

## FOREWORD

THE INFORMATION AGE IN WHICH WE LIVE has brought new challenges and opportunities that have affected all our lives. The processes of news gathering, news reporting and news dissemination have been revolutionised. Technology enables us to see major events as they occur, almost anywhere on our planet. Public reactions are instantaneous, creating huge challenges for organisations and governments to respond with the speed and efficiency that many new situations require. News events of the day, conveyed by the media with the aid of satellite links, optical fibre cables and the Internet, are shaping our world.

Are we happy with the shape it is taking? There are obvious dangers in the instant gratification of the media and in the massive increase in choice of television and radio stations, newspapers, magazines and websites. One of the greatest of these is the obstacle path of distractions that shorten our attention spans, hindering a clear focus on facts and analysis. There is constant pressure on journalists and news programmers to move on to the next topic before all the facts of the present story have been given full consideration.

Given these pressures and distractions it is even more important that we create attractively-presented, well-researched and professionally-produced media that inspire a real desire to learn, to understand, to question and to analyse. We must not be ruled by technology but must make it work for us. And above all, we must seek to develop the most powerful data processor known to man – the human brain. These issues are very much to the fore in how we view the media's responsibilities.

The United Arab Emirates' *Yearbook* strives to present a detailed, factual view of the events that have shaped our nation over the past 12 months. It is a publication that has gained widespread respect for its objectivity and professionalism. I hope that you will take the time to read it and to gain a deeper impression of the issues that shape our nation. I also invite you to keep abreast of events by visiting our website: [www.uaeinteract.com](http://www.uaeinteract.com).

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