly Sporting Club. It's primary Facebook account has just under four million followers. In the first half of 2022 Magicano enjoyed more interactions (172.6 million) on Facebook than it did in the whole of 2021, where the page didn't even feature in Egypt's top five, nevermind the regional charts.



Image: Magicano, August 2022, via Facebook.





TOP PERFORMING PAGES ON FACEBOOK

	NAME, RANK	(ING AND COUNTRY	INTERACTIONS	C
#]	Sl	Magicano Fi @MagicanoMedia Palestine	172.6M	
#2		Screen Mix G OScreenMixx Egypt	151.1M	
#3		Rudaw Fi @RudawEnglish Iraq	117.7M	
#4		Al Jazeera Egypt fi @AJA.Egypt E gypt	79.8M	
#5	JERUSALEM PRAYER TEAM	AlSharqiya f @sharqiyatv Iraq	74.5M	

Table: MENA's Top Performing Facebooks Pages, Data via Emplifi.





HANGE IN POSITION **SINCE END OF 2021**

NEW ENTRY

NO CHANGE

UP FROM #4

NEW ENTRY

NEW ENTRY

Also breaking through in the first two quarters of 2022 were Al Jazeera Egypt (79.8 million interactions) and Al Sharqiya (74.5 million), an Iraqi TV news channel.



Image: AJA Egypt **via** Facebook.

The dominance of pages based in Egypt and Iraq (with the Kurdistan based news site, **Rudaw**, sitting at number three) reflects the popularity of Facebook in those markets. As of April 2022, more than 45.6 million Egyptians use Facebook, akin to 61.8% of the population aged 13+. In Iraq, 19.25 million use Facebook, just over two-thirds (68.2%) of those aged thirteen and above. Globally, Facebook had **2.93 billion** monthly active users at the end of Q2 2022.

Since the end of 2021, Mustafa Hosny (No. 1), Youm7 (No. 3) and Supercar Blondie (No. 5) all dropped from the top five.



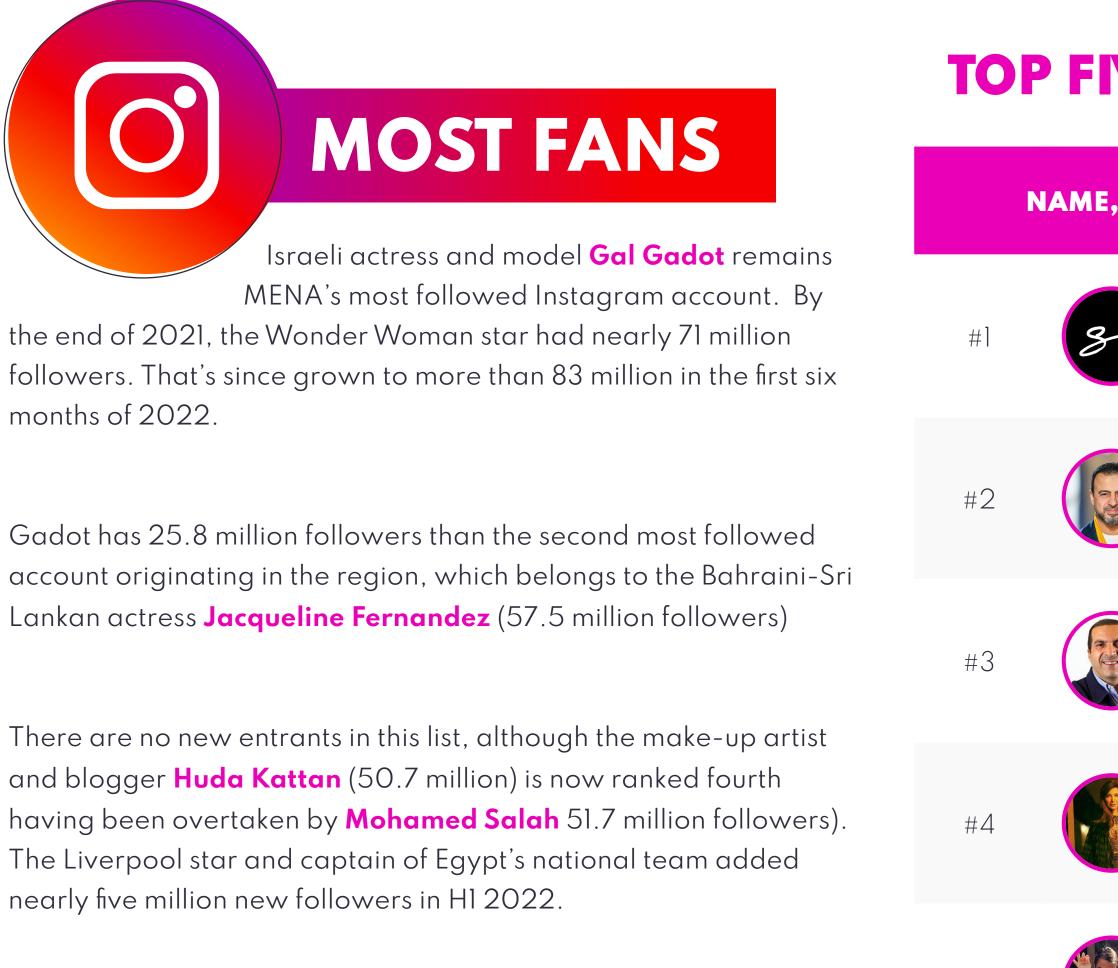












#5

Nusret Gökçe, aka Salt Bae, the Turkish chef and restaurateur wraps up our top five with 46.8 million followers.





TOP FIVE MOST FOLLOWED INSTAGRAM ACCOUNTS

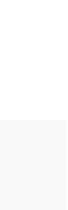
ME, RANH	CING AND COUNTRY	FOLLOWERS	CHANGE IN POSITION SINCE END OF 2021
S-l	Gal Gadot @ @gal_gadot T Israel	83.4M	– NO CHANGE
	Jacqueline Fernandez	62.6M	– NO CHANGE
	Mohamed Salah	51.7M	UP FROM #4
	Huda Kattan © @hudabeauty Iraq	50.7M	DOWN FROM #3
	Nusret Gökçe (Salt Bae) @ @nusr_et ~ Turkey	46.8M	

Table: MENA's Top Five Most Followed Instagram Accounts, Data via Emplifi.

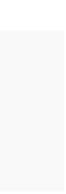














MID-YEAR UPDATE | INSTAGRAM

















Image: Screenshot of Manoto TV's Instagram, May 2022.







MOST INTERACTIONS

As we saw in our 2021 end-of -year report, the profiles with the most interactions on Instagram are distinctive from our list of the most followed accounts. This lack of overlap highlights how there is not necessarily a relationship between the number of followers a user and the engagement an account has.

One again, Manoto TV's Instagram page - with 805.4 million interactions in H1 - has enjoyed considerably more engagement than the next account on our list. That's partly due to the popularity of Instagram in Iran, as well as the volume of posts they make on the platform. The Iranian sports news website Vazesh 3 also had a strong six months, rising to fourth place (194.1 million interactions).

Turkish football team Fenerbahçe Spor Kulübü remains in second place (238.3 million interactions) with another Turkish team, Galatasaray, hot on their heels (232 million interactions).





TOP PERFORMING ACCOUNTS ON INSTAGRAM

	NAME, RANK	(ING AND COUNTRY	INTERACTIONS	C
#1		Manoto	805.4M	
#2	AHCE SPOP TULUB BUILD ALL AND	Fenerbahçe © @fenerbahce Turkey	238.3M	
#3		Galatasaray ◎ @galatasaray ← Turkey	232M	
#4		Varzesh3 © @varzesh3 Iran	194.1M	
#5	JERUSALEM PRAYER TEAM	Ennahar TV 	162.2M	

Table: MENA's Top Performing Instagram Accounts, Data via Emplifi.





CHANGE IN POSITION **SINCE END OF 2021**

NO CHANGE

NO CHANGE

NEW ENTRY

UP FROM #5

NEW ENTRY

Algerian **Ennahar TV** makes its first appearance on this list, coming in at number five. Although they have fewer than six million followers, they enjoyed 162.6 million interactions on Instagram in the first half of the year.



Image: Screenshot of Ennahar TV's Instagram, May 2022.

Since the end of 2021, **Çağrı Taner** (232 million interactions) and **Beşiktaş JK** (194.1million interactions) both dropped from the top five.













MOST FANS

Of the social networks covered in this report YouTube has seen the most change since the end of 2021. Four of the top five most followed accounts in the region during H1 2022 are new entries, with only Mohammed Moshaya Al-Ghamd (aka **mmoshaya**) remaining on the list (where he drops from number one to number three).

The changing of the YouTube guard is led by **AboFlah**, with 25.9 million followers. The Somali YouTuber (real name Hassan Suleiman), attracted considerable attention earlier in the year when he raised \$11 million for the campaign supporting displaced people in the region. His **record breaking fundraising efforts** included the "Longest live-stream (video)", which ran for 268 hours 14 mins 20 seconds and "Most viewers for a charity donation live stream on YouTube."



#5





TOP FIVE MOST FOLLOWED YOUTUBE CHANNELS

ME, RANK	ING AND COUNTRY	FOLLOWERS	CHANGE IN POSITION SINCE END OF 2021
3-l	AboFlah AboFlah K uwait	25.9M	NEW ENTRY
ARTICE SPOR ALLUBRIT	netd müzik netd müzik Turkey	22.6M	NEW ENTRY
	Mohammed Moshaya mmoshaya Saudi Arabia	21.9M	DOWN FROM #1 FOLLOWERS INCREASED FROM 21.2A
	TRT Originals Urdu TRT Originals Urdu Turkey 	18.5M	NEW ENTRY
	Al-Remas Al-Remas - س امیریا، < Iraq	16.8M	NEW ENTRY

Table: MENA's Top Five Most Followed YouTube Channels, Data via Emplifi.





2M

MID-YEAR UPDATE | YOUTUBE



Image: AboFlah, via European Gaming, January 2022.

Other popular YouTube accounts which surged in popularity this year included the channel for **netd müzik** part of the wider video on demand provision provided by the Turkey-based Netd.com (22.6 million followers), TRT Originals Urdu (18.5 million followers)which features dubbed episodes of the Turkish historical drama Payitaht Sultan Abdulhamid ("The Last Emperor") and the Iraq based Arabiclanguage music channel Al-Remas (16.8 million followers).

Since the end of 2021, Enes Batur (15.5 million followers), Anasala (13.4 million followers), **Saad Lamjarred** (13.3 million followers) and **MBC** (11.2 million followers) all dropped from the top five.





MOSTVIDEOVIEWS

Turkey also dominated our list of the YouTube channels with the most views in H1 2022. Among MENA originated services, **netd** müzik (822.2 million views), Trendyol (737 million views) and Kuruluş Osman (468.8 million views) are ranked first, third and fourth respectively. None of these channels featured in our end of 2021 round-up.

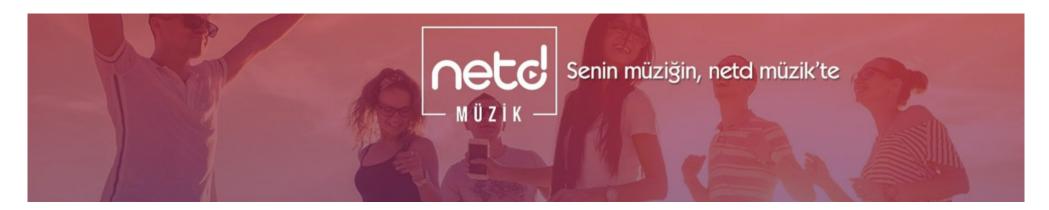


Image **via** YouTube.

That said, as our 2021 report discussed, we've already seen the growing popularity of music on YouTube, manifest here by **netd müzik** taking the top spot for engagement. Kuruluş Osman is another Turkish historical drama, a genre which enjoys huge global reach. The Guardian **explained** back in 2019 how "thanks to international sales and global viewership, Turkey is second only to the US in worldwide TV distribution - finding huge audiences in Russia, China, Korea and Latin America.



TOP PERFORMING CHANNELS ON YOUTUBE

	NAME, RANK	ING AND COUNTRY	INTERACTIONS	C
#1		netd müzik netd müzik Turkey	822.2M VIEWS	
#2		Nas Daily Nas Daily Israel 	766M VIEWS	
#3		Trendyol Trendyol Turkey	737M VIEWS	
#4		Kuruluş Osman ▶ Kuruluş Osman ☞ Turkey	468.8M VIEWS	
#5	3-l	Supercar Blondie Supercar Blondie UAE	459M VIEWS	

Table: MENA's Top Performing YouTube Channels, Data via Emplifi.





HANGE IN POSITION **SINCE END OF 2021**

NEW ENTRY

DOWN FROM #1

NEW ENTRY

NEW ENTRY

NEW ENTRY

Nas Daily, who enjoyed nearly 2 billion views on YouTube last year, remains popular dropping one place to the number two spot, with 766 million views in the first half of 2022.

Perhaps the most striking entry in this list is for the Turkish e-commerce platform **Trendyol**. Serving markets throughout Europe, the channel (737 million views in H1) features commercials, make-up and outfit suggestions, as well as other content featuring people from Turkey's fashion scene. Its popularity is just one indication of the increasingly important role social media plays in e-commerce.

Since the end of 2021, Mmoshaya (723.5m views), Anasala I (702.2m views), **Atv** (618.7m views) and **ON** (528.3m views) all dropped from the top five.

THE MOST POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST JANUARY - JUNE 2022



MOST FANS

The breaking news account for Al Arabiya, the Dubai based Arabic TV news channel, continues to be MENA's most followed account on Twitter with nearly 22 million followers.

د. عانض القرني
@Dr_alqarnee إلى الراقدين على الأسرّة البيضاء،

جمع الله لكم بين الأجر وَالِشفَاء، تذكّروا هذه الدعوة، ولا تيأسوا، ولا تقنطوا من رحمة الله، "وَأَيُّوْبَ إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ أَنَّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ أسأل أرحم الراحمين أن يعافيكم ويشافيكم.

1:01 PM · Jul 30, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

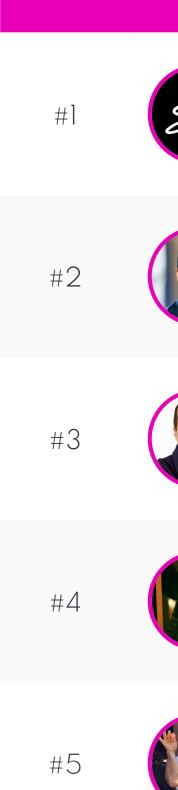
308 Retweets 3 Quote Tweets 467 Likes

Image via Twitter.



Another news channel account, Al Jazeera Arabic is ranked fifth, down one spot from the end of 2021 even though it's follower count has grown by 1.5 million in that time.

In second and third place are the Saudi based preacher **Dr**. Aid al-Qarni and the Muslim scholar Mohamad al-Arefe. Both have around 20 million followers on Twitter and are also active on multiple other social media platforms.



NA



TOP FIVE MOST FOLLOWED TWITTER ACCOUNTS

ME, RANK	(ING AND COUNTRY	FOLLOWERS	CHANGE IN POSITION SINCE END OF 2021
3-l	Al Arabiya GAIArabiya_Brk U AE	21.8M	NO CHANGE FOLLOWERS INCREASED FROM 21.1M
	Aid al-Qarni Dr_alqarnee Saudi Arabia	20.5 M	NEW ENTRY
	Mohamad Alarefe @MohamadAlarefe Saudi Arabia	19.5M	DOWN FROM #2 FOLLOWERS DECREASED BY 0.1M
	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	19.1M	DOWN FROM #3 FOLLOWERS INCREASED FROM 18.3M
	Al Jazeera Arabic GAJArabic Qatar	19M	DOWN FROM #4 FOLLOWERS INCREASED FROM 17.5M

Table: MENA's Top Five Most Followed Twitter Accounts, Data via Emplifi.











Recep Tayyip Erdoğan 🤣

9,628 Tweets



Recep Tayyip Erdoğan 🤣

@RTErdogan

Türkiye devlet görevlisi

Türkiye Cumhurbaşkanı ve AK Parti Genel Başkanı - President of Türkiye and AK Party Chairman

104 Following 19.2M Followers

Image: Screenshot showing **Recep Erdoğan's** Twitter profile.



Recep Erdoğan, the President of Turkey, comes in at number four - down one spot from 2021 - despite growing his followers by a further 1.2 million. With 19.1 million followers, President Erdoğan's Twitter base is some way ahead of his nearest compatriot, **Cem Yılmaz** (15.7 million followers) the Turkish actor, standup comedian, musician, filmmaker, screenwriter, and cartoonist.



METHODOLOGY

This new report explores the most followed, and interacted with, social media accounts in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). It builds on data presented for the first time in the New Media Academy's 2021 report on social media developments in the Middle East.

As with that study, we worked in partnership with **Emplifi** to identify and share the biggest – and most engaged – social media pages and profiles in the MENA region in the first half (H1) of 2022 (January – June).

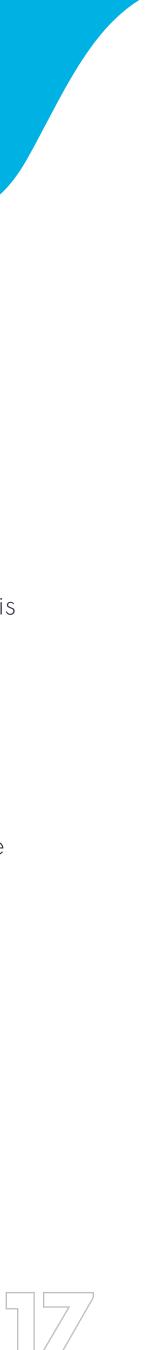
Analytics By



Emplifi monitors more than +15 million social media accounts, making it the largest social media dataset of its kind. Harnessing this data, Emplifi works with more than 7,800 clients across 100 countries around the world, helping marketers and brands gain valuable and actionable knowledge about their industry.

These principles shape this interim report. Featuring previously unpublished data, this white paper provides a unique snapshot of insights into the most followed accounts on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter, across MENA.

We also dive into the pages and profiles on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube which enjoyed the most engagement during the first half of the year, and some of the reasons for these trends.



ABOUT NEW MEDIA ACADEMY



New Media Academy (Arabic, English) was launched in 2020 by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to train Emirati and Arab youth to lead the rapidly growing field of digital media.

To improve their career prospects and enable them to lead as digital citizens in the new economy, the institution provides a range of interactive online programs that are delivered by top digital practitioners and academics from around the world.

Additionally, the academy collaborates with an elite group of influencers in the Arab world and helps institutions and businesses to create digital strategies and creative digital content.

New Media Academy's goals are in line with the four basic requirements in the UAE and the region: talent development, capacity building, preparation for the future and open learning. This reflects the key role the institution plays to ensure a promising future for the country and the region.





You Tube



REPORT AUTHOR & DESIGNER



DAMIAN RADCLIFFE AUTHOR

Damian Radcliffe is the Carolyn S. Chambers Professor in Journalism, a Professor of Practice, an affiliate of the Department for Middle East and North Africa Studies (MENA) and the Agora Journalism Center, and a Research Associate of the Center for Science Communication Research (SCR) at the University of Oregon.

He is also a three-time Knight News Innovation **Fellow** of the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University, an Honorary Research Fellow at Cardiff University's School of Journalism, Media and Culture Studies (JOMEC), and a life fellow of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA).

An experienced Digital Analyst, Journalist and Researcher, Damian writes about digital trends, social media, technology, the business of media, and the craft of journalism. He tweets @damianradcliffe.







TERRA JOHNSTON DESIGNER

Terra Johnston is a digital storyteller and mixed-media artist based in the Seattle, Washington area.

Working with a wide variety of clients she utilizes both her marketing and design background in areas such as brand development, social media content creation, web, and graphic design, media relations, and copywriting.

She also does custom portrait and cartographic commissions and is currently designing the art for a children's book.

THE MOST POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST JANUARY - JUNE

MID-YEAR UPDATE | REFERENCES AND DISCLOSURE

REFERENCES

All of the sources used for the creation of this report are hyperlinked throughout.

DISCLOSURE

Damian Radcliffe is owner/director of Kenja Consulting, LLC (UK) and Kenja Media Consulting (US). The work Professor Radcliffe does for the University of Oregon and for Kenja Consulting are related or overlap in that Professor Radcliffe undertakes research journalism, training, public speaking and consulting in areas which are, or may appear, related to Professor Radcliffe's University of Oregon (UO) duties. Thus, this study could affect Damian Radcliffe's personal financial status.

This does not imply or suggest University of Oregon involvement, responsibility, endorsement, approval, or promotion of any commercial product, service, or outside activity. Any opinions or viewpoints expressed are not official positions of the University of Oregon or endorsed or approved by the University of Oregon.

Professor Radcliffe's outside work activity was reviewed and approved by the University of Oregon in accordance with its conflict of interest and commitment.



