# Dubai Media Academy to develop Arabic-literate AI tool for enhanced cultural understanding



The Dubai Media Academy (DMA) has announced plans to develop an Arabic-literate Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool aimed at providing better contextual understanding of the Arab world. This initiative will be accompanied by several supporting projects designed to facilitate its development. The announcement was made on 21 April during the first day of Dubai AI Week 2025, scheduled to run until 25 April.

As part of the initial stage of the project, DMA conducted a study that brought together Arabic media institutions, technology experts, and academics from various Arab countries. The study sought to address the issue of inaccessible Large Language Models (LLMs) that presently limit nuanced comprehension and application of the Arabic language within AI systems.

Muna Bu Samra, Director of DMA, highlighted that the recent announcement marks the first phase of a broader series of initiatives planned for May 2025. Speaking to Khaleej Times, she said, “Today [Monday] is the first stage of this report to fully understand the needs of the media.” Bu Samra emphasised the establishment of an “ecosystem” that would connect media institutions, developers, and academics in order to “better understand the Arabic language,” while also aiming to “protect Arab identity.”

The forthcoming AI tool will be named “عi,” with the Arabic letter "ع" representing the first letter of the Arabic word for “Arabic.” According to DMA, the tool is intended to make AI more accessible and relevant to Arabic-speaking users by recognising the unique linguistic and cultural context of the Arab world.

Asem Galal, advisor to DMA, explained the current limitations of existing LLMs such as ChatGPT, particularly their inability to understand the context and intricacies of Arabic language usage. He noted that many Arabic words are written identically but pronounced differently depending on their placement within a sentence, and without recognising the subtle variances in text or sound, AI systems often fail to identify the correct form. “If today I gave an AI model a sentence, but I don't know the text or the sound, and I don't know the form, [AI] won't know which word to use," explained Galal.

He further pointed out that generative AI technologies often lack sensitivity to cultural nuances important to the Arab world, a deficiency that could be resolved by developing AI models specifically attuned to these cultural factors. “All of these problems can be easily solved if we have a model that understands the cultural sensitivities of AI,” he added.

Alongside the DMA’s efforts, the Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI) has been working since December 2024 to develop advanced linguistic AI models aimed at enhancing machine understanding of Arabic. These efforts align with the theme of the United Nations (UN) Arabic Language Day for the year 2025, which focuses on “Arabic Language and AI: Advancing Innovation while Preserving Cultural Heritage.”

The DMA’s initiative represents a significant step toward improving the integration of Arabic language and culture within AI technologies, potentially transforming how AI tools interact with Arabic-speaking users across the region.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.middleeastainews.com/p/dubai-ai-week-arabic-media-initiative> - This article confirms that the Dubai Media Academy launched the Artificial Intelligence Initiative in Arab Media during Dubai AI Week 2025 on 21 April, aiming to build an AI ecosystem tailored to Arabic language and cultural identity, involving media institutions, tech companies, and academics.
* <https://news.uppersetup.com/technology/2025/04/22/dubai-media-academy-launches-artificial-intelligence-initiative-in-arab-media/> - This source supports the claim that the Dubai Media Academy’s initiative focuses on creating comprehensive AI tools and solutions to support Arabic language content and media professionals, aligning with the broader goals announced at Dubai AI Week.
* <https://www.tahawultech.com/home-slide/microsoft-advances-1-million-ai-learners-commitment-at-dubai-ai-week-2025/> - This page highlights Dubai AI Week 2025 activities and supports the context of the event timeline and the emphasis on AI education and awareness in Arabic, complementing DMA’s initiative stated during the same event.
* <https://mediaoffice.ae/en/news/2025/april/17-04/dubai-ai-week-expands-agenda-with-global-events> - This official announcement by Dubai Media Office expands on the Dubai AI Week agenda, which includes AI developments and initiatives like those of DMA, linking AI with education, culture, and media, confirming the event’s scope where DMA made its announcement.
* <https://mbzuai.ac.ae/> - The Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence website provides background on their AI research and linguistic AI models development, supporting the claim that MBZUAI has been working since December 2024 on advanced Arabic AI models.