

Online Resources in Islamic Studies

Users' Perceptions and Needs

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Background

- Islamic Studies designated a Strategic Subject in June 2007
- “Islam at universities in England” - June 2007
- “Islamic studies: current status and future prospects” – Nov 2007
- “Islamic Studies: the way forward” - April 2008
- “International Approaches to Islamic Studies in Higher Education” - June 2008

DigiIslam Project

- JISC call for bids to undertake project on “User Requirements for Digitised Resources in Islamic Studies” in December 2007
- Exeter’s bid accepted February 2008
- Project runs March to May 2008
- Report submitted June 2008

DigiIslam 1.66



Review of User Requirements for Digitised
Resources in Islamic Studies

JISC

UNIVERSITY OF
EXETER

May 2008

Aims and Objectives

- Landscape existing resources for Islamic Studies
- Identify gaps
- Recommend and prioritise improvements to digital provision

Methodology

- Questionnaire
- Focus Group and Telephone Interviews
- Reading List and High Use Book Project
- UK Theses Project
- Gateways and Portals Project

Questionnaire I : Use of Online Resources

- 145 academics and librarians in 35 institutions
- 53 responses (36.5% response rate)
- Over 90% use online resources
- Most heavily used resources :
 - Online Journals in English (94.7%)
 - Online Reference Works in English (88.9%)
 - Primary Texts in Translation (75.6%)
 - Primary Texts in Islamic Languages (72.2%)

Questionnaire 2: Most Highly Rated Online Resources

- Backsets of Journals in English (78%)
- Online Reference Works in English (73.2%)
- Current Journals in English (70.7%)
- Resources in Islamic Languages (32.5%)
- E-Books in English (23.1%)

Questionnaire 3: Priorities for Digitisation

- Research monographs in English (53.8%)
- Bio-Bibliographies (43.6%)
- Translations of Primary Texts (41.0%)
- Primary Texts in Islamic Languages (38.5%)
- Islamic Manuscript Catalogues (38.5%)
- Periodicals in English and Western languages – current and backsets (c. 30%)

Questionnaire 4: Priorities within Islamic Studies

- Islamic history (50%)
- Qur'anic Studies (47.4%)
- Contemporary Islamic Thought (44.7%)
- Islamic Law (42.1%)
- Hadith Studies (34.2%)
- Islamic Sociology/Anthropology (28.9%)
- Islamic Philosophy (26.3%)
- Islamic/Islamist Politics (23.7%)
- Islamic Theology (21.1%)

Questionnaire 5: Use of Websites

- Islamic organisations in English (94.7%)
- University gateways (66.7%)
- Islamic organisations in Arabic, etc. (63.2%)
- Websites created by individuals (60.6%)
- Some sites rarely used, e.g. INTUTE (never = 80.6%), Islamic Studies Resources (78.4%), MENALIB (64.9%)
- Archiving websites deemed important (81.6%)

Reading List Survey

- 10 institutions – full or partial reading lists
- 29 books appear four or more times
- Only 10 = 34.5% available digitally of which five are only available as part of a package

Core text													
Author	Title	Year	ISBN (print edition)	Dawsons			Coutts			NetLibrary			ACL S
				Price	Credits	eISBN	Single user price	Multiple user price	eISBN	Buy	Lease	eISBN	
Houval	Arabic thought in the liberal age	1983	9780521274234	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Hodgson	The venture of Islam V.1	1974	9780226346830	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
	The venture of Islam V.2	1974	9780226346847	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
	The venture of Islam V.3	1974	9780226346854	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Esposito	Islam and politics	1996	9780815627746	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Walzer	An introduction to Islam	2003	9780521539057	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Lings	Muhammad	2006	9781594771538	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Ramadan	Western Muslims and the future of Islam	2004	9780195183566	X	X	X	£13.04	£14.35	9786610845613	£36.00	£25.00	9781429410427	
Donner	The early Islamic conquests	1981	Out of print	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Houval	A history of the Arab peoples	2005	9780571226641	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Ladous	A history of Islamic societies	2002	9780521779333	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Esposito	Islam : the straight path	2005	9780195182668	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Berkey	The formation of Islam	2002	9780521588133	£38.81	325	9780511307720	£47.88	£79.80	9786610159949	£58.00	£43.00	9780511065804	
Rubin	Muslims	2005	9780415348681	£70.00	325	9780203087046	£84.00	£140.00	9786610348213	£101.00	£75.00	9780203087046	
Schacht	An introduction to Islamic law	1982	9780196254737	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Esposito	Modernising Islam	2002	9781850656784	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Kennedy	The Prophet and the age of the Caliphs	2004	9780562405257	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Holt	The Cambridge history of Islam	1977	9780521291354	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Humphreys	Islamic history : a framework for inquiry	1991	9781850433606	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Wol	Islam	1994	9780815626398	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Martin	Approaches to Islam in religious studies	2001	9781851682683	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Esack	The Quran : a user's guide	2005	9781851683543	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Maqsood	Beyond the veil	2003	9780863564413	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Donohue	Islam in transition : Muslim perspectives	2006	9780195174311	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
DeLooze-Bas	Wahhabi Islam	2007	9781845113223	X	X	X	£26.93	£29.63	9786610840991	£27.00	£20.00	9781429420921	
Abu El Fadl	Islam and the challenge of democracy	2004	9780591119380	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Brown	A new introduction to Islam	2003	9780631216049	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Surish	Reason, freedom, & democracy in Islam	2000	9780195128123	£18.17	325	9780195351910	£20.01	£22.02	9786610472048	£33.00	£24.00	9781423760320	
Etinghausen	The art and architecture of Islam	1987	9780140580596	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Etinghausen	Islamic art and architecture	2003	9780300088694	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Watt	Islamic philosophy and theology	1987	9780748607495	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Goddard	A history of Christian-Muslim relations	2000	9780748610099	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

** ACL S Subscription information at:
<http://www.humanitiesbook.org/pricing/subscriptions.htm#an chor193500>



High Use Book Survey

- Most heavily used books in Islamic Studies from SOAS (23), Leeds (20), Exeter (20)
- Little correlation between institutions – no book in all three lists
- Three titles shared between 63 high use books and 29 most popular titles from reading list survey

Recent Doctoral Research

- 860 PhDs awarded in Islamic Studies, 1997-2006
- Almost half the total awarded in past 100 years
- 97 institutions involved, but 10 universities account for 43.5% of recent theses
- Top subjects among top ten universities (374)
 - Islamic Sociology/Anthropology (50)
 - Islamic Law (44)
 - Islamic History (37)
 - Islamic Politics (28)
 - Islamic Finance (20)
 - Islamic Community in UK (20)

i) PhD Theses in Islamic Studies, 1997-2006 Top 10 universities

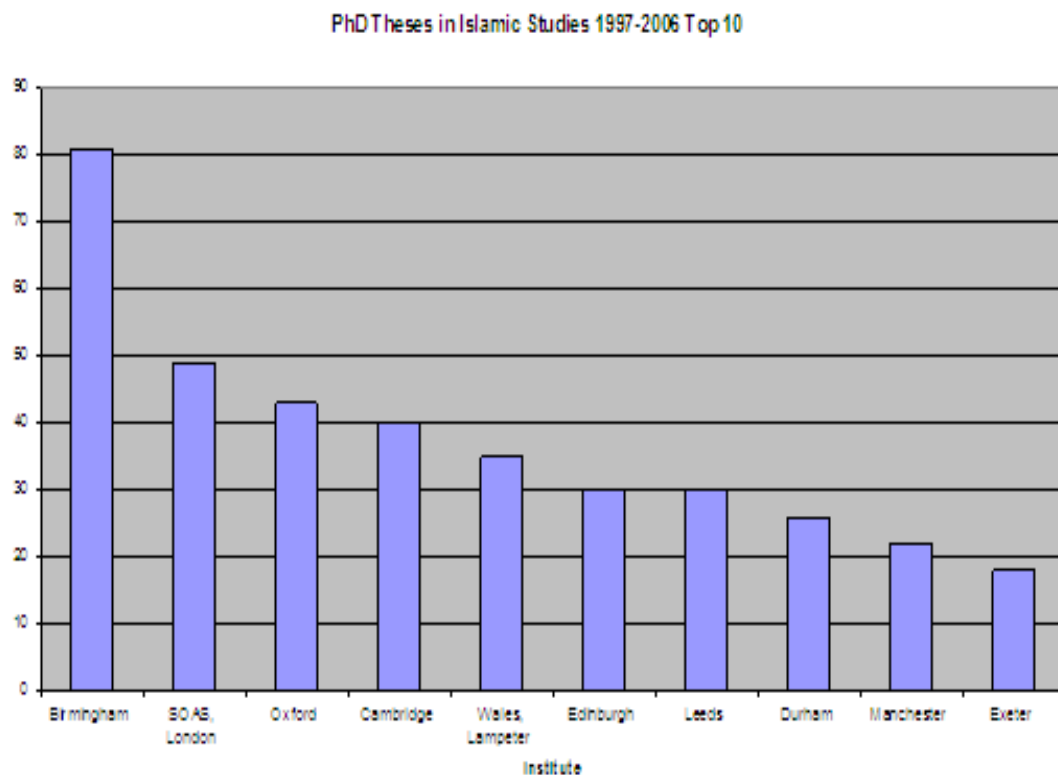


Figure 1

Table 16

Institute	Theses
Birmingham	81
SOAS, London	49
Oxford	43
Cambridge	40
Wales, Lampeter	35
Edinburgh	30
Leeds	30
Durham	26
Manchester	22
Exeter	18
Grand Total	374



Survey of Existing Portals

- Gateways to Sources on the Middle East
- Gateways to Sources on Islam
- Portals of Digitised Primary Texts
- Digitised Islamic Manuscript Catalogues
- Ongoing Islamic Digitisation Projects

[Middle East Virtual Libraries](#) is a well-annotated guide to Arabic and Persian texts available online. Covers the Qur'an, *hadith*, *fiqh* and a wide variety of Islamic texts, as well as full-text electronic books in the fields of Arabic literature and Persian poetry.

Contains links to sites specialising in the Qur'an and the *Hadith* such as [Islamicity](#) (searchable multi-lingual text of the Quran), [Hadith al-Islam](#) (searchable texts), the [USC-MSA Compendium of MuslimTexts](#) (searchable *hadith* texts in English) and [Altafsir](#) (scanned texts).

Other sites looks at different kinds of Islamic materials: [Al-Meshkat](#) (huge number and variety of downloadable books as .rar files), [Fiqh al-Islam](#) (navigable fully-pointed texts), [Shia Books](#) (online text), [Maktabat Sahab al-Salafiyah](#) (downloadable .rar files), [Nida' al-Iman](#) (scanned texts), and [al-Tebyan](#) (navigable online text of material in Arabic and Persian including Persian literature) as well as sites devoted principally to Arabic and Persian *adab* and belles-lettres such as [al-Waraq](#) (subscription based), and [Persopedia](#) (online texts of major poets).

The site is maintained by the Aziz S. Atiya Middle East Library at the University of Utah.

[Al-Tafsir](#) makes available full-text Arabic commentaries on the Qur'an from a wide variety of viewpoints (Sunni, Shi'i, Sufi, Zaydi, Ibadi, Ithna'ashari) as well as works on *i'rab*, *asbab al-nuzul* and *ahkam al-Qur'an*. Two commentaries are available in both Arabic and English : *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* and *Tanwir al-Miqbas min Tafsir Ibn 'Abbas*, plus al-Wahidi's *Asbab al-Nuzul*, as well translations of the Qur'an in 24 different languages.

[Arabic and Persian Texts relating to the Shaykhi, Babi and Baha'i Movements](#) contains a considerable amount of fully digitised texts, for example complete works by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Ahmad al-Ahsa'i, and Baha' Allah.

[Markaz Wadud lil-Makhtutat](#) contains facsimiles of over 650 manuscripts in a wide variety of Islamic subjects, as well as 127 printed books. The printed books cover edited texts, manuscript catalogues and Arabic versions of Brockelmann and Sezgin. The texts can be downloaded as zipped .rar files.

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Outcomes

- How online resources are used for teaching and research
- What the gaps are & priorities in filling them
- What the most heavily-used textbooks are
- What the most popular research areas are at PhD level
- Inventory of existing portals and libraries of online primary texts

Recommendation: 1. National Gateway to Islamic Resources

- Existing resources – ebooks and journals, reference works, dictionaries, websites

- New resources
 - Gateway to primary texts
 - Digitised version of all UK Islamic manuscript catalogues
 - Electronic versions of recent Ph.D. theses
 - Open Access Repository to E-Prints

Recommendation : 2. Online Teaching Materials

- Feasibility Study into the creation of contextualised, interactive set of primary texts in Arabic and Persian for teaching

Recommendation : 3. Subsidy of Online Reference Works

- Encyclopaedia of Islam, Encyclopedia of the Qur'an, New Pauly
- Index Islamicus Online
- Oxford Islamic Studies Online
- New resources, e.g. Brockelmann and Sezgin

Recommendation : 4. Archiving of Websites

- Support organisations willing to archive
 - Islamic organisations in English
 - Websites, wikis and blogs of UK Muslim community
 - UK websites with substantial Islamic content

Recommendation 5: Against the Creation of an E-Books Observatory

- Very expensive
- Copyright problems
- Evidence shows that items would be difficult to select
- Responsibility of individual institutions and students

The Future

- Report submitted to JISC – May 2008
- JISC discussing report with HEFCE, June-Oct 2008
- HEFCE “in the process of investigating an appropriate form of intervention to support [Islamic Studies] with advice from the Islamic studies community” (HEFCE, *Strategically Important and Vulnerable Subjects : Final Report of the 2008 Advisory Group, October 2008* (p. 9))