



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Doha Office

UNESCO & the World Digital Library

World Digital Library (WDL) Arab Peninsula Regional Group Meeting

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WDL Background

- ▶ Launched in April 2009 at UNESCO Headquarters with US Library of Congress
- ▶ More than 12,000 unique cultural materials from libraries/archives around the world (manuscripts, maps, rare books, films, sound recordings, prints)
- ▶ Unrestricted public and open access, free of charge
- ▶ Multilingual platform: 6 UN official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish) + Portuguese
- ▶ 193 Member states of UNESCO represented in collection with materials in 131 languages
- ▶ A shift in digital library projects: from focus on quantity to quality

WDL Objectives

In line with UNESCO's values and mandate:

- ▶ Promote cross-cultural understanding and intercultural cooperation
- ▶ Increase quality and variety of cultural content on the Internet
- ▶ Provide a global teaching resource for educators, scholars and general audiences
- ▶ Narrow the digital divide within and between countries
- ▶ encourage both students and the general public to learn more about the cultural heritage of all countries

“From ancient Chinese or Persian calligraphy to early Latin American photography”



Participating libraries in GCC/Yemen

- ▶ **Qatar**
Qatar National Library
- ▶ **Saudi Arabia**
Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, Prince Sultan Library for Science and Knowledge; King Abdulaziz University Library, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST)
- ▶ **United Arab Emirates**
Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage
- ▶ **Bahrain**
Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain
- ▶ **Oman**
Oman Memory Center for Omani Heritage, Sultan Qaboos University Library, The Electronic Library of the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs
- ▶ **Yemen**
Al-Noor Center for Research and Studies, Yemen



Relevance for UNESCO

- ▶ **Guaranteeing universal access to information and knowledge**
 - Only UN agency mandated with promoting free flow of ideas including universal access to information, preservation of knowledge and promoting diversity of cultures including protection of cultural heritage
 - UNESCO's mission is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science and culture and communication and information
 - Places libraries, especially digital libraries, at the heart of knowledge societies as they enable people to access, share and apply knowledge



► Building capacities in preserving cultural heritage

- To respond to limited capacities of countries to digitize their cultural treasures, WDL and UNESCO worked on supporting libraries and archives in establishing national digital conversation center across the world
- Provided Brazil, Russia, Egypt, Iraq, and Uganda with equipment, software, training, and financial support to establish digital conversion centers to produce high-quality digital images for inclusion of materials on own websites and on the WDL.
- Most of content on WDL is coming from these digitization centers



Similar UNESCO's projects

- ▶ **Memory of the World Programme**
 - Launched in 1992 to preserve the world's documentary heritage in all its forms, especially heritage that is rare and endangered and to guard them against collective amnesia
 - Recording the world's history from 1700 BC to present day
 - More than 300 archives and materials on International Register on account of their historical significance for humankind and outstanding universal value
 - Actively contributing to highlighting the world's hidden cultural treasures by making them accessible to all and bringing them on a centralized platform
 - Support establishment of Regional & National MoW committees



► Memory of the World Programme

• Egypt

Memory of the Suez Canal



Documentary heritage submitted by Egypt and recommended for inclusion in the Memory of the World Register in 1997.

>> [More information](#)

Persian Illustrated and Illuminated Manuscripts



Documentary heritage submitted by Egypt and recommended for inclusion in the Memory of the World Register in 2007.

>> [More information](#)

The National Library of Egypt's Collection of Mamluk Qur'an Manuscripts



Documentary heritage submitted by Egypt and recommended for inclusion in the Memory of the World Register in 2013.

>> [More information](#)

• Lebanon

Commemorative stela of Nahr el-Kalb, Mount Lebanon



Documentary heritage submitted by Lebanon and recommended for inclusion in the Memory of the World Register in 2005.

>> [More information](#)

The Phoenician Alphabet



Documentary heritage submitted by Lebanon and recommended for inclusion in the Memory of the World Register in 2005.

>> [More information](#)

• Saudi Arabia

Earliest Islamic (Kufic) inscription

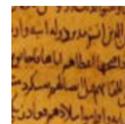


Documentary heritage submitted by Saudi Arabia and recommended for inclusion in the Memory of the World Register in 2003.

>> [More information](#)

Morocco

Kitab al-ibar, wa diwan al-mobtadae wa al-khabar



Documentary heritage submitted by Morocco and recommended for inclusion in the Memory of the World Register in 2011.

>> [More information](#)

• Tunisia

Privateering and the international relations of the Regency of Tunis in the 18th and 19th centuries



Documentary heritage submitted by Tunisia and recommended for inclusion in the Memory of the World Register in 2011.

>> [More information](#)

► Information for All Programme

- Intergovernmental programme created in 2000 to harness new opportunities of the information age to create equitable societies through better access to information
- Strengthen Member States' capacities to address emerging challenges of the ethical dimensions of knowledge societies
- Focus on information for development, information preservation, information access, information literacy and information ethics
- Provide policy advice, tools and resources to governments to develop national information frameworks and strengthen capacities
- Support establishment of National IFAP Committees



Thank you!



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