IMMAA 2025 Annual Conference Ignites Media Innovation and AI Dialogue in Cairo

The 2026 conference at St. Joseph University in Macau

The 19th International Media Management Academic Association (IMMAA) Annual Conference took place from October 17 to 19, 2025, at The American University in Cairo, Egypt. Bringing together leading academics, industry specialists, and media professionals from around the world, the event featured vibrant discussions and

presentations focused on **"Managing Innovation and Creativity for Sustainability in Media Companies."** A key highlight was the announcement that **Macau will host the next IMMAA conference in October 2026**, promising another dynamic forum to explore the evolving media landscape.

IMMAA President Dr. Gregory Ferrell Lowe described the conference as an intellectually enriching and culturally captivating experience. He acknowledged the diverse contributions from senior managers and experts, deepening understanding of Egypt's lively media ecosystem amid rapid AI developments globally. Dr. Lowe emphasized the critical role of media in daily life and the profound implications AI presents for employment, management, and the overall media **The intellectual content featured significant new research and active discussions related to AI developments affecting media industries.** Also, **the cultural experience was truly amazing — our community was captivated by the storied wonders of Egypt."**

Dr. Rasha Allam, Chair and event coordinator from The American University in Cairo, highlighted the conference's breadth with its five plenary sessions and around 90 presentations from international participants. She stressed the importance of continuous skill development in the AI era, ethical AI use in newsrooms and research, and the need for policies that keep pace with technological innovation. Collaboration between academics and industry was underscored as key for addressing the swiftly changing media environment. **"Some of the takeaways were about the importance for professionals and academics to keep developing their skills, especially in the era of AI, the ethical use of AI inside newsrooms and in the research field, and the importance of having policies that would cope with the technological advancements and the recent innovations."**

General Assembly and Strategic Collaboration

A significant milestone announced during the General Assembly was the plan for integration between IMMAA and the World Media Management and Economics Conference (WMEMC). This union aims to formalize professionalization efforts by establishing a legally chartered and registered academic association with bylaws and a collective brand identity, combining the strengths of both organizations and reducing overlap that raises expenses for colleagues and creates potential brand confusion. Dr. Lowe explained that WMEMC will become the annual conference under IMMAA's umbrella, although the association name is likely to be different. At present, the favorite option among those who have commented and discussed this seems to be the Association for International Media Management and Economics, AIMME (pronounced Amy). Working groups are working to formalize proposals for governance and next steps that will be shared via newsletters and on IMMAA's websites. Colleagues who have expressed a personal professional interest in being involved should expect invitations or requests to collaborate as the process evolves.

Looking ahead, the 2026 IMMAA conference will be hosted by the University of São José in Macau, located close to Shenzhen and adjacent to Hong Kong. A visa for the visit can be acquired on arrival for most passports. In 2027, the conference will be co-organized with WMEMC and held at Universidad Panamericana in Guadalajara, Mexico, under the leadership of Prof. María Elena Gutiérrez Rentería, as announced during the Assembly by Prof. Bjørn von Rimscha, the Vice President of WMEMC.

Conference Highlights and Sessions

In Cairo, the conference opening featured remarks from Dr. Gregory F. Lowe on IMMAA's mission and the pervasive societal influences of media. Dr. Ahmed El Moselmany, head of Egypt's National Media Authority, emphasized bridging academia with industry and aligning curricula with organizational development. Dr. Soha Rizk, solution engineer of Cisco, highlighted business and management implications in the shift from mass media to personalized communication enabled by internet protocols and cloud infrastructure as critical for media resilience.

In the first panel on Innovation and Sustainability in Media, speakers explored AI's role as an accelerator of change while emphasizing that it cannot replace human wisdom. Charlie Beckett, from the London School of Economics, discussed AI's market concentration effects alongside innovative experiments by smaller news media companies. Prof. Edson Tandoc at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore shared insights on journalists' adoption of GPT technologies. Presentations by Noha Mellor (University of Sharjah) and Ahmed El Gody (Örebro University) added fresh perspectives on the subject from perspectives informed by research on the subject matter in the Global South.

As a featured highlight, Eli Noam from Columbia University delivered a compelling lecture on media's "second convergence," the increasing prevalence of media activities by non-media companies, and an impending transformative "third convergence" enabled by AI. He described emotional and societal stages in confronting AI disruption, from denial to acceptance, and discussed humans' evolving collaboration with AI, suggesting the emergence of a novel society paradigm.

Several panels featured regional scholars and industry leaders who clarified common challenges and opportunities in the Arab region, focusing on digital transformation, sustainability, and innovation.

The conference was well attended, featuring more than **90 presentations covering topics from AI ethics to new business models, pedagogy and curricula, emerging companies and evolving strategies, a broad range of management specializations, and deep discussion about streaming ecosystems, digital advertising, media resilience, and creativity in the digital environment.** The parallel sessions were

chaired by respected international academics, reflecting the conference's international reach and a steadfast commitment to helping bridge research and industry.

Cultural experiences included a medieval Cairo tour and a Nile Gala dinner cruise, with an optional post-conference tour to the Giza Pyramids. Participants agreed that the event was an enriching immersion into Egypt's deep, historic, and significant cultural heritage.

This edition of the IMMAA conference solidified the association's growing leadership role as a premier forum blending scholarship, industry expertise, and cultural vitality that provides a valuable platform for ongoing collaboration about sustainability and innovation in media management.

For a dynamic glimpse of the conference experience in Cairo, watch our video highlights reel and explore social media posts on our LinkedIn page.

Stay Connected

Join the conversation, share your perspectives, and be part of shaping the future of media innovation and sustainability with IMMAA. IMMAA warmly invites all members, researchers, and media professionals to contribute their insights and suggestions for future newsletter editions. Your ideas help shape a vibrant community discourse and keep us all connected and informed. Stay engaged by following the IMMAA website and our social media pages for the latest updates and announcements.

Become IMMAA member

IMMAA invites professors, researchers, practitioners, and students from around the world to join our vibrant and diverse global network. United by a commitment to advance knowledge in media management and support innovation in practices, the International Media Management Academic Association brings together experienced and emerging scholars with professional networks to foster dialogue, build expertise, and grow our strongly interconnected community.

Membership is free of charge. Our priority is to support networking growth, sharing insights, and cultivating opportunities for engagement. Members receive priority news and event registration, publication, and networking opportunities, access to the

newsletter, workshops, and mentorship programs. Subscribe now at: https://immaa.org/become-an-immaa-member/

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This Newsletter was created by the **International Media Management Academic Association (IMMAA).**

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