

## Soul-Searching Middle East Youth Turn to 'Streams in the Desert'

**Two-thirds of arid region's young people stream videos on phones; SAT-7 PLUS eyes 'digital generation' with gospel**

Hits: 975

**STREAMS IN THE DESERT:** Since launching a year ago, SAT-7 PLUS -- a Netflix-type service that streams Christian programs 24/7 in Arabic, Farsi and Turkish across the Middle East and North Africa -- has gained 37,000 viewers. A ministry of SAT-7 ([www.sat7usa.org](http://www.sat7usa.org)), it's the first-ever Christian video streaming service in the vast desert region.

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**EASTON, Mo.** -- Thousands of soul-searching young people in the Middle East, including many from Muslim families, are using their smartphones to watch the first-ever Christian video-on-demand streaming service in the vast desert region.  
By SAT-7  
Hits: 975

Since launching a year ago, SAT-7 PLUS -- a Netflix-type service that streams faith-based programs 24/7 in Arabic, Farsi and Turkish across the Middle East and North Africa -- is growing by the day.

The free on-demand channel is a "game changer" for sharing the Christian message of peace and love in the troubled region where Christians often find themselves isolated from other believers and unable to talk about their faith openly.

### **Digital, Social 'Explosion'**

Mobile digital and social media use is growing in places like Iraq and Syria, especially among young people searching for hope and purpose in their lives, according to Shady (pronounced Shad-dee) Francis, Arabic digital director of media ministry SAT-7 ([www.sat7usa.org](http://www.sat7usa.org)).

"We all know that young people are spending more and more time on screens, consuming content that's often harmful and throws them further away from God," said Francis. "We're meeting young people right where they are on social media and video streaming. Every day, the gospel is changing lives in this digital generation."

Floods of young people in the region -- currently two-thirds of them -- are turning to their phones to stream and watch video content, according to the ministry's technology director Antoine Karam in the Middle East, presenting a huge opportunity. "They're ready to see God's love made visible," he said.

Popular social media platforms such as Facebook -- used every day by 90% of young people in the Middle East and North Africa -- link to the ministry's livestream programs. Viewers are able to chat in real-time with online counselors who speak their language, understand their struggles, and respond to questions about Jesus.

### **Streaming in Desert, Mountain Areas**

"Many of our young viewers do not come from Christian backgrounds, and they're eager to see and

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know more. ~~Francis, who will represent SAT-7 at the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) convention in Nashville, Tenn., in March. "They're often surprised to learn that the Middle East is where the Christian faith was born."~~  
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Broadcasting from the Middle East, the media ministry's "virtually-uncensorable" satellite television programs reach an estimated 25 million people -- and the number of viewers is expected to climb as digital streaming penetrates even the most remote areas, including the mountains and deserts of Afghanistan and Iran.

"I can't describe it, but my whole being was filled with the presence and peace of the Holy Spirit," a viewer told the ministry last month. Another viewer described the show's hosts as "children of the Light."

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### **About SAT-7**

*Launched in 1996, SAT-7 ([www.sat7usa.org](http://www.sat7usa.org)) -- with its international headquarters in Cyprus -- is a multimedia ministry that broadcasts Christian and educational satellite television programs to an estimated 25 million people in the Middle East and North Africa. Its mission is to make the gospel available to everyone, and support the church in its life, work and witness for Jesus Christ. SAT-7 broadcasts 24/7 in Arabic, Farsi (Persian), Dari and Turkish, using multiple satellite channels and online services.*