



Tagipedia first Arabic online encyclopedia funded by Talal Abou Ghazaleh

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NNA - Sharing knowledge is the key target of Palestinian Talal Abou ghazale, owner of the education and professional services firm (TAG-org) organization which is on a 10 million dollar mission to boost Arabic on the internet where it accounts for less than one percent of websites despite being spoken by 1 in 20 people worldwide.

It is the leading project with fully Arabic content and huge focus on the Arabic language as a means to spread culture and heritage.

If, Abou Ghazale has his way, the end of this year will see the launch of Tagipedia, a free online Arabic encyclopedia with a million entries.

"I see it as a means of building on Arab knowledge society, which is my mission in life... to contribute to the economic and social development of the Arab world," Ghazale said.

The encyclopedia, which will be the center of focus at the press conference to be held between Abou Ghazale and the Lebanese press syndicate Head Muhammad Baalbaki on September 12, is now in the phase of building its electronic system and collecting information.

"We need to expand the work team, especially the experts in different fields so as to show the high potentials we have in the Arab world and to form a higher authority responsible for monitoring the encyclopedia's content".

About 350 million people or 5% of the world's population, consider Arabic their first language, while hundreds of millions more are familiar with it through Islam Holy Book, the Koran.

Yet, only 0.9% of websites use Arabic, placing it 13th overall behind the likes of Polish and Dutch, according to analysts.

"For a language with a great heritage and culture, that it very modest," said Ghazaleh who added that his company has spent more than 10 million dollars developing Tagipedia over the past five years, and will fund its running costs, keeping it free of advertizing.

Ghazaleh describes the website as an act of philanthropy .

Unlike Wikipedia, whose content is created by users, Tagipedia will have a more traditional form, with all entries vetted for accuracy and relevance before publication.

Ghazaleh expects it to have one million entries by launch, compared to Wikipedia's 235.000 or so articles in Arabic.

"Wikipedia is a great innovation and it helped collect, store and disseminate knowledge, but there has always been a call for enhancing the Arabic content on the internet".

"Tagipedia is a library; no one has the right to post any information without verification. The content is vetted for data to be correct, useful and non offensive to any person, authority, religion, culture or community," he said.

"We have always refused donations or funding because we want to keep our independence," he noted.

"Above all, there is a need for Arabic content. The problem is that beyond newspaper websites, we don't have many other sides focusing on the Arabic language. We don't see new Arabic applications; we don't see new

start-ups dedicated to the language. It's not just about having an Arabic website address - we need to create content that people want".

It is note-worthy that Abu Ghazale called at the Arab Forum for Internet Governance in Kuwait to establish a strong platform under the name of "Arab Internet Governance Observatory" with a main objective that is to monitor the most important developments in Internet governance and policies and to inform the concerned persons in the region of these developments".

The dream of every Arab citizen will finally come true owing to Talal Abou Ghazale's funding to this project which will allow the access to a million entries in Arabic by the end of the year 2013.

As soon as Tagipedia sees the light, the Arabic language will rank fifth in the online world. This project aims at helping the new generation get correct information that go in line with our traditions, our culture and our Arab nationality.

<http://www.nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/13526/Tagipedia-first-Arabic-online-encyclopedia-funded-by-Talal-Abou-Ghazaleh>