



# International Congress of Arabic Publishing and Creative Industries



ABU DHABI  
INTERNATIONAL  
BOOK FAIR

ORGANIZED BY

مركز أبوظبي  
للغة العربية  
Abu Dhabi Arabic  
Language Centre



# International Congress of Arabic Publishing and Creative Industries

The Congress aims to showcase the **latest trends in publishing**, highlighting the adaptation of books into other formats. The Congress is the first in the Arabic publishing world to facilitate conversation between publishers, content creators, thought leaders, and entrepreneurs from different platforms. The event will explore **how different media can thrive as the business of storytelling evolves**.

35

Speakers

3

Keynote  
Presentations

6

In-depth Panel  
Discussions

1

Fireside  
Discussion

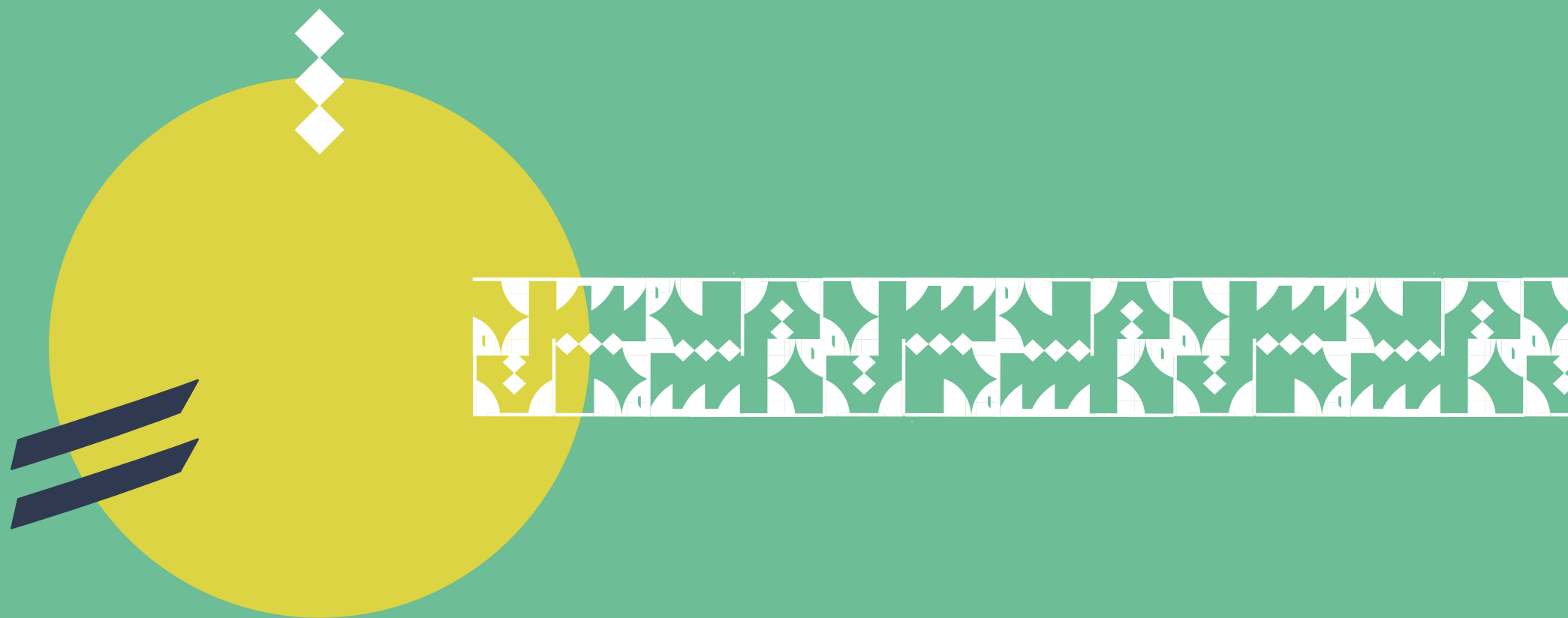
22 May, 2022 | 10:00 AM - 6:30 PM

Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre – Conference Hall A

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

## Congress Schedule

9:00 AM - 9:45 AM	REGISTRATION AND REFRESHMENTS
10:00 AM - 10:30 AM	<p><b>Opening Ceremony</b></p> <p><b>Welcome Address</b> H.E. Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman, Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi</p> <p><b>Special Guest Speaker</b> Sheikha Bodour Al Qasimi, President of the International Publishers Association (IPA)</p> <p><b>Opening Remarks</b> H.E. Dr. Ali Bin Tamim, Chairman, Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre</p>
10:30 AM - 10:50 AM	<p><b>Keynote Speech:</b> "The 70-20-10 Model for Innovation in Publishing". Ann Hiatt, Bestselling Author, Silicon Valley Veteran, and Investor</p>
10:50 AM - 11:05 AM	<b>Q&amp;A</b>
11:05 AM - 11:50 AM	<b>Panel Discussion 1: Arabic Publishing: Where Are We, and Where Are We Heading?</b>
11:50 AM - 12:30 PM	<b>Panel Discussion 2: Education and Publishing in the Virtual World</b>
12:30 AM - 1:30 PM	LUNCH
1:30 PM - 1:55 PM	<p><b>Keynote Speech:</b> "Reading in a Time of Distraction" Nicholas Carr, Pulitzer Prize Finalist for "The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains," and New York Times bestselling author.</p>
1:55 PM - 2:05 PM	<b>Q&amp;A</b>
2:05 PM - 2:50 PM	<b>Panel Discussion 3: Is Social Media the New Book Market?</b>
2:50 PM - 3:30 PM	<b>Panel Discussion 4: Exporting Arabic to the World</b>
3:30 PM - 3:45 PM	REFRESHMENTS BREAK/NETWORKING
3:45 PM - 4:05 PM	<p><b>Keynote Speech:</b> "Digital Self-Determination: How Countries Can Choose Their Own Paths in Ebooks &amp; Audiobooks" Michael Tamblin, CEO of Global Digital Bookseller Rakuten Kobo</p>
4:05 PM - 04:20 PM	<b>Q&amp;A</b>
4:20 PM - 5:05 PM	<b>Panel Discussion 5: Arabic Media Crossover: Adapting Books Into Audio, Film, and Games</b>
5:05 PM - 5:50 PM	<b>Panel Discussion 6: Is the Reader the New Author?</b>
6:00 PM - 6:20 PM	<b>Fireside Discussion: What Does the Future Hold for Arabic Content on the Internet?</b>
6:20 PM-6:30 PM	CLOSING REMARKS



Congress  
Program



# Congress Program

9:00 am – 9:45 am      Registration and Refreshments

10:00 am – 10:30 am      Opening Ceremony



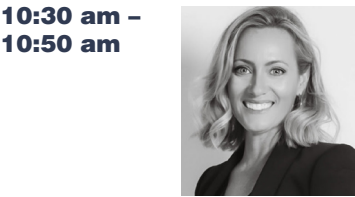
**Welcome Address**  
H.E. Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman,  
Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi



**Special Guest Speaker**  
Sheikha Bodour Al Qasimi  
President of the International Publishers  
Association (IPA)



**Opening Remarks**  
H.E. Dr. Ali Bin Tamim  
Chairman, Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre



**Keynote Speech: “The 70-20-10 Model  
for Innovation in Publishing”.**  
Ann Hiatt  
Bestselling Author,  
Silicon Valley Veteran, and Investor

10:50 am – 11:05 am      Q&A

11:05 am – 11:50 am      **Panel Discussion 1:  
Arabic Publishing: Where Are We, and Where Are We  
Heading?**

What are the top Arabic publishing markets? Which genres are most popular, and what are their market shares? How big are digital books? How important are imports? Are imports and exports fully serving the Arabic market?



**Panelists**



**Sherif Bakr**  
Publisher  
Al Arabi Publishing  
and Distributing



**Shereen Kreidieh**  
General Manager  
Asala Publishing House



**Stefanie Lamprinidi**  
Regional Content  
Expansion Manager  
Storytel



**Ruediger  
Wischenbart**  
President and Founder  
Content and Consulting

**Moderator**



**Carlo Carrenho**  
Publishing Consultant

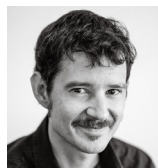


## 11:50 am – 12:30 am **Panel Discussion 2: Education and Publishing in the Virtual World**

Few sectors are more affected by Covid than education. The pandemic heightened the importance of and brought significant attention to digital learning platforms. Are these new platforms here to stay? What is their role in higher education? Will open access become a reality?



### Panelists



**Cristóbal Cobo**  
Senior Education  
Specialist, World Bank



**Al Kingsley**  
CEO Of Edtech  
Company NetSupport  
and Chair of Multiple  
Educational Boards



**Bissan Korban**  
Head of Higher  
Education Products  
and Services MENAT  
Region, Pearson ME  
Publishing



**John Russell**  
Director of Education  
Alef Education

### Moderator



**Hanada Taha  
Thomure**  
Endowed Professor  
of Arabic Language  
and Director of the  
Arabic Language  
Center for Research &  
Development,  
Zayed University



**12:30 pm – 01:30 pm** **Lunch**

**01:30 pm – 01:55 pm**



## **Keynote Speech: “Reading in a Time of Distraction”.**

Nicholas Carr  
Pulitzer Prize finalist for “The Shallows:  
What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains,” and New York Times  
Bestselling Author.

**01:55 pm – 02:05 pm** **Q&A**

## **02:05 pm – 02:50 pm** **Panel Discussion 3: Is Social Media the New Book Market?**

Social media is playing an increasingly important role in book publishing. Big western houses now want authors with a platform, usually in the form of thousands of followers on social media. Publishers invest heavily in digital marketing as e-commerce comprises an increasing portion of the book market. Is this a bubble or a solid trend? Does the Arabic market have the same relationship to social media as other markets? How influential are booktubers and TikTok influencers in terms of book sales?



### Panelists



**Sami Al-Batati**  
Founder and Presenter  
of YouTube Channel the  
Shadow of the Book



**Annie Arsane**  
Head of Platform  
strategy, METAP, TikTok



**Joelle Yazbeck**  
Partner Manager,  
MENA, Twitter

### Moderator



**Ed Nawotka**  
International and  
Bookselling Editor,  
Publishers Weekly



02:50 pm – 03:30 pm **Panel Discussion 4:**  
**Exporting Arabic to the World**

What are the challenges of selling Arabic translation rights to other markets?  
What are the best practices and success stories? How can Arabic literature reach more readers around the world?



**Panelists**



**Saeed Al Tunaiji**  
Acting Executive  
Director, Abu Dhabi  
Arabic Language Centre



**Rawan Al-Dabbas**  
MENA Regional Director,  
International Federation  
of the Phonographic  
Industry (IFPI)



**Juergen Boos**  
President and Chief  
Executive Officer, the  
Frankfurt Book Fair/  
Frankfurt Buchmesse



**Persa Koumoutsis**  
Writer, translator of  
Arabic literature, and  
co-founder and director,  
the Centre of Greek and  
Arabic Literature and  
Culture in Greece

**Moderator**



**Hannah Johnson**  
Publisher,  
Publishing Perspectives

03:30 pm – 03:45 pm **Refreshments Break/Networking**

03:45 pm – 04:05 pm



**Keynote Speech:**  
**Digital Self-Determination:  
How Countries Can Choose Their Own  
Paths in Ebooks & Audiobooks**

Michael Tamblyn,  
CEO of global digital bookseller Rakuten Kobo

04:05 pm – 04:20 pm

**Q&A**

04:20 pm – 05:05 pm

**Panel Discussion 5:**  
**Arabic Media Crossover: Adapting Books Into Audio,  
Film, and Games**

Streaming video is becoming the main source of content for users all over the world, and companies are seeking localized, original content in numerous languages. This has inspired production companies to generate creative content in multiple formats, including music, film, TV, and digital gaming. How can the Arabic publishing industry maximize the appeal of original Arabic content around the world while maintaining its cultural distinctiveness?



**Panelists**



**Maha Abdullah**  
MENA Localization  
Consultant and Regional  
Languages Expert – Ex-  
NETFLIX and Disney+  
Streaming Services



**Todd Gallicano**  
Author, Hollywood  
Screenwriter;  
Podcast Host



**Sultan Al Ryami**  
Head of Gaming and  
eSports, AD Gaming,  
Creative Media Authority,  
Department of Culture  
and Tourism - Abu Dhabi



**Jonathan Knight**  
General Manager,  
Games,  
The New York Times

**Moderator**



**Michael Garin**  
Director General  
of Creative Media  
Authority, Department  
of Culture and Tourism -  
Abu Dhabi

**05:05 pm – 05:50 pm**    **Panel Discussion 6:**  
**Is the Reader the New Author?**

New digital platforms have facilitated content creation and publication to such an extent that traditional publishers are no longer required. Are digital platforms the future of publishing? What are the advantages and risks of this market? Will the trend have a significant effect on the Arabic language market?



**Panelists**



**Giacomo D'Angelo**  
CEO, StreetLib.com



**Mohamed Ellabban**  
Head of Arabic Community, Quora



**Alan Lee Janney**  
Award-Winning Self-published Author

**Moderator**



**Ed Nawotka**  
International and Bookselling Editor, Publishers Weekly

**06:00 pm – 06:20 pm**    **Fireside Discussion:**  
**What Does the Future Hold for Arabic Content on the Internet?**

Good-quality Arabic content on the internet is limited, despite Arabic being the fifth-most spoken language in the world. Trusted sources are very difficult to find, leading to less trust and high levels of frustration among knowledge seekers. This is an opportunity loss for the region. Can we bridge this divide before the knowledge gap with the rest of the world widens further? If so, how?



**Interviewer**



**Nafez Dakkak**  
Managing Partner at Work and Learning Venture Studio BLDR.

**Speaker**



**Abdulsalam Haykal**  
Executive Chairman, Digital Knowledge and Platform Provider Majarra

**06:20 pm – 06:30 pm**    **Closing Remarks**





# Participants Biographies







### Maha Abdullah (Panel Discussion 5)

Maha Abdullah has more than 20 years of experience working in the translation and localization industries. She worked as the MENA localization consultant for Disney+ Streaming Services, and served as the regional language manager for Netflix MENA, Turkey, & Africa, and she led the Netflix Arabic launch linguistic efforts in 2016. She created a number of research documents and guidelines that are still used by Netflix, including market research for internal and external teams and stakeholders. She also worked with the engineering and product design teams to make sure Netflix provided the best right-to-left and bidirectional UX experience. Maha has a bachelor's degree in English literature, and diplomas in Arabic and German languages, neuro-linguistic programming, and the dialogue of civilizations.



### Annie Arsane (Panel Discussion 3)

Annie Arsane has spent most of her 15 year career honing her brand-building skills in one of the best marketing schools in the world—Procter and Gamble. She spent over a decade specializing in insights and analytics before she moved to brand management, where she led the Pantene business in the MENA region.

Annie joined TikTok at the beginning of 2021. She established the platform strategy team, responsible for building the TikTok for Business brand across METAP. When she isn't working, Annie spends time with her daughters, Ella and Carlie, who finally think she is cool since she joined TikTok. She is an avid reader but often finds herself quoting the books she reads, which her colleagues politely tolerate.



### Sherif Bakr (Panel Discussion 1)

Sherif Bakr has worked in publishing, and at Al Arabi Publishing and Distributing, since 1997.

Al Arabi Publishing and Distributing was founded in 1975, and its #Different\_Books series, launched in the past 10 years, includes over 200 titles from 55 countries.

Bakr also served as general secretary of the Egyptian Publishing Association, where he was responsible for the development of publishing for four years. He is an elected member of the International Publishing Association's Freedom to Publish Committee, a member of the Book and Publication Committee of the Supreme Council of Culture (Cairo), and part of Egypt's Export Council for Printing, Packaging, Paper, Literary and Artistic Works.



### Sami Al-Batati (Panel Discussion 3)

Sami Al-Batati was born in Riyadh. He graduated from the College of Engineering at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals with honors and received the Reader of the Year (the "iRead") Award, organized by the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra), in 2017.

He is the founder and presenter of the "Shadow of the Book" channel on YouTube, which has 345,000 subscribers and more than 160 reviews. He has worked as a cultural advisor to a number of private entities, and has participated in cultural seminars with the Ministry of Culture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Ministry of Culture and Youth in the United Arab Emirates. He is the director of the Reading Enrichment Program (iRead) at the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture.



### H.E. Dr. Ali Bin Tamim (Opening Remarks)

HE Dr. Ali Bin Tamim is the Chairman of the newly established Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Center and has been the Secretary General of Sheikh Zayed Book Award since November 2011.

Throughout his career, Bin Tamim assumed several roles. He served as a chairman of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Centre, chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Archives as well as member of the Board of Directors. Bin Tamim served as a Jury member of several cultural awards in UAE; most notably the Prince of Poets Program, Dubai Cultural Award and the Khalifa Educational Award. He also served as member of the Supreme Committee of the State Appreciation Award. Bin Tamim managed the Kalima Translation Project and was the General Manager of Abu Dhabi Media Company from 2016 to 2019.

Bin Tamim received his Doctorate Degree in Literary Critique from Yarmouk University in Jordan in 2005. He is a seasoned patron of the Arabic written word with a long record of valuable contributions to the field of Culture and Heritage in the United Arab Emirates.



### Juergen Boos (Panel Discussion 4)

Juergen Boos has been trained as a publisher at Herder Verlag (Freiburg) in the early 1980s and has degrees in both marketing and organisational theory. He has held management positions at Droemer Knaur Verlag (Munich), Carl Hanser Verlag (Munich), as well as Springer Science and Business Media (now Springer Science) and John Wiley & Sons (Weinheim). He became president and CEO of the Frankfurter Buchmesse GmbH (Frankfurt Book Fair) in 2005 and is both president of LITPROM (Society for the Promotion of African, Asian and Latin American Literature) and managing director of LitCam (Frankfurter Buchmesse Literacy Campaign).

He is the recipient of the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art (2013) and an honorary degree from the Ivane Javakishvili Tbilisi State University. The French embassy appointed him a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres (Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters) in 2018. He is also a member of the Scientific Committee of Sheikh Zayed Book Award and the Akademie Deutscher Buchpreis (German Book Prize Academy).



### Carlo Carrenho (Panel Discussion 1)

Carlo Carrenho is a Publishing Consultant based in Sweden and head of international business development at the Italian digital aggregator StreetLib. He was the founder of book trade media title PublishNews in both Brazil and Spain. Along with a partner in his home country of Brazil, he recently launched Pop Stories, an audiobook company. He is also the co-organizer of Reboot Books, a mixture of conference, think tank, and community.

Carlo majored in economics at the University of São Paulo and graduated from the Radcliffe Publishing Course. Throughout his career, Carlo has focused on digital developments in the publishing industry and new business models. He has held executive positions at companies such as Thomas Nelson (Brazil), Ediuoro (Brazil), and Word Audio Publishing International (Sweden). He has also consulted for companies in Brazil, Germany, Finland, Spain, Argentina, Canada, and the U.S.

Carlo lives in the idyllic town of Trosa in Sweden with his wife Carla and two kids. He loves movies, books, travelling, and just sitting and thinking by the piers of his town.



### Nicholas Carr (Keynote Speaker)

Nicholas Carr is an acclaimed writer whose work focuses on the intersection of technology, culture, and business. His book “The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains” was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in nonfiction and a New York Times bestseller. Nick is a visiting professor of sociology at Williams College in Massachusetts and was formerly executive editor of the Harvard Business Review.

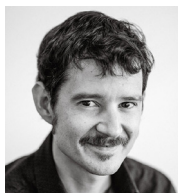
In addition to “The Shallows,” Nick’s books include “The Glass Cage: Automation and Us,” which the New York Review of Books called “a chastening meditation of the human future;” “The Big Switch: Rewiring the World, from Edison to Google,” a national bestseller that the Financial Times called “the best read so far about the shift to cloud computing;” and the notorious “Does IT Matter?” His most recent book, “Utopia Is Creepy,” is a collection of essays.

is an acclaimed writer whose work focuses on the intersection of technology, culture, and business. His book “The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains” was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in nonfiction and a New York Times bestseller. Nick is a visiting professor of sociology at Williams College in Massachusetts and was formerly executive editor of the Harvard Business Review.

Nick has written for many publications, including The Atlantic, the Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, Wired, Nature, and MIT Technology Review. His essays, including “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” and “The Great Forgetting,” have been collected in several anthologies, including The Best American Science and Nature Writing, The Best Spiritual Writing, and The Best Technology Writing. In 2015, he received the Neil Postman Award for Career Achievement in Public Intellectual Activity from the Media Ecology Association.

Nick is a former member of the Encyclopedia Britannica’s editorial board of advisors, was on the steering board of the World Economic Forum’s cloud computing project, and was a writer-in-residence at the University of California at Berkeley’s journalism school. Since 2005, he has written the popular blog Rough Type. He holds a B.A. from Dartmouth College and an M.A. in English and American Literature and Language from Harvard University.

In addition to speaking at a wide range of corporate, professional, and scholarly events, Nick has appeared as a commentator on many television and radio programs, including NPR’s “All Things Considered” and “OnPoint,” the “PBS NewsHour,” MSNBC’s “Morning Joe,” “CBS Sunday Morning,” and the “Colbert Report.”



### Cristóbal Cobo (Panel Discussion 2)

Cristóbal Cobo is a Senior education specialist at the World Bank, focusing on the effective and appropriate use of new technologies in education.

From 2014–2019, Dr. Cobo served as founding director of the Center for Research at the Ceibal Foundation in Uruguay, leading initiatives to learn from Plan Ceibal, Uruguay’s educational innovation center.

Previously, Cristóbal spent 10 years as an associate researcher at the Oxford Internet Institute at the University of Oxford (UK). He also served as external evaluator for organizations in the U.S., Canada, and at the U.N. Cristóbal has provided keynote addresses in over 30 countries and spoken at four TEDx events. He has published four books and over 80 academic articles.

A native of Chile, Cristóbal received his doctorate in human-computer interaction from the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Cristóbal is currently senior fellow for The Inter-American Dialogue, and has been featured on CNN, Deutsche Welle, El País o Le Monde Diplomatique, the Wall Street Journal and the World Economic Forum.



### Rawan Al-Dabbas (Panel Discussion 4)

Rawan Al-Dabbas is the Regional director of the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI), MENA. Rawan leads IFPI’s work across the region to promote the value of recorded music, expand its commercial uses, and campaign for the rights of record producers. Prior to that, Rawan, a lawyer by trade, spent seven years heading the Copyright and International Relations department at the Emirates Publishers Association. There, she enabled the Association’s interaction with local, regional, and international stakeholders, including government bodies, on a range of issues pertinent to the UAE’s publishing industry.

Rawan has been key at enhancing the copyright legal framework for publishers in the UAE, facilitating discussions between stakeholders—including the UAE Ministry of Economy—in order to establish the region’s first copyright management organization, ERRA (The Emirates Reprographic Rights Management Association).



### Nafez Dakkak (Fireside Discussion)

Nafez Dakkak is the Managing partner at BLDR, a venture studio focused on pioneering the future of work and learning in the MENA region.

Nafez is the former CEO of the Queen Rania Foundation’s London office, where he oversaw the foundation’s strategic partnerships and talent developmen, and led the foundation’s engagement with the education entrepreneurship sector.

Nafez founded and is the executive chairman of Edraak.org, an Arabic online education portal that reaches over five million learners across the MENA region. An initiative of the Queen Rania Foundation, Edraak’s learners come from all across the region and include disadvantaged youth in Gaza, Syria, and Iraq. Nafez was recognized as one of the top 50 “Makers+Shakers” in education technology globally by EdtechXGlobal in 2016. He also received the Order of Independence First Class on behalf of Edraak from HM Abdullah II King of Jordan in 2017.

Nafez writes on education reform and technology regularly in Arabic and English publications, including the Stanford Social Innovation Review, Harvard Business Review Arabic, and Edsurge. Nafez has a master’s in education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.



### Giacomo D'Angelo (Panel Discussion 6)

Giacomo D’Angelo is the CEO of StreetLib.com, a publishing platform that manages over 500,000 titles from publishers and authors around the world. StreetLib acts as a gateway distributor, delivering digital books and audiobooks to and from anywhere in the world.

At StreetLib, Giacomo drives the company’s strategy and international expansion with a global outlook and a special focus on emerging markets. Giacomo combines a passion for the Internet and blockchain technologies with his love for books, which he believes are the best tool for improving human potential. As a software engineer-turned-CEO, Giacomo believes that we are on the cusp of a new creative renaissance on the internet, one that will have a huge impact on the \$150 billion global book publishing industry—and beyond. At StreetLib, he and his team are building a next-generation publishing ecosystem to tap into this exciting opportunity. Giacomo’s professional blog is at <https://giak.medium.com>.



### Mohamed Ellabban (Panel Discussion 6)

Mohamed Ellabban is the Head of the Arabic Community at Quora, where he leads the platform's effort to build its community for Arabic speakers all over the world. He is a multi-skilled social media savvy with over 12 years in online strategic planning, digital communications, building online communities, managing digital capacities, and crisis communications to develop digital media projects in several organizations.

Alongside his work at Quora, Ellabban serves as an advisory council member at the University of South Florida's digital marketing program, where he provides pertinent insights and helps faculty and program participants strengthen the links between the industry and academia. He has also served as an advisory council member at George Washington University School of Business's Digital Marketing Program. Prior to joining Quora, he worked as a social engagement strategist at the American Red Cross, where he led the grey sky operations during crises and disasters, and served as the organization's subject matter expert.



### Todd Calgi Gallicano (Panel Discussion 5)

Todd Calgi Gallicano is the author of *Guardians of the Gryphon's Claw*, *The Selkie of San Francisco*, and *Search for the Swan Maiden*, the first three books in the critically acclaimed "Sam London Adventure series". The books encourage readers to learn more about mythology and folklore, and to visit and support the world's majestic national parks. They are also available in German under the title "Magic Guardians."

When he's not working on the next Sam London adventure, Mr. Gallicano is a Hollywood screenwriter. A graduate of New York University's School of Film and Television, Mr. Gallicano began his career in the film industry with Italian film producer Dino De Laurentiis. He has sold screenplays to DreamWorks SKG and Netflix, and has developed scripts with 20th Century Fox, Warner Bros., Blumhouse, 21 Laps, Heyday, and other major production companies. His screenplay "Best. Christmas. Ever." is currently in production for Netflix and stars Heather Graham, Brandy Norwood, Jason Biggs, and Matt Cedeño.

Mr. Gallicano has been a featured speaker at conferences; spoken to thousands of students about storytelling; appeared in news articles and television; written for major publications; and hosts "The Creature Files" podcast, where he talks with experts and eyewitnesses about creatures from mythology and folklore.



### Michael Garin (Panel Discussion 5)

Michael Garin is a highly respected media industry executive with more than 50 years of experience. He was appointed CEO of twofour54 Abu Dhabi, the Emirate's media and entertainment hub, in January 2020. Today, more than 600 media companies from around the world, including CNN, SkyNews Arabia, Unity Technologies, and Ubisoft call twofour54 home.

Michael joined twofour54 from Image Nation Abu Dhabi, where he served as CEO, overseeing Image Nation's business strategy and operations and playing a vital role in managing and forging key international partnerships. Michael also spent four years as a member of the executive committee of the Abu Dhabi Media Company.

His media career began at Time Inc., where he worked for TIME, Fortune, and Time-Life Television for over a decade. From there, Michael helped co-found what would eventually become Lorimar-Telepictures, a leading independent television company in the U.S. His other previous roles included CEO of Central European Media Enterprises and global head of media and telecommunications investment banking for ING.



### Ann Hiatt (Keynote Speaker)

Ann Hiatt is a bestselling author, executive consultant, speaker, and investor. She is a Silicon Valley veteran with 15 years' experience as the right hand to Jeff Bezos (former CEO and founder of Amazon), Marissa Mayer (former CEO, Yahoo!) and Eric Schmidt (former CEO and executive chairman at Google/Alphabet).

Ann relocated from Silicon Valley to Europe in 2018 and sits on several boards of directors in the UK. She also consults with CEOs and their leadership teams across the globe on c-suite optimization through leadership retreats and training. She is also a sought-after public speaker and has been on hundreds of stages across five continents.

She has published articles in publications such as Harvard Business Review, Fast Company and CNBC. She has also contributed to articles in the New York Times, Economic Times, the Financial Times and Forbes. Her first book, "Bet On Yourself," was published by HarperCollins in 2021.



### Abdulsalam Haykal (Fireside Discussion)

Abdulsalam Haykal is an entrepreneur and investor focused on making knowledge and information otherwise unavailable in Arabic accessible to most Arabic-speaking communities in the region. He continues a family business legacy that goes back to 1939.

Abdulsalam is the founder and executive chairman of Majarra (formerly Haykal Media), the region's leading provider of premium digital knowledge and information platforms in Arabic. Flagship products include the Arabic editions of Harvard Business Review, MIT Technology Review, Stanford Social Innovation Review, Popular Science, Fortune, and Psychologies. Majarra also produces Manhom, the largest directory of individuals and companies in the Arabic language. Abdulsalam is a founder and board member of Transtek Systems, an enterprise software systems company with market-leading products for fixed assets, inventory, maintenance, and AML. He is also the founder and chairman of Lableb, an Arabic-natural language processing (NLP) product company. Abdulsalam serves on the board of trustees of the American University of Beirut, and on the UAE's Arabic Language Advisory Council. He was recognized by the World Economic Forum as a Young Global Leader, and by the Arab Thought Foundation, which awarded him the Media Innovation Award. He is a graduate of the American University of Beirut; SOAS, University of London, and the executive programs at the Harvard Kennedy School and Yale University.



### Alan Lee Janney (Panel Discussion 6)

Alan Lee Janney is the author of 15 mysteries and thrillers. His books have been Amazon bestsellers in multiple categories. A hybrid writer, he publishes through his own imprint as well as with Podium Audio and Tantor Media.

He lives in Roanoke, Virginia, with his wife and three children, and he looks forward to being your favorite mystery writer for the next twenty years.



### Hannah Johnson (Panel Discussion 4)

Hannah Johnson is the publisher of international book industry magazine Publishing Perspectives, which provides daily information and news about book markets around the world. In addition to building partnerships with international cultural and trade organizations, she works with the Frankfurt Book Fair to organize and support a number of its overseas initiatives. Hannah has also worked as the managing editor for an online media company, The Hooch Life, focused on craft distillers and cocktail experts. Prior to that, she worked as a project manager for the Frankfurt Book Fair's New York office, managing various business and marketing activities.



### Al Kingsley (Panel Discussion 2)

Al Kingsley is the CEO of the edtech company NetSupport, and has almost 30 years' experience in educational technology and digital safeguarding as well as a passion for education, governance, and improving organisational performance.

Al has more than 20 years of governance experience, and serves as chair of Peterborough's Hampton Academies Trust and the Richard Barnes Academy. He is also chair of his region's Governors' Leadership Group, the Special Education Needs and Disabilities Board, and Employment and Skills Board. Al sits on the Regional Schools Commissioner's Advisory Board for the East of England and North London. He is a FED co-chair of two groups and chair of the British Educational Suppliers Association's EdTech Group.

Al is a well-known face in edtech around the world and popular podcaster who focuses on thought-provoking conversations about education technology, digital strategy, and improved learning outcomes. He is the author of "My Secret #EdTech Diary: Looking at Educational Technology Through a Wider Lens" (John Catt Educational).



### Jonathan Knight (Panel Discussion 5)

Jonathan Knight has been working in the computer and video game industry for 25 years. He began as a producer at Activision, and has worked as an executive producer / studio head at major video game publishers including EA, Zynga, and Warner Bros. Interactive. He has been the production and creative leader on a number of major game franchises, including The Sims, Harry Potter: Wizards Unite, The Simpsons Game, FarmVille, Words With Friends, Wolfenstein, and DC Comics.

At EA, he was the creative force behind the blockbuster game Dante's Inferno, overseeing the game's story, development, and trans-media projects, including a comic book series, an animated feature, and the action figure. Jonathan lives in California, and is currently the general manager of games for the New York Times, operating and empowering the team that brings daily joy to puzzle solvers with games like Spelling Bee and the legendary New York Times Crossword.



### Bissan Korban (Panel Discussion 2)

Bissan Korban is a products and publishing expert with more than 15 years of experience in education, including both K-12 and higher ed. She is currently the head of products and services, higher education, at Pearson Education in the MENAT region. Previously, Bissan headed product development and publishing for Pearson across the Middle East region. There, she contributed to many curriculum reform efforts, including the development of bilArabi, the innovative K-12 educational program for both native and nonnative speakers of Arabic.

Prior to Pearson, Bissan was an instructional designer and product owner with global players such as McGraw Hill. She holds a master of education management from the Lebanese American University, a bachelor's degree in education from the American University of Beirut, and a teaching diploma. She currently resides in Dubai and is the proud mother of three children.



### Persa Koumoutsis (Panel Discussion 4)

Persa Koumoutsis is a novelist and literary translator. She was born in Cairo, and moved to Greece following her studies in English and Arabic literature at the Egyptian University of Cairo. She has been working as a literary translator since 1992 and has translated more than 40 titles from Arabic into Greek, including 14 novels by the Nobel Prize-winning Egyptian author Naguib Mahfouz.

Ms. Koumoutsis has received numerous awards, including the International Cavafy Prize for translation (2001), honorary medals from the Egyptian Ministry of Education (2008 and 2010), a special honorary award from Al Azhar University's school of languages (2015), and the first Translation Guild Award for the Anthology of Modern Arabic Poetry (2017).

She has also published eight books, including "West of the Nile," "In the streets of Cairo," "A Walk With Naguib Mahfouz," and "Alexandrian Voices," all of which have been translated into Arabic. In 2019, with the organization CulturePolis, she co-created and now directs the Centre of Greek and Arabic Literature and Culture.

In 2021 she was awarded the "Achievement Award" for Translation and International Understanding by the Sheikh Hamad International Organization.



### Dr. Shereen Kreidieh (Panel Discussion 1)

Dr. Shereen Kreidieh has a bachelor's degree in elementary education, a teaching diploma in early childhood education, a master's in children's literature, and a doctorate in publishing from Oxford Brookes University.

Dr. Kreidieh established and manages Dar Asala, which has produced high-quality children's books in Arabic since 1998. She also teaches children's literature and social work at Haigazian University in Beirut. Dr. Kreidieh is an alumna of the British Council's International Young Publishers and Cultural Leader program, and was on the Book and Reading Promotion committee for Lebanon's Ministry of Culture. She currently serves as the president of Lebanese Board of Books for Young Children (the Lebanese chapter of IBBY) and is a member of IBBY International's executive committee. Shereen was a member of Hans Christian Andersen Award jury in 2018.





### **Stefanie Lamprinidi (Panel Discussion 1)**

Stefanie Lamprinidi is the Regional content manager for Storytel's non-European markets. She leads the local content strategies and supports regional content acquisition. She previously worked on Storytel's expansion, driving the content development in the company's new markets.

Prior to Storytel, Stefanie served in multiple sales and business development roles in the publishing sector, working across the UK and international markets with Hachette UK and Penguin Random House UK.



### **H.E. Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak (Welcome Address)**

A member of the Executive Council of Abu Dhabi, overseeing some of the Emirate's most significant institutions across the culture, tourism, media, entertainment, and real estate sectors, HE Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak plays a critical role in driving Abu Dhabi's growth as a sustainable, diversified and globally-integrated economy.

Al Mubarak was appointed as the Chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi) in 2015, where he oversees the cultural development of the Emirate and its promotion as a global destination, through the integration of tourism regulations and the active engagement of local, regional and international audiences.

Since its inception and under His Excellency's leadership, DCT Abu Dhabi has achieved remarkable milestones including the opening of Louvre Abu Dhabi in 2017, recognised globally as one of the world's most iconic cultural attractions, as well as the reopening of Qasr Al Hosn, the oldest landmark in Abu Dhabi, representing the emirate's evolution into a modern, global metropolis.

Al Mubarak is also the Chairman of Aldar Properties, the Emirate's leading real estate developer, which also plays a key part in the development and provision of international-standard education through Aldar Academies.

In addition, his Excellency is Chairman of Miral Asset Management, where he has led the transformation of key areas within the Emirate, including Yas Island, and has developed strategic partnerships such as the one established with Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi™.

Al Mubarak is also the Chairman of twofour54, Abu Dhabi's media freezone and content creation hub, which encompasses broadcast, publishing, music, digital media, and gaming. He is also the Chairman of Image Nation Abu Dhabi, the Emirati film production and media company. Through these roles, he continues to guide the Emirate's urban development as well as the growth of its creative ecosystem.

Al Mubarak is a member of the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity, where he is joined by international religious leaders, educational scholars, and cultural leaders across the world, to support and spread the values of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. The Committee provides counsel on various initiatives, including the Abrahamic Family House, which is to be built in Abu Dhabi.

His Excellency also serves as Vice-Chair on the Foundation Board of ALIPH, the international alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas.

Furthermore, Al Mubarak is a board member of the Emirates Schools Establishment, an independent federal entity with a mandate to manage and operate public schools.

Al Mubarak is a graduate of Northeastern University (Boston, USA), with a double major in Economics and Political Science.



### **Ed Nawotka (Panel Discussion 3)**

Ed Nawotka is the International and bookselling editor of the trade magazine Publishers Weekly. He is also U.S. coordinator of Publishers Weekly en Español, which he helped launch in 2020 and is based in Seville, Spain. A widely published essayist and critic, his work has appeared in the New York Times, New Yorker, and other publications. He was the cofounder of international trade web site Publishing Perspectives, a culture columnist for Bloomberg News, and has more than two decades' experience reporting on global business and media.

Ed has also worked as a consultant for multinational firms in industries ranging from energy and oil and gas to public relations and videogames; recent clients include France's Ubisoft and Korea's Big Hit Entertainment. Ed is currently advising start-up companies, including a location-based book recommendation app and an AR/VR audio game platform. He has lectured at conferences and industry events across the world, from Beijing to Buenos Aires, and is on the faculty of the Publishing Course at the Yale School of Management. He lives in Houston, Texas.



### **John Russell (Panel Discussion 2)**

John Russell is an award-winning and accomplished K-12 digital domain publisher and senior leader with more than 15 years of strategic operational expertise gained in industry-leading positions, where he's been responsible for the design, development, and delivery of international curriculum and local standards-based instructional content produced by large multinational teams for private and public sector projects.

He's known for his energetic collaborations with peers, persuasive skills, and eye for technical detail in his pedagogical, creative, and digital leadership roles at Oxford University Press, Macmillan Education, and Marshall Cavendish.



### **Sheikha Bodour Al Qasimi (Speaker Guest Speaker)**

Sheikha Bodour Al Qasimi is the president of the International Publishers Association (IPA). A trailblazer in the global publishing scene, Bodour Al Qasimi is creating a positive impact by pushing the IPA's agenda on freedom to publish and intellectual property rights.

In 2019, Bodour established PublisHer, an informal networking body that seeks to increase the number of women in leadership roles in the publishing industry.

As the CEO and founder of Kalimat Publishing Group, she has been an avid advocate of the role of books and literacy in enlightening children.

Bodour chaired the committee of Sharjah World Book Capital 2019, an honor awarded by UNESCO. Her work to further Sharjah's contributions as a hub for reading, literacy, and culture culminated in global recognition for the emirate. Bodour has a bachelor's degree in archaeology and anthropology from Cambridge University, and a master's degree in medical anthropology from University College London.



### Sultan Al Riyami (Panel Discussion 5)

Sultan Al Riyami started his career in media at twofour54 in 2015 with the strategy and investments team, and transitioned to gaming and esports operations in mid-2020. His goal is to turn Abu Dhabi into a global powerhouse in the gaming and esports scene by creating a world-class competitive package for game developers.

He helped drive the conversations that led to Unity Technologies setting up their headquarters for the Middle East and Africa in the Middle East, and led discussions with division 1 esports teams like Team NIGMA (now Nigma Galaxy), encouraging them to relocate their global headquarters to Abu Dhabi.

Sultan spends his free time playing the latest releases on both PC and console, and enthusiastically cheering on his favorite esports teams when they're competing live!



### Saeed Al Tunaiji (Panel Discussion 4)

Saeed Al Tunaiji's commitment to newspaper journalism began in 1990. He has worked at Al Khaleej, where he wrote for the Mosaic column, and at Al Bayan, where he was a weekly contributor. In 2012, he moved to Al-Ittihad, where he wrote for the Views page.

He has also worked as director of media at the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi, director of the Sheikh Zayed Book Award, and as publishing director at Dar Al Kutub at the Department of Culture and Tourism. He is currently the acting executive director of the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Center.



### Michael Tamblin (Keynote Speaker)

Michael Tamblin is the President and chief executive officer at Rakuten Kobo, where he drives growth, profitability, and international expansion in a fiercely competitive market.

He combines a passion for reading with a deep focus on hardware and software experiences. In addition to leading Rakuten Kobo, the global digital bookseller, he advises startups focused on aging and technology as chief entrepreneur of Age-Well NCE. He is on the board of directors of the Law Commission of Ontario, Ontario's law reform body, as well as The Power Plant, Toronto's foremost contemporary art gallery. Michael has been a part of Rakuten Kobo's executive team since its inception in 2009, and previously held the role of chief content officer. He holds a master's degree in business administration from the University of Western Ontario.



### Dr. Hanada Taha Thomure (Panel Discussion 2)

Dr. Hanada Taha Thomure is the endowed professor of Arabic language and director of the Arabic Language Center for Research & Development at Zayed University, UAE. Previously, she served as associate and acting dean of Bahrain Teachers College, University of Bahrain, and director of Arabic programs at San Diego State University, USA.

She has close to 30 years of experience in teacher preservice preparation and in-service training, Arabic language curriculum design, developing and reviewing national literacy strategies, and literacy coaching. She designed the first system for leveling (determining the level of ability required to read) Arabic texts, which is currently used by regional and international publishers to level their Arabic children's books. Dr. Taha Thomure was among the first researchers to develop Arabic language arts standards, which have been used by more than 100,000 students all over the Arab world. She is the senior author for Pearson's first Arabic language arts K-9, a state-of-the-art curriculum that is standards-, literature- and inquiry-based. She has reviewed the national Arabic curricula for Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, UAE, and Bahrain, and has been an adviser for USAID, DLI, World Bank, Ernst Young, and many private international schools across the region.



### Rüdiger Wischenbart (Panel Discussion 1)

Rüdiger Wischenbart was born in 1956 in Graz, Austria, and founded Content and Consulting in 2003. He is a writer specializing in culture and cultural industries, global book markets, innovation in the book industry, literature, media, and communication.

Most recently, he co-founded ReBoot Books, a series of professional debates on the international book business ([www.rebootbooks.org](http://www.rebootbooks.org)), and the Digital Consumer Book Barometer, a market report series with a focus on ebooks, audiobooks, online sales, and subscriptions ([www.global-ebook.com](http://www.global-ebook.com)). Since 2007, Wischenbart has updated the Global 50: The Ranking of the Publishing Industry ([www.wischenbart.com/ranking](http://www.wischenbart.com/ranking)) annually, and has co-authored the Diversity Report series on literary translation in Europe since 2008 ([www.culturaltransfers.org](http://www.culturaltransfers.org)). He also coordinates SIDT, a collaborative project for innovation trainings under a Creative Europe grant ([www.sidt-books.eu](http://www.sidt-books.eu)).

A former head of communications at the Frankfurt Book Fair and director of international affairs at BookExpo America, Wischenbart has authored several books on migration and modernization in Central and Southeastern Europe, notably "Canettis Angst: Erkundungen am Rande Europas" (1994).



### Joëlle Yazbeck (@yazbeckjoelle, Panel Discussion 3)

Joëlle Yazbeck is Twitter's partner manager for the global content partnerships team in the MENA region. She helps large broadcasters and publishers, and their news, sports, TV and entertainment verticals unleash the power of content and connect with valuable audiences at scale.

Joëlle has over 11 years of experience in digital media, and her previous commercial roles are key to her ability to both identify the sweet spot between valuable content and innovative opportunities, and to find the approach that will enable clients' successful growth.



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