

# Internet Television in Egypt

## "Technological Requirements & Design Challenges"

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### **Introduction & Research Problem:**

The interest of this research is to study the phenomenon of using the Internet as a means for television broadcasting, in what is known today as "Internet TV," and the impact of this development on the future of traditional TV in Egypt, and on the way television content is designed and watched by the Egyptian audience. The importance of the study comes from the novelty of the phenomenon it focuses on, which has not been tackled so far by an adequate number of Egyptian researchers... Moreover, studies like this one are of great help for all those who are involved in the field of television media in Egypt, as the results, outcomes and recommendations of such studies could act as accurate scientific indicators about the rapid spread of modern non-traditional highly advanced technological methods in the world of television broadcasting today. These indicators could help us in Egypt, even in part, to develop effective plans and strategies to deal with nowadays modern innovations in the television industry.

### **Research Aims:**

This research aims to study the use of the international information network "Internet" as a means for broadcasting television, and the impact of that on the future of traditional TV in Egypt, and on the way television content is designed and watched by the Egyptian audience.

## **Research Questions:**

1. What is "Internet TV"? And what are its forms and technological requirements?
2. How to design the TV content broadcasted online? And what are the differences between that content and the one broadcasted traditionally?
3. Would the traditional television broadcast lose its importance in the world of visual media on the grounds that the future of the TV industry will be limited to the use of the Internet as a TV broadcasting means?
4. Will Egypt be able to catch up with the integration of the Internet as a TV broadcasting means? And what is the impact of this development on the Egyptian audience, and on the nature of television watching in Egypt?
5. What are the advantages and disadvantages we will gain in Egypt with the expansion in the application of online TV broadcasting?

## **Research Methodology:**

This study depends on an analytical descriptive methodology in order to answer the research questions and achieve its aims. That included employing two research methods (i.e., an observational instrument and a questionnaire survey).

## **Research Findings, Conclusions & Recommendations:**

The study concluded an important set of findings and recommendations, including the following:

- TV people, whether in Egypt or abroad, still see the Internet as a mere source of information that will supplement what already they offer of programs and information materials for spectators. On the other side, Internet people see television as just a new player added to the list of multiple online media ... Most of all, what is provided by Internet TV is a combination of broadcasting television, computer applications and Internet services together. With broadcasting television service over the Internet, the viewer will be able to access a world of thousands of TV channels to watch and interact. Therefore,

Internet TV should be recognized with its characteristics and advantages which indeed exceed what is being provided now by traditional television.

- Internet TV is considered one of the services that keep pace with the new technology shift to a digital society. Entertainment generally and digital culture and techniques linked closely with all segments of how to deal with the information society and telecommunications, and the way to include them in its texture and its development.
- Broadcasting live TV using the Internet is a modern method of providing television content and controlling it, and not just a "load" of audio and visual materials from the Internet service. Combining television with the Internet in this way will undoubtedly lead to profound changes in the concept of communication linking the iconic media message and its distributor and recipients in Egypt... As such, we will be able to discriminate in Egypt between two different eras: Television before the Internet and beyond.
- Anyone watching television broadcasted via the Internet can access any TV channel on the network, and this is available to any subscriber and from anywhere in the world. This feature is what makes Internet TV much better than traditional broadcasting television, which its space is geographically limited in scope as its coverage area is determined according to the ability of the receiving antennas.
- The past few years have seen a marked increase in the number of global television channels Internet web sites, most of those channels already owns the equipment and hardware needed to send instantaneous digital signals to both the Internet and satellites... In the Arab world, a large number of Arabic TV channels have already started broadcasting over the Internet, through coordination with some Internet companies to allow their digital content to be broadcasted on air and simultaneously to Internet users.
- Receiving television via the Internet is primarily based on the concept of mutual interactive communication between the sender or television channel on

the one hand, and the recipient or spectator on the other hand. TV channels web sites offer the recipient the ability to interact with television material, choose programs, store and re-watch in a very high flexible manner.

- With Internet TV, Egyptian and Arabic channels will save huge amounts of money which are being paid now to satellite companies; telecommunications companies are much cheaper than satellite ones.
- The number of Egyptian and Arabic television channels on the Internet today is obviously limited; this is due to the existence of financial, cultural and social obstacles.
- In addition to the high cost of the service and slow Internet speed, the main technological obstacles to the spread of Internet TV in Egypt today is that the number of Egyptian citizens enjoying Internet services is still modest compared to developed Western countries.
- We must immediately start providing the constitution and equipment needed to support the launch of Internet TV services in Egypt, bearing in mind that any delay in rush out to those modern technologies will undoubtedly increase the necessary cost to apply Internet TV system later in Egypt.
- When receiving TV service via the Internet spread, and every home in Egypt be able to receive it, it will inevitably turn to all Egyptian channels, either broadcasted over the air or via satellite. And in light of the continuing technical progress, and low cost to create TV channels on the Internet, we will have in Egypt hundreds of TV channels through the Internet, and perhaps even each organization or institution in Egypt will create their own online television channel next to their web site that already exists on the network.
- Web sites of TV channels on the internet should have attributes and characteristics that distinguish them from other web sites on the network. Web sites of TV channels should be able to exhibit excellence attracts the spectator and supports positive mental image of the channel in front of its audience.

- Compared to the content of foreign TV channels web sites on the Internet, the content of Egyptian and Arabic television channels web sites is defiantly poor. Illustrations needed to help receivers to understand backgrounds topics are seldom used. Still images necessary to display the contents in an attractive form and to facilitate understanding are not widely employed, in addition to the lack of attention to the comments accompanying these images to help explaining their contents. Moreover, and unlike foreign TV channels web sites on the Internet, the Egyptian and Arabic TV channels web sites do not use enough symbols and icons needed to help receivers to browse across the site and access its sub-pages that contain the details of the topics. Most of the Egyptian and Arabic TV channels web sites on the Internet also fail, compared to foreign TV channels web sites, to fully benefit from the interactive features offered by Internet, as such receivers cannot really contribute to the development of presented contents.
- Egyptian TV channels on the Internet must be a reflection of the aspirations of the Egyptian public and its requirements with commitment to the Eastern values and habits... Moreover, and in order to achieve effectiveness and impact on the receivers, Egyptian Internet TV channels should be potentially monitored to increase their competitiveness and scale up the media message in terms of form and content.
- The form of broadcasted programs via the Internet should not be a repetition to those already on air; they should be accompanied by the expansion of production and continuous development to be more attractive than traditional on-air programs. That supports the competitive position of the Egyptian and Arabic Internet TV channels in the face of foreign TV channels broadcasted on the same network.
- Like any modern technological application employed in communication and media purposes, Internet TV requires that members of the public be sufficiently qualified to absorb and use it... Therefore, organizations, companies and institutions concerned with providing services of Internet TV in Egypt should take the lead to organize seminars, lectures and presentations and other similar events, in order to explain to the professionals and the public

alike, the benefits that Egypt and the Egyptian people will gain due to the introduction of such a new television broadcasting means.

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**Key Words:**

Internet, TV, Egypt, Deign, Technology