

*The New Media Frontier:
A Data-Driven Analysis of
YouTube Viewership in the
Arab World*



Mohamed Alfi

Matt G. M

contact@alfidigital.com

[Our website](#)

The New Media Frontier: A Data-Driven Analysis of YouTube Viewership in the Arab World

Executive Summary: The Unprecedented Digital Video Shift in the Arab World

YouTube has transcended its origins as a video-sharing platform to become a foundational pillar of the digital and cultural landscape in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. This report provides a comprehensive, data-driven analysis of YouTube consumption among Arabic-speaking users, quantifying its immense scale, profiling its core audience, and dissecting the behavioral shifts that define its usage. The analysis reveals a market where digital video consumption is not just a trend but a deeply ingrained daily habit, driven by a young, highly-connected population.

The scale of the platform's reach is staggering. Country-level data from 2025 positions **Egypt** as the regional leader with **50.7 million users**, followed closely by **Saudi Arabia** with **27.3 million** and **Iraq** with **22.3 million**. This immense user base is underscored by Saudi Arabia's remarkable distinction as the country with the world's highest YouTube penetration rate, with approximately **95.8% of its population** using the platform. This level of saturation suggests that YouTube functions as a ubiquitous utility, integral to communication, education, and commerce across the kingdom.

Demographically, the MENA YouTube audience is overwhelmingly **young and family-oriented**. More than **60% of viewers are millennials**, who spend over three hours daily on online video, surpassing time spent on messaging and gaming applications. A pivotal behavioral shift is the transformation of YouTube into a communal, family-centric experience. Over **90% of mothers** in Saudi Arabia and the UAE watch YouTube with their children daily, while **80% of parents** in Egypt do the same, often viewing content together as a shared, bonding activity.

The report identifies a critical dual-channel consumption model: while mobile devices remain the dominant screen for on-the-go, "snackable" content, there is a massive and rapid shift towards Connected TV (CTV) for more engaged, lean-back viewing. In May 2024 alone, YouTube reached over **12 million people on CTVs in Saudi Arabia** and over **2.5 million in the UAE**. This duality allows the platform to capture both personal and communal viewing occasions, solidifying its position as a direct competitor to traditional broadcast television.

The content ecosystem is dynamic and diverse, with music videos, educational tutorials, and lifestyle vlogs at the forefront of what audiences consume. This high level of engagement and trust has fueled the rise of the Arab Creator Economy. Individual content creators are evolving into "entertainment startups," launching production companies and creating jobs, a trend that signifies a fundamental shift in media production and

commercialization within the region. In conclusion, YouTube is not merely a platform for entertainment but a central, evolving, and highly influential pillar of the Arab world's digital future.

1. Introduction: YouTube's Foundational Role in the MENA Digital Landscape

1.1. The Primacy of Digital in the Arab World

The narrative of digital video consumption in the Arab world is inextricably linked to the region's remarkable digital readiness. The widespread adoption of internet access and smartphone technology has created a fertile ground for platforms like YouTube to flourish. In key MENA markets, particularly the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia, the level of digital connectivity is among the highest in the world. As of recent data, **97.7% of the population in the UAE and Saudi Arabia** are online daily, and **97.8% are using smartphones**. This exceptional level of connectivity ensures that the population is constantly engaged with digital content, providing an unparalleled opportunity for platforms that can deliver on a mobile-first model.

This pervasive connectivity has fundamentally altered media consumption habits, paving the way for platforms that offer on-demand, personalized content. The digital landscape in the MENA region is no longer defined by traditional media but by the immediacy and accessibility of online platforms. This is evident in Egypt, where **75% of millennials are online daily** and **70% use smartphones**, regularly turning to YouTube for their queries and content needs. This profound shift establishes the context for why YouTube has not just gained a foothold in the region, but has become a dominant force in its media and social ecosystems.

1.2. Report Purpose and Scope

This report's objective is to provide a comprehensive and data-driven analysis of YouTube viewership among Arabic users. It moves beyond a simple recitation of user statistics to provide a deep, nuanced understanding of the platform's role in the region. The analysis addresses key questions that are essential for any professional seeking to understand this market: What is the scale of the user base in specific countries? What are the key demographic and behavioral traits of this audience? How and why are they consuming video content? And what strategic implications do these trends hold for creators and businesses? By synthesizing information from multiple authoritative sources and presenting it in a clear, structured format, the report aims to serve as a definitive guide to the Arab YouTube market.

1.3. Analytical Framework

The methodological approach for this report is based on the synthesis of data from multiple reputable sources, including industry reports from DataReportal and Global Media Insight, as well as first-party research from Google's Think with Google initiative. This multi-source approach is crucial for providing a

robust and credible analysis. Raw numerical data is interpreted to reveal underlying trends and their broader implications. For example, by cross-referencing user counts with penetration rates and consumption habits, it is possible to discern why the platform has achieved such a unique status in a country like Saudi Arabia. The report is designed to connect disparate data points, establishing a coherent narrative that explains the causal relationships between technological adoption, demographic shifts, and evolving viewing behaviors, thus providing a complete picture of the market.

2. YouTube's Market Dominance: User Base and Penetration in Key Arab Nations

2.1. Country-Level User Base & Rankings (2025)

YouTube's user base in the Arab world is immense, with tens of millions of people engaging with the platform on a monthly basis. The latest data for 2025 highlights a clear hierarchy of market size within the region. **Egypt** stands out as the largest market, boasting a user base of **50.7 million people**. This is a testament to the country's large population and its rapid digital acceleration. Saudi Arabia follows as the second-largest market with **27.3 million users**, a figure that, when considered in the context of its population, reveals its extraordinary level of engagement. Iraq emerges as the third-largest market with **22.3 million users**, indicating a significant and rapidly growing digital population.

Other Arab countries also contribute substantially to the regional user base. Morocco ranks fourth with 21.1 million users, followed closely by Algeria with 21 million. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) records 8.95 million users, placing it sixth. Tunisia has a user count of 7 million, while Jordan, Kuwait, and Oman have 6.45 million, 3.9 million, and 3.29 million users, respectively. These numbers confirm YouTube's deep integration across the Arab world, with its reach extending far beyond a handful of major markets.








2.2. Penetration Rates: The Case of Saudi Arabia




While user numbers provide a clear picture of market size, penetration rates offer a deeper understanding of the platform's societal adoption. Saudi Arabia holds a unique and highly significant position in the global digital landscape. As of February 2025, approximately **95.8% of the Saudi population uses YouTube**, making it the country with the world's highest YouTube penetration rate. This figure is not merely a statistical anomaly but a profound indicator of how deeply the platform is integrated into the fabric of daily life. The near-universal adoption of YouTube in Saudi Arabia suggests it functions not just as a recreational app but as a ubiquitous utility. It is an essential tool for information, communication, education, and commerce for nearly the entire population. This exceptional level of penetration is a direct consequence of the country's high rates of internet and smartphone usage, where daily online activity and smartphone adoption both exceed 97%. The high penetration rate therefore reflects a cultural embrace of the platform that has transformed it into a critical channel for a vast array of daily activities.

2.3. Data Nuances and Discrepancies

It is important for any data analysis to acknowledge and address potential variations in reported numbers. For instance, some sources cite Saudi Arabia's user count as 28.30 million in 2024, while others report 27.3 million for 2025. Such minor discrepancies are a natural feature of market analysis and can be attributed to several factors. These include differences in data collection methodologies, variations in the reporting period (e.g., end-of-year vs. a specific month), and the distinction between a platform's total active users and its potential ad reach. Furthermore, market dynamics, including population growth and evolving user habits, contribute to natural fluctuations. The existence of these variations does not invalidate the overall trends but rather underscores the importance of consulting multiple sources and understanding the context of the data.

Table 1: YouTube User and Penetration Statistics in Key Arab Countries (2025)

Country	User Count (millions)	YouTube Penetration Rate (%)
 Egypt	50.7	N/A
 Saudi Arabia	27.3	95.8% (Feb 2025)
 Iraq	22.3	N/A
 Morocco	21.1	N/A
 Algeria	21	N/A
 United Arab Emirates	8.95	94.1% (Global Penetration)
 Tunisia	7	N/A

Country	User Count (millions)	YouTube Penetration Rate (%)
 Jordan	6.45	N/A
 Kuwait	3.9	N/A
 Oman	3.29	N/A

3. The Arab

YouTube Audience: A Demographic & Behavioral Deep Dive

3.1. The Millennial-Centric Audience

The demographic profile of the YouTube audience in the MENA region is distinct, with a clear concentration in younger age groups. Analysis confirms that more than **60% of viewers are millennials**, a demographic group generally defined by those in their twenties and thirties. This makes YouTube's largest audience in the Middle East, a viewership base that is second only to the United States when measured by watch time. The centrality of this generation is not passive; they are active drivers of content consumption and creation, actively shaping the trends that dominate the platform. They are also **twice as likely as their global counterparts** to post content online and share "how-to" videos. This profound influence of the millennial generation on the platform's character is a key differentiator of the Arab YouTube market.

3.2. Gender and Age Distribution

A more granular view of the audience reveals specific gender and age distribution patterns that are critical for targeted strategies. Globally, YouTube's user base is predominantly male, with a split of **54.4% male to 45.6% female**. This global trend is reflected and, in some cases, accentuated in key Arab markets. For example, the YouTube ad audience in Egypt is **61.1% male** and **38.9% female**. In the UAE, the audience for YouTube influencers is **59% male** and **40.92% female**.

In terms of age, the most dominant global demographic is the **25-34 age group**. This trend is also pronounced in the Arab world, where the average age of a YouTube user in the MENA region is between 33-35 years old. A detailed breakdown of the UAE's YouTube influencer audience shows a concentration in the millennial bracket: the 26-32 age group accounts for **31.92%** of the audience, followed by the 19-25 age group at **25.66%**. This demographic makeup provides a clear mandate for creators and brands to produce content that resonates with the interests and values of this young, digitally native generation.

3.3. The Family as the Primary Consumption Unit

A unique and profoundly significant behavioral trend in the MENA region is the evolution of YouTube from a personal device-based platform to a shared, family-oriented experience. The consumption of content is not a siloed, individual activity but a communal one that brings family members together. Over **90% of mothers** in Saudi Arabia and the UAE watch YouTube with their children on a daily basis. In Egypt, **80% of parents** watch YouTube daily, with over **65% of them watching more than they do traditional television** when the content is in a "snackable" format.

This collective viewing behavior is not limited to entertainment. It highlights a profound cultural shift where the platform is being used to foster family bonding and to address parental needs. Many millennial parents turn to YouTube to find parenting advice and inspiration. In fact, **77% of millennial mothers** in the region trust YouTube as much as they trust family and friends for guidance. This creates a powerful feedback loop where a generational demographic trend, the rise of the millennial parent, directly influences a core behavioral pattern, making YouTube a central hub for family-based consumption. The platform has successfully transitioned from a personal entertainment tool to a communal one, much like traditional television, by catering to both the entertainment and practical needs of the family unit.

Table 2: Key MENA Audience Demographics

Demographic	Global (2025)	UAE Influencer Audience	Egypt Ad Audience (Jan 2024)
Male	54.0%	59.0%	61.1%
Female	46.0%	40.92%	38.9%
Under 18	N/A	8.81%	N/A
18-24	15.8%	25.66% (19-25)	N/A
25-34	21.7%	31.92%	N/A

		(26-32)	
35-44	18.5%	16.73% (33-39)	N/A
45-54	14.0%	N/A	N/A
55-64	9.9%	N/A	N/A
65+	9.5%	N/A	N/A

4. How and Why Videos are Watched: Trends in Consumption

4.1. Watch Time and Daily Habits

The high level of engagement with YouTube in the MENA region is evident in the remarkable amount of time users spend on the platform. Millennials in the region, in particular, spend over **three hours per day on online video**, a figure that is higher than the time they dedicate to both messaging applications and games. This signals a significant allocation of attention and time to video content.

The platform's daily usage rates further reinforce its foundational status. A substantial **77% of youth in Egypt** watch YouTube every single day. In fact, the MENA region as a whole is ranked **second in the world for the number of daily YouTube video views**, with over **310 million views per day**. This level of engagement confirms that YouTube is not an occasional source of entertainment but a daily habit, integral to the lives of millions of Arabic users.




4.2. The Dual-Screen Strategy: Mobile and Connected TV

The evolution of video consumption in the MENA region is defined by a powerful dual-screen model. While mobile devices remain the primary access point for the majority of users, there is a "massive shift" towards watching content on Connected TVs (CTVs). The continued dominance of mobile is driven by high smartphone penetration, which stands at **97.8% in the UAE and Saudi Arabia**. This allows for the consumption of "snackable," short-form content at any time and in any location.

Simultaneously, the growth of CTV viewing marks YouTube's successful transition into the living room, a space traditionally dominated by broadcast television. This trend is not merely a slow migration but a rapid,

large-scale shift. Data from May 2024 reveals that YouTube's viewership on CTVs reached specific and substantial numbers: more than **12 million people aged 18 and over in Saudi Arabia**, over **2.5 million in the UAE**, and over **600,000 in Qatar**. The rapid adoption of CTV viewing indicates that YouTube has successfully captured a new, high-engagement viewing occasion. The duality of mobile for on-the-go consumption and CTV for a shared, lean-back experience makes the platform a powerful and versatile tool that captures audiences in multiple contexts throughout their day. This effectively positions YouTube as a direct and formidable competitor to traditional television networks in the region.

Table 3: Connected TV Viewership in KSA, UAE, and Qatar (May 2024)

Country	Number of Viewers (18+)
 Saudi Arabia	Over 12 million
 United Arab Emirates	Over 2.5 million
 Qatar	Over 600,000

4.3. The "Why": Motivations for Consumption

Beyond the "how much," a complete analysis requires an understanding of the motivations behind this high level of engagement. Why do Arabic users dedicate so much time to YouTube? The data points to a clear set of drivers that extend far beyond simple entertainment.

A dominant theme is the use of the platform for **self-improvement and education**. This is often referred to as "Help-me-be-better" content, and it is a key driver for millennials in the region. Over **80% of millennials** across the MENA region believe they can find a YouTube video on anything they want to learn, from practical life skills to playing a musical instrument. This high level of trust in the platform as a source of knowledge and expertise is a foundational element of its appeal. Furthermore, YouTube plays a critical role as a **"Shopping Companion"**. The platform has become an essential tool in the purchasing journey, influencing consumer decisions across various categories. For instance, **86% of skincare shoppers** in the UAE and Saudi Arabia use YouTube during their purchase journeys to research products and brands. The influence of the platform is so profound that **over 80% of parents in Egypt** are swayed by advertisements they see on YouTube before making a purchase. This is reinforced by the fact that a significant portion of the audience, including **87% of viewers in the UAE** and **79% of Gen Z viewers**, find YouTube advertising

more effective for brand discovery than other platforms. The high trust and engagement that define the platform's utility as a source of knowledge also translate into a powerful commercial channel.

5. The Content Ecosystem: A Deep Dive into What's Trending

5.1. Top-Performing Content Genres

The content ecosystem on YouTube in the Arab world is diverse, catering to a wide range of interests, but some categories consistently outperform others.

Music and Entertainment remain a dominant vertical, driving billions of views and shaping regional pop culture. The Moroccan singer Saad Lamjarred's video for "Lm3allem" stands as a testament to this, being the first Arabic music video to cross the 1-billion-view mark. Other top-performing music videos, such as "Ya Lili" by Balti and "3 Daqat" by Abu and Yousra, have also garnered hundreds of millions of views, demonstrating the immense appetite for music content.

Education and Tutorials are highly engaging, aligning with the "Help-me-be-better" motivation. This category includes everything from DIY and life hacks to personal finance and academic topics. The audience actively seeks content that provides knowledge and teaches new skills, offering a unique opportunity for creators and businesses to establish themselves as industry experts. **Vlogs and Lifestyle** content, particularly from prominent creators, also commands massive audiences. Top creators like **AboFlah** and **Anasala** | أنس و أصالة, whose videos document their daily lives and special events, rank among the most-watched creators in the region. This genre thrives on authenticity and a strong connection between the creator and their audience.

Gaming is a major content vertical, with dedicated channels and streamers amassing millions of subscribers. The immense popularity of gaming content is highlighted by the millions of subscribers garnered by channels like **FFearFFul** and other top-ranking gaming YouTubers in the region.

Finally, **Short-Form Video**, notably YouTube Shorts, is gaining significant traction. This aligns with the overall trend in the region for "quick entertainment shorts that deliver quick information in a minute," catering to a consumer base with a preference for fast-paced, easily digestible content.

5.2. The Rise of the Arab Creator Economy

A significant and forward-looking trend is the evolution of individual content creators into professional media companies or "entertainment startups". The high engagement and profound influence that creators have built with their audience have created a viable economic model that extends far beyond ad revenue.

Individual creators, such as **Omar Farooq** and **Ahmed Al Nasheet**, are now running full-fledged operations with dedicated teams. Omar Farooq, for example, transitioned from solo vlogging to launching a production company, "Atanafas," which employs 20 people and creates diverse content for clients across the MENA

region. This trend is not confined to individuals; companies like Telfaz11 have successfully scaled from popular YouTube series to producing successful feature films, effectively fostering new talent within Saudi cinema.

This professionalization of content creation is a direct consequence of the immense trust and connection viewers have with creators. The audience's high level of trust, which, as noted earlier, can even rival that of family and friends, provides creators with a form of social capital that is easily monetized through brand partnerships, product endorsements, and merchandise. This dynamic creates a powerful economic incentive for creators to professionalize their operations, thereby giving rise to a new and innovative media industry. The development of a creator-led economy demonstrates that YouTube's influence is not limited to consumption patterns but extends to the very structure of the media industry in the Arab world, with the region emerging as a leader in this creator-driven innovation.

6. Strategic Implications and Future Outlook

6.1. Actionable Insights for Content Creators and Businesses

The insights derived from this analysis provide a clear roadmap for any entity seeking to engage with the Arab YouTube market. The most dominant demographic is the millennial parent, who uses the platform for both entertainment and practical advice. Therefore, a successful content strategy should prioritize the creation of family-friendly, educational, and lifestyle content that serves the needs of this audience, addressing both the children's entertainment and the parents' desire for self-improvement and guidance.

Furthermore, it is essential to embrace the **dual-screen model of consumption**. This means optimizing content for both mobile and Connected TV viewing. Mobile-first content should be concise, fast-paced, and engaging, tailored for the "snackable" consumption habits of a user on the go. Conversely, content intended for CTV should be of a higher production value, suitable for the longer, lean-back viewing experience of a family in their living room.

The high level of trust and influence of local creators presents a compelling case for **influencer marketing**. Businesses should prioritize partnerships with trusted local creators who have already cultivated a strong connection with their audience. The data confirms that these partnerships are a highly effective method for brand discovery and can significantly influence purchasing decisions. Finally, the audience's strong motivation to use the platform for learning presents a clear opportunity for brands to establish themselves as industry authorities by providing valuable, informative, and "Help-me-be-better" content.

6.2. The Future of YouTube in the Arab World

The analysis of YouTube viewership in the Arab world points to a future of continued and profound growth.

The platform's success is not a fleeting trend but is built on a foundation of a young, highly-connected population with an insatiable appetite for digital video. The platform's ability to seamlessly transition from a personal, mobile-first experience to a shared, communal one on Connected TVs reinforces its versatility and resilience in the face of evolving consumer habits. The rise of the creator economy, where individual talent is professionalized and scaled into new media ventures, signals that YouTube is not just a distribution channel but a powerful economic engine.

In the coming years, YouTube will likely continue to blur the lines between social media, broadcast television, and e-commerce. Its role as a central pillar of the region's digital ecosystem will only solidify, driven by an audience that trusts its creators, relies on its content for learning and discovery, and uses it as a means of both personal expression and shared family experience.

7. Appendix: Data Sources and References

- **Google Think with Google:** <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/intl/en-emea/marketing-strategies/video/getting-know-youtubes-biggest-middle-eastern-audience-millennials/>
- **Global Media Insight:** <https://www.globalmediainsight.com/blog/youtube-users-statistics/>
- **DataReportal:** <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2025-egypt>
- **Campaign ME:** <https://campaignme.com/uae-saudi-qatar-viewers-shift-to-watching-youtube-on-connected-tv/>
- **Sprinklr:** <https://www.sprinklr.com/blog/social-media-in-saudi-arabia/>
- **The Arab Weekly:** <https://thearabweekly.com/social-media-use-youth-rising-across-middle-east>
- **Go-Globe:** <https://www.go-globe.com/online-video-consumption-middle-east-statistics-and-trends/>
- **Shafaq News:** <https://shafaq.com/en/Iraq/Top-3-in-Arab-world-Iraq-s-YouTube-user-count-revealed>
- **Media Avataar:** <https://mediaavataarme.com/news/ott-and-streaming/28140/youtube-creators-across-mena-are-rapidly-becoming-entertainment-startups/>
- **HypeAuditor:** <https://hypeauditor.com/top-youtube-all-united-arab-emirates/>

This list of top trending Arabic songs from January 2025 is relevant as it provides a concrete example of the popular content genres discussed in the report.