

**A workshop on Soundslides at the Al-Wasat newspaper in Manama, Bahrain**

**15-19 May – 2010**

**Alwasat** **الوسط**  
يومية سياسية مستقلة



Al-Wasat is a media centre just outside Manama in the suburb Budayia. Al-Wasat was founded in 2002 with Dr. Mansoor Al-Jamri as the editor and is one of six national media in Bahrain. Al-Wasat publishes the country's only opposition newspaper with a circulation of around 12,000 copies and is read by both Sunni and Shia Muslims. Al-Wasat has around 120 employees, of which five are photographers.



- Staff at Al-Wasat





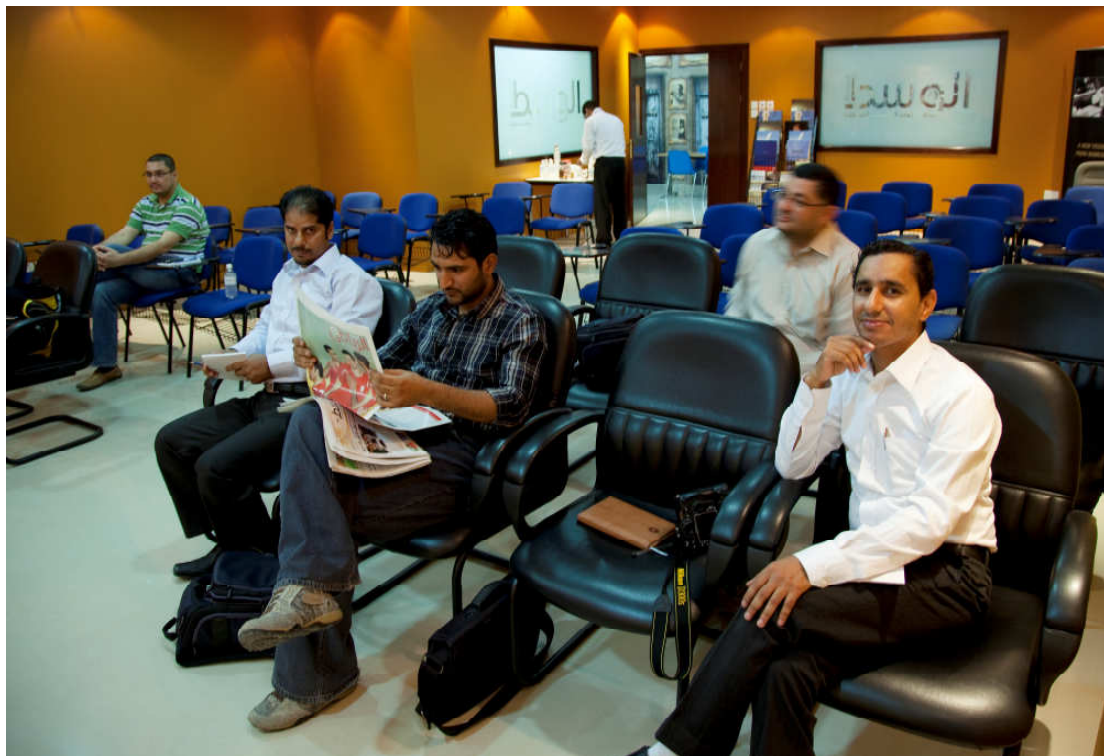
Over a period of time the Al-Wasat newspaper has been developing and expanding the internet version of their paper and launched it with both TV and radio. This strategy allowed them to circumvent the regulations about licenses for live TV transmissions, since the Internet is still a grey area regulation-wise in terms of what is legal and what is not. Al- Wasat was contacted in the beginning of May 2010 by the Department of Culture and Media who informs the paper that they may no longer transmit live TV on the Internet. Soundslides are the solution to this problem. Soundslides are a quick and easy editing programme which is cheap and easy to use. Soundslides are viewed as the prime storytelling tool of the future where the combination of sound and pictures is a way to enhance the overall impression left by the stories.

## **Day 1**

We begin the day with a presentation of all participants. I presented some of my on-going projects and described my customers and my way of working. They were very interested in details about what it's like to work as a press photographer in Denmark and what the impression of the profession is in the broader public. We discussed ethics and morals and examples of where the lines of acceptability are blurred. Obviously there is a big difference between how photographers work and under which conditions they work. Press photographers in Bahrain do not enjoy the same respect as they do in Denmark and the authorities and the police often try to prevent them from working. The photographers are eager to describe the difficulties they encounter. The police consistently try to stop them from covering demonstrations.

(The police are not Bahraini citizens, but hired men from Pakistan, India and other countries and therefore have a distorted relationship with the population. Every day there are disturbances in the streets where young people light fires and throw rocks, mostly in the Shia Muslim areas of Manana. The press photographers in Bahrain are not organised in the same way that Danish press photographers are and do not negotiate with the authorities about their rights. We spent a lot of time discussing this and creating an understanding of the work we do.

Towards the end of the day I presented different Soundslides from national and international media. From an early stage it was clear that the participants realized the huge potential in this way of telling a story. The participants are asked to go through their archives and choose a series of photos or a reportage which can be used in the initial exercises. The journalists borrow photographs from the photographers. Finally I go through Soundslides to give them an impression of what the final product would look like. Staff in the IT section install Soundslides on all the computers and test their usability.



## Day 2

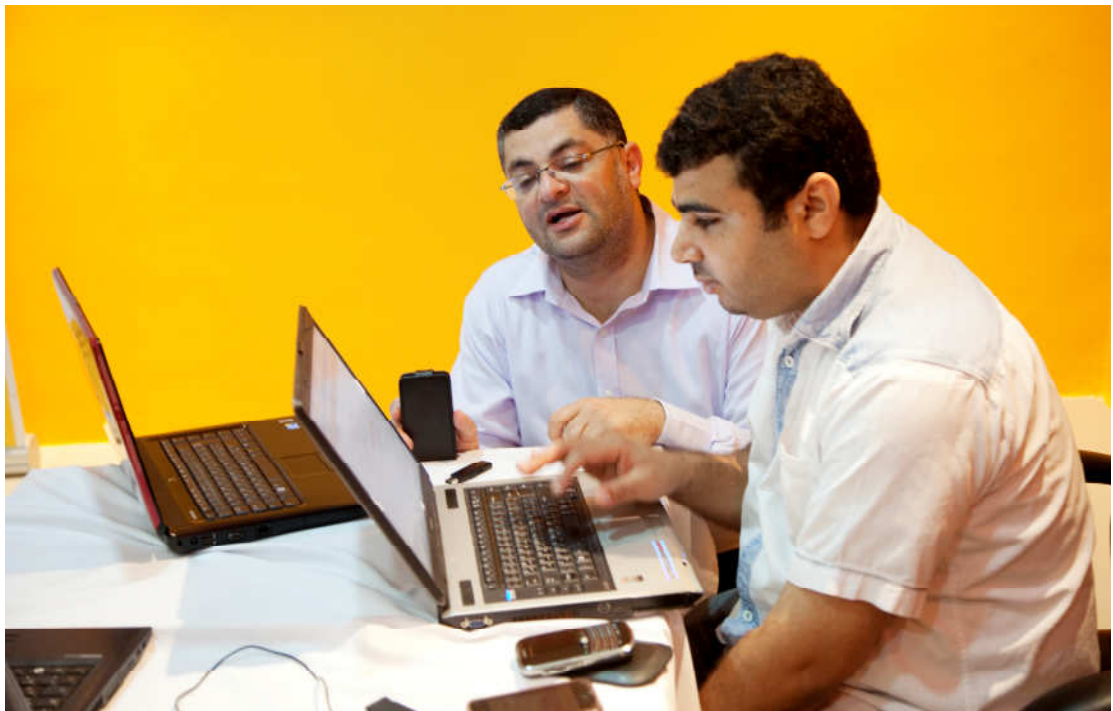
A couple of the participants have already created Soundslides from home, an illustration of how easy the programme is to work with. Two layouters and a staff member from the IT section have joined the team. This shows the spectrum of people who can benefit from using Soundslides. Everyone has brought with them pictures from their archives which are prepared for use.

A good Soundslide is characterised by its sound and I review the programme called Audacity, a cost-free sound-editing programme downloaded from the Internet.

The participants use a Dictaphone, their mobile or other recorders for their sound recordings. Next stage in the programme is to discuss the elements of a good story and what stories are suitable for a Bahraini audience. The participants agree that readers are mostly interested in news, sports and cultural events and so most of their storylines fall within these genres. They do not believe that human interest stories have much of an audience, but think that also those types of stories are important to convey.

We agree to create three templates; one for news, one for cultural issues and one for sport and agree to compile a presentation of Al Wasat as the final assignment.





### Day 3

The participants are now well on their way to producing their own Soundslide and everyone supports each other to ensure flowing storylines.





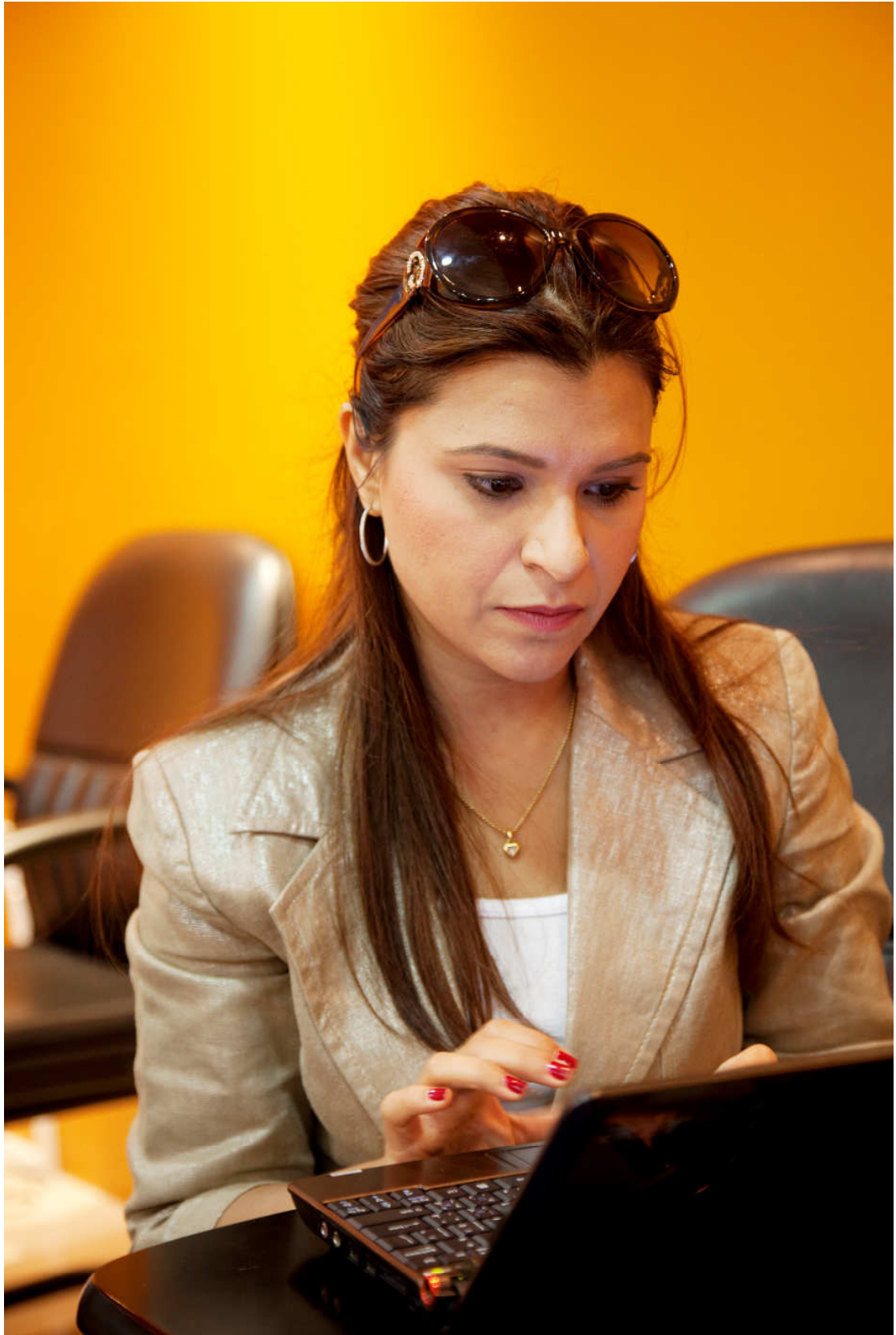
To round up the day a storyboard for the final assignment. Everyone wants to participate and is allocated a part. Some are responsible for taking pictures of staff in the building while others prepare questions and conduct interviews.

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## Day 4

Most of the day is spent gathering material for the project about Al Wasat. Not everyone is able to participate, as there are other issues that need solving. We finish the project late that evening.





## Day 5

Last day of the workshop. The day begins by reviewing all of the projects and the joint project on Al Wasat is fine-tuned. The editorial staff gather and we begin by showing three independent projects by Reem Khalifa, Mohammad Mukhareq and Aqeel Raheem Al-Fardan. The projects provide a good impression of what the participants have learnt and their ability to communicate through pictures and sound. Reem's Soundslide is an example of how the Soundslide programme can convey traditional journalism where the interviewer herself participates. This works fine and is in principle TV journalism transferred to Soundslides.

The length of Mohammad's story is suitable and he combines music and the interview he has conducted well. Aqeel produces a Soundslide without speak, but will a positive atmosphere about it.

