

**Al-Babtain Library Electronic website**

**Al-Babtain Central Library for Arabic Poetry – Kuwait**

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1. **Background Information:**

Al-Babtain Central Library for Arabic Poetry, is the first library specialized in the Arabic poetry world.

The website of Al-Babtain Central Library for Arabic Poetry was launched concurrently with the opening of the library on 04/08/2006. The library design and construction kept pace with up-to-date technologies used at that time. With continuous rapid technological development in web design and creation technology, and services provided by websites, the library has been keen on keeping abreast with such development by designing a new website for the library. Comprehensive upgrade was conducted for the website, which was re-launched in its new look in November 2011"full developed by library staff", which is suitable for the latest technology means using a set of critical tools of research, development and applications intended to help library visitors and users of its services.

The website visitor will find sections containing adequate amount of information about the Library, its creation, history and various sections of the Library. Each section has diverse information containers including books, rare books, periodicals and theses in addition to complete information about original and digitally pictured manuscripts maintained in the Library collections, which are considered as an Arab heritage treasure representing a brilliant aspect of the Arab and Islamic civilization history.

In addition to the above, the Library website visitors will find link to the Library general index, which enables a visitor to search in the Library different collections using many search criteria (such as title, author, subject, publishing data, etc.) providing the visitor with several search methods including simple search and advanced search. These tools enable the searcher to access their intended content in shortest possible time making use of vast amount of data, which the Library is keen to add to all information containers and make the same searchable for users convenience. This puts users on the right path to attain the results desired from their search.

The website also presents the Arab culture in a new form through creating a set of sections, which are regularly updated with view to making the Library content of cultural and heritage treasures accessible by all. Therefore, the Library paid attention to add such sections including:

* Poet of the Month: On a monthly basis, an Arab poet is selected to provide all relevant information about them including information about their life and known and unknown poetic production to the readers in an attempt by the website administrators to provide all readers with access to information about the poets, celebrate their memory and remind people of their role in the Arab intellectual output, poetry and culture.
* Book of the Week: On weekly basis, a new or rare book available in the Library is presented. Such presentation familiarizes the reader with such book, which is often not newly printed, and provides them with all valuable information in the book reviving these books again after had been forgotten by people.
* Cultural Clip: It is a new concept presenting light brief cultural feedback to the Arab reader with view to remaindering them of cultural news published in old newspapers and periodicals that people may have forgotten. Many readers and followers of the website expressed positive feedback about this service.
* Cultural Forum: It is an interactive forum between the Library and the audience through which a cultural or literary issue is raised where the audience can give their opinions about the same in addition to providing comment by the Library at the end of duration allocated for the issue discussion and making it available to the audience to make use of this constructive interaction.
* Cultural Magazine: It has been recently launched and is intended to document and disseminate new developments, articles and Arab cultural varieties as well as all issues related to the Arabic language, literature and poetry. The goal behind this is to expand the cultural information base with Arab audience. The magazine is presented in a domain on the Library website collection (<http://babtainlibrary.org>)

The website online services include:

* E-registration for training courses: website provides online registration for the training courses offered by the Library for free for those above 40 years old in the computer literacy or course of social networking media courses.
* Mailing List: It allows registered users to receive the Library newsletters, updates and announcements to their E-mails.
* Mobile Library: free SMS messaging service, which allows those who registered online to receive SMS messages about the library events and updates.
* Library WhatsAPP: Online registration, registered user will be added to (Broadcast) list of the library to receive cultural newsletters via this application.
* Publications: The website provides electronic versions (including more than 120 E-versions) and audio versions (*Full Two Books of Poetry* allowing listening to the same online)
* Virtual Tour: It is an initiative that aims to create a virtual environment allowing the website visitors to have a virtual tour throughout various sections of the Library. There will be future development for more advanced virtual visit.
* RSS: provides summaries allowing the public to stay abreast with the website updates.
* Social Networks: An official accounts (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram - Pintreset) intended to have effective communication with the public and society as well as providing some cultural information that benefit the audience. Ex: Instagram account publishes portrait designs for multiple poems and share them through other networks.
* E-Calendar: It displays review of the most important events and activities in the Library during the month.
* YouTube Channel: displays videos of events that took place in the Library as well as cultural videos shedding lights on some rare books in the Library.
* Useful Links: It contains a list of websites relating to the State of Kuwait, local libraries, Arab libraries, international libraries, poetry websites, literary and poetic websites.
* Photo Gallery: It has special photo album of most important events of the Library.
* FAQ: provides answers to frequently asked questions that come to the minds of visitors in connection with the Library and its services.

Technological Features on the Website:

* Mobile Applications: The Library has application for Apple (IOS) & Android devices as the Library application is currently available on the Appstore and Google Play. There is an updated version of the application that will be uploaded soon.
* Mobile Version: website is equipped with technologies enabling it to guide a visitor in the event that they use tablet or smart devices to Mobile version which is suitable for display on screens of these devices.
* The website promptly updates its data with popular search engines like Google and Bing. The website has search feature to search in its contents through Google search engine.

Note: The Library is established to serve as center for Arabic language, culture, literature and poetry. Therefore, materials are focused on Arabic language and the website contains some materials in English, which contain basic information about the website and certain services that can be made available in English.

**II. Goals & Timeframe**

The electronic services have several objectives including:

* building an authenticated E-reference specialized on Arabic language & culture and communication with other civilizations
* Create an effective cultural environment between the library and the public via the Internet
* Facilitate the services offered by the library and converted them to electronic services to save time, effort and money.
* Strengthening the link between the new generations and interested people in the Arabic language or the Arab cultural heritage
* Offering the largest possible number of electronic channels of communication between the library and the public via internet to contribute to the positive deployment of Arab culture.
* Providing electronic and multi-media of the Arab cultural contents.
* Documenting the diverse cultural events that are held in the library and encourage cultural communication between different civilizations
* Activate the role of Arabic language and maintain its features as stated in reference books as an essential reference for both scholars and amateurs;

**Timeframe:**

1. Launching the first Website of the library with upon the opening thereof in April 2006.
2. November 2011, the website was re-launched in new look covering new several services.
3. February 2002, the library launched its mobile applications for Apple and Android devices
4. November 2012, online registration was launched via the library Whats App
5. December 2012, cultural clip section was opened on the website
6. February 2013, Library Cultural Forum was initiated.
7. November 2013, the library added to its set of services the (Cultural Magazine).

The library still strives to update its online services and expand at all possible areas. It operates based on a systematic plan for future development and utilization of modern technologies in serving the public.

**III. Project’s added value and importance**

Arabic language and culture, literature and poetry heritage constitute precious treasure which represents an important civilized aspect. Provision of materials and information as well as accessibility thereto via up-t-o-date means became inevitable requirement. Therefore, the library has been keen to be a important reference in this aspect and seeks through multiple channels to communicate with other civilizations; activate joint linkages among these civilizations and facilitate access to the library through various modern ways contributing to the creation of positive environment that serves the objectives for which the library is established. The library seeks, via several services such as social networking, smart phone applications, cultural sections on the website as well as newsletters and broadcasts via Whats App, to attain expansion and spread to create an attractive awareness environment through the internet, which not only provides information , but also creates an interactive environment between the parties.

**IV. Challenges**

* Lack of interest in cultural enlightenment and awareness in the Arab community;
* Existence of online sources that provide inaccurate and false information about Arab culture, literature and poetry;
* Lack of compliance with to intellectual rights , copyrights and publishing contents of the library publications in improper or illegal manner;
* Lack of sense of responsibility in preserving cultural heritage among many people in the Arab community;
* New generations are affected by many modern influences that create some kind of cultural alienation in connection with Arabic language;
* Magnitude of Arab cultural, literary and poetic production, which requires great efforts to survey and document.

**V. Relevance of the project to the respective Action Line**

Arab culture and civilization is huge product extending over thousands of years that passed through different eras. Further, flow of information in the current era in relation to Arab cultural, literary and poetic outputs are difficult to count and require great capabilities. In spite of these difficulties, the Al- Babtain Library, through various means, seeks to achieve the objectives for which it was opened and develops action plans that are in line with the present situation to draw better results in the future and achieve more benefits. Action plan is still under discussion and development. However the library achieved important gains in the past as well as in the present towards the desired goals. It set goals for the future to be attained for more expansion in the set objectives and thus increase the scope of goals at higher levels.

**VL. Conclusion**

Since its inception till now, Al-Babtain Library has been seeking to provide best services at various levels and continue efforts to achieve these goals. Further, it has future visions to support development of services provided and increase the number of beneficiaries of these services. The library sought to be cultural incubator for different cultures around the world through links the Arab world, which has provided throughout its history in various positive contributions to scientific and literary knowledge. We firmly know that the task is not easy, but we seek, with available potentials, to faces the challenge and achieve all possible goals and impose new rules that contribute to building a cultural high level in the local community and the Arab world.