

Europe's online success story

Leading-edge news publishers join World Newspaper Congress programme.



Verdens Gang (VG) in Norway has long been ahead of the curve in web and multimedia strategy. Leading that activity has been Torry Pedersen, who has joined the programme of the World Newspaper Congress, to be held in Beirut, Lebanon from 7 to 10 June 2010.

Pedersen, the CEO of VG, which includes Norway's most profitable and most-read news site, is well known for recognising early that print and online news operations have different formats and different attributes and for exploiting these successfully. VG has been a leader in web-TV-, user-generated content and other multimedia initiatives that have made it a magnet for consumers and advertisers alike.

"To make a newspaper good, you have to focus on the newspaper. To make online good, you have to focus on online," he has said. "You have to make good use of all platforms to make an impact. The reason we did is because we have to take into account the market is changing and plan properly."

Pedersen will speak to the theme of the Congress, *In Search of the New Business Model*. The key focus is an exploration of the strategies being implemented by media groups as the growth in revenues from digital publishing remains relatively modest for newspapers, and revenues from print products continue to fall.

The World Newspaper Congress, the World Editors Forum and Info Services Expo 2010 are the global summit meetings of the world's press. The events, organised by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) and hosted by the An-Nahar newspaper, are expected to draw 1500 newspaper publishers, managing directors, CEOs, chief editors and other senior newspaper executives to Beirut. It is the first time the global events will be held in the Arab world.

Details of the evolving programmes are available at www.wanlebanon2010.com.

Confirmed speakers for the Congress include:

- Oliver Fleurot, the CEO for Public Relations, Corporate and Financial Communications and Events Management for Publicis Groupe. Fleurot, a former chief executive of the *Financial Times*, believes not enough is known about

advertising effectiveness on the web and more research is needed. "You have to consider the traditional media as a sort of place where you understand what's going on, which is safe, and you must think of the web as a place where you are an explorer," he says.

- Mohamed Alayyan, the chairman of *Al Ghad* newspaper, the leading independent daily newspaper in Jordan, which has been at the forefront of multimedia development built around the core value of providing relevant, local content, no matter what the platform.
- Roman Gallo, the CEO of PPF Media, whose *Nase Adresa* (*Our Address*) in the Czech Republic is one of the most talked about hyper-local news projects in the world. PPF Media is in the process of blanketing the country with 200 different hyper-local weeklies, whose reporting teams are based in company "news cafes". The combination of newsrooms and Internet bistros is designed to facilitate contacts with readers and potential sources (and also bring in revenue).

The events will, as always, be accompanied by a rich social programme, tours, meetings with local and international political, business and cultural leaders, and more. Among the highlights: an opening cocktail at the Couvent St Jean, a convent on a hillside above the city; a Lebanese folklore evening on the Mediterranean in Byblos, said to be one of the oldest inhabited cities in the world; and a gala closing dinner at the Beiteddine Palace, the former seat of the Lebanese Emirs.

Other highlights

- *World Trends in the Newspaper Industry: An Update*, the annual state of the industry address by Timothy Balding, Director General of WAN-IFRA Global Affairs.
- Presentation of the best from the 2010 strategy reports of WAN-IFRA's major Shaping the Future of the Newspaper research project, analyzing developments and opportunities in the press industry.
- The 2010 Global Report on Innovations in Newspapers by the Innovation International Media Consulting Group.
- Annual round table seminars on press freedom (*What's Ahead for the Independent Arab Press*), digital media (*Digital Futures 2010*), and young readership development (*Winning Strategies for Engaging the Young Latest Strategies*).
- A gala opening ceremony that includes presentation of the prestigious Golden Pen of Freedom, the annual press freedom prize from WAN-IFRA. The 2010 Golden Pen will be presented to Iranian journalist Ahmad Zeid-Abadi.
- A session on new content platforms, which will examine the surge in sales of electronic readers for books, notably 'tablets', and the multiplication of mobile devices with easy and comfortable access to news sites. These developments have given a new lease of life to the idea that wireless platforms may yet take a central role in news publishing. The session will examine current newspaper experiments in publishing on such devices and takes a whirlwind tour of what's now on the market.

The events will be opened by the Lebanese Prime Minister, Saad Hariri.

For the evolving programmes, registration information and other details, visit www.wanlebanon2010.com.

Learn more about WAN-IFRA at www.wan-ifra.org or through the *WAN-IFRA Magazine* at www.wan-ifra.org/magazine.