

Abstract: Open and Personal: Economic Intelligence Methods for the Middle East by Dr. Gil Feiler

The nineteen nations of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) present a market of nearly 300 million, this figure will double in twenty-five years. The region is home to roughly 65 percent of the world's proven oil reserves and 30 percent of its proven natural gas reserves.

Despite these facts, Western businessmen, decision makers and other interested parties who aim to gather micro information from open sources face many difficulties and obstacles.

The goal of this paper is to introduce the steps necessary to locate the most reliable, accurate and up-to-date information in the region. This paper will address the following issues:

- Availability of open sources in the region. (local press, information centers, on-line vendors, Internet etc.)
- General content advantages and disadvantages of using these sources. (biased information, state controlled economies and press, censorship, reliability)
- Technical difficulties and obstacles for Western users (language barriers, indexing, software)
- How to use open sources appropriately for your organization's needs?
- Methods applied to overcome various barriers.

The paper features several specific case studies to illustrate the difficulties of obtaining information in the region and methods to gather necessary materials from open sources.

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