

Brahms Chouity

At7addak



AT7ADDAK

“ I saw an opportunity to help Middle Eastern gamers compete in online tournaments. ”

COUNTRY	Lebanon
INDUSTRY	Technology
EMPLOYEES	7
YEAR SELECTED	2012
WEBSITE	www.at7addak.com

COMPANY SNAPSHOT

Try to turn off your computer: At7addak.com challenges you. Based in Lebanon, At7addak.com (“I challenge you,” pronounced At-ha-ddak) is the first and largest competitive gaming community designed by and for Arab gamers. The company offers gamers a chance to use their existing gaming platforms to compete with friends and to enter tournaments sponsored by the likes of EA and Activision. The website also boasts exclusive content including news and in-depth game reviews, both in English and Arabic. Within five months of launching in a region with an estimated 45 million gamers and a US\$1 billion gaming industry, At7addak.com attracted 30,000 registered users (growing substantially each month), 160,000 monthly unique visitors, and four million monthly page views.

Entrepreneur Brahms Chouity spent most of his childhood split between Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. In 2003, he earned a degree in international business and hotel management from Switzerland’s Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne. At the time, his father ran an event management company in the KSA that worked closely with the Saudi Royal family. Brahms saw an opportunity to take part in the thriving Saudi business sector, and upon graduating he founded Trait d’Union, a hospitality investment company that quickly secured projects valued at over US\$10 million each in the KSA, Lebanon, Iraq, and Bahrain. In 2006, Brahms set up the Near East franchise of Quintessentially, an exclusive VIP lifestyle management company that caters to over 150,000 members. In 2009, he also played a key part in establishing the Radical Sportscars KSA franchise.

By 2010, Brahms was travelling over 90 times a year and it was starting to take a toll on him. When his wife became pregnant, he decided to take a well-deserved break from work. Much to his wife’s chagrin, Brahms spent most of his sabbatical playing console games, one of his favorite pastimes. While watching The Social Network one night, Brahms realized he could turn his passion into a business by creating an online community for Arab gamers. He had no prior technical experience, so his first move was to recruit the top graduate from AUB’s computer engineering program. In March 2011, the duo presented the At7addak.com business plan during the ArabNet Digital Summit, and two months later they launched the alpha version of the site. Their early adopters were impressed: in January 2012, the same month as the official launch, At7addak.com won the “Best Readers’ Choice Startup” award from Wamda, a well-known Abraaj Capital-backed entrepreneur support organization in MENA.

Today At7addak.com offers gamers in the Middle East opportunities to connect and compete with one another. Users sign up for a free account, configure their profiles with their ID from different gaming platforms (PSN ID, Xbox Live gamer tag, Steam ID), and then challenge each other to any of the 20+ games offered on the site. The users compete on their existing platforms—Playstation3, Xbox360, PC, and mobile—and the company’s innovative Automated Scoring Software uploads their scores to their At7addak.com profiles in exchange for points. At7addak.com has endorsement agreements with most of the world’s top game developers, including an exclusive agreement with EA, and every season the finalists from all of At7addak.com’s online tournaments qualify to play at the real-life final championships. At7addak.com has already hosted the largest official EA Battlefield 3 online tournament in the world and the largest official Call of Duty: Black Ops in-person tournament in the Arab region.

Brahms has captured the attention of the region, and, according to Socialbakers, with over 120,000 fans, growing at a rate of 11,000 fans each week, At7addak.com has the second-highest number of Facebook fans of any website in the region. Moreover, with approximately 20,000 Facebook impressions per post, At7addak.com’s “People Talking About” score is the highest in the region. Having recently earned second place of almost 600 entries in a “Developer Awards” competition hosted by the leading tech blog in MENA, At7addak.com is pushing the envelope for technical innovation in the region.
