

# An exciting time for digital content services in Mideast

MAHINDRA COMVIVA BETS BIG ON THE REGION WITH EXPANDED PORTFOLIO OF SERVICES

DUBAI

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**T**hink you have seen enough of digital content? Then think again. "We are still at the tip of the iceberg as far as the digital content space is concerned and everybody is exploring it," said Atul Madan, head of digital services at Mahindra Comviva, the mobility solutions arm of India's Tech Mahindra. "The kind of growth we have seen in the last four to five years has been phenomenal. [But] people who get recommended content or services consume 48 per cent more content.

"Dubai is ahead of other countries in the Middle East in this space. With the Emirate undertaking the IoT (internet of things) initiative, this is going to open up completely a new and much larger business opportunity for everybody in the ecosystem," he said.

He said in the IoT world there are too many providers with too many solutions. That is why there is a disconnect. There needs to be integrated service for consumers.

Madan said that the era of voice and SMS is finished for telecom operators. Telecom operators can make money only on value-added services (VAS). "The biggest asset telcos have today is their understanding of consumers and the reach. Other than that everything is a commodity. Through telcos, we can see what people are consuming," he said.

But, he said the problem with telcos is that all the information today is available at various places and it is fragmented. There is no integrated data available which can be used by people who need it. That is why telcos are putting a lot of effort into data analytics and consumer insights.

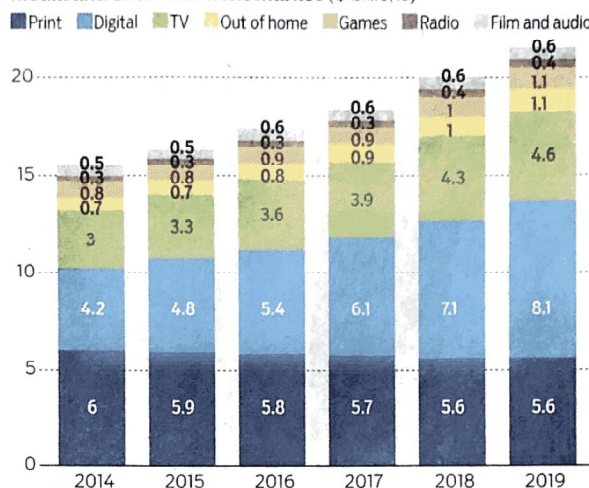
#### Solutions

Mahindra Comviva portfolio of solutions spans digital financial services, customer value management, messaging and broadband solution and digital lifestyle services and managed VAS services. Its solutions are deployed by over 130 mobile service providers and financial institutions in over 95 countries.

Even though the company works with broadcast media channels as well as music labels,

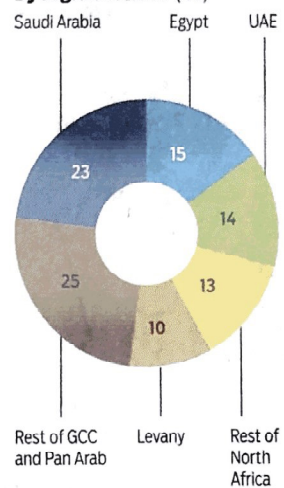
### Mena statistics

Media and entertainment market (\$ billions)

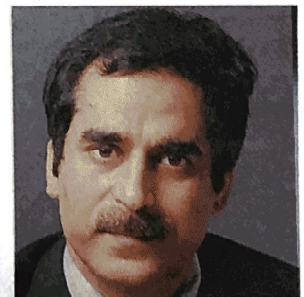
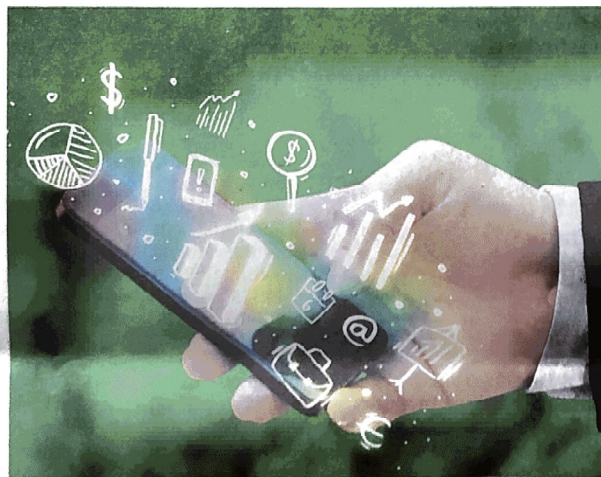


Source: Statista

By region in 2019 (%)



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■ Atul Madan

on demand services.

According to research firm International Data Corporation, worldwide revenues for (AR/VR) market are forecast to increase by 100 per cent or more over each of the next four years. Spending on AR/VR products and services is expected to soar from \$11.4 billion (Dh41.8 billion) in 2017 to nearly \$215 billion in 2021.

In contrast, the consumer segment will be dominated by AR and VR games, with total spending reaching \$9.5 billion in 2021.

Madan said that gaming is one of the domains which have universal appeal, be it South East Asia, Middle East, Europe or North America. Africa is still not ready for rich media content.

"Nobody has brought this kind of services to the Middle East. We will be the first to offer these kinds of services in the Middle East and will be rolled out within two months," he said.

**\$215b**  
projected spending on AR/VR products and services by 2021

**\$9.5b**  
projected spending on AR/VR games by 2021

artists and content aggregators, Madan said that majority of its business comes through mobile operators.

"Eighty per cent of our revenue comes from rich media services. Of late, what we are seeing is that customers are moving away from traditional VAS to mobile commerce. Telcos, which have a deep interest in digital

services, are not spending money and most of the money is going into mobile financial services. This [VAS] is one domain which they have started outsourcing to partners like us," he said.

The company has signed a partnership deal with Indian-based content distributor Atechnos for augmented reality/virtual reality games and video-