

Qatar National Library hosts prestigious workshop for regional World Digital Library members

Doha, 24 June 2013 – Qatar National Library (QNL), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, in collaboration with the World Digital Library (WDL), recently hosted a workshop in Doha for current and prospective members of the WDL’s Arab Peninsula Regional group.

The workshop, which was conducted in Arabic and English, was aimed at encouraging Arab Peninsula Regional Group members to improve overall standards of content contribution to the WDL, and was aimed at developing regional networks to allow feedback and facilitate exchange.

The WDL initiative was founded by the Library of Congress, with the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). It is led by the Library of Congress, and houses a digital repository of cultural treasures which is contributed to by libraries and other cultural institutions from around the world. Qatar Foundation and Qatar National Library are major sponsors of the WDL, along with Carnegie Corporation of New York, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, and other corporate, foundation, and individual donors. The WDL’s website -- www.wdl.org -- is available in seven languages, including Arabic.

Thousands of items from QNL’s prized Heritage Collection – a rare trove of manuscripts, books, and artefacts documenting a wealth of Arab-Islamic civilisation and human thought, and an increasingly popular destination for students in Qatar – have been digitised and can be accessed for free on the WDL web portal through -- <http://www.wdl.org/en/search/?institution=central-library-qatar-foundation>.

“Qatar National Library supports the WDL in its mission to promote international and intercultural understanding, expand the volume and variety of cultural content on the internet, and build capacity in partner institutions,” said **Dr Claudia Lux, Project Director of QNL**. “It provides resources free of charge to educators, scholars and the general public, and the conducting of regular trainings and workshops is critical to the building of technical capacity among members of the Arab Peninsula Regional Group. It will enhance the members’ ability to contribute digital content and to meet the quality standards established by the WDL.”

Dr John Van Oudenaren, Director of WDL, also welcomed the initiative. “We are pleased to be working with the Qatar National Library in this workshop and grateful for the library’s great support for hosting this regional meeting,” he said. “Capacity building is an important mission of WDL, enshrined in our charter and endorsed by UNESCO. Helping to narrow the global digital divide in the creation of, and access to, high-quality digital content is a big part of what the WDL is about. The workshop for hands-on work is aimed at ‘training the trainers’ in creating digital content. This furthers the WDL’s capacity-building mission and will facilitate the flow of high-quality Arabic content from this region to the WDL in the future.”

The workshop, entitled ‘Train The Trainer – Hands On’, was attended by current and prospective WDL partner institutions from across the region. These included King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, King Hamad Library, Sultan Qaboos Libraries, Omani Digital Library, King Abdulaziz University, Al- Ahgaf Library for Manuscripts, Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, Prince Sultan Library for Science and Knowledge, National Library of Jordan, King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies, Kuwait National Library, Library of Imam Idarus Omer Alhabshin for manuscript and printed books, and Al-Noor Centre for Studies and Research.

Expert trainers from Qatar Foundation, QNL and WDL’s head office at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., imparted skills in digital conversion, metadata standards, and the expert description of culture and heritage items.

Qatar National Library is maintaining high quality standards of digital content contribution that meet the quality standards established by the WDL, through selecting the content, digitising it, creating the metadata supported by expert descriptions and providing the content to the WDL which makes thousands of items from QNL’s prized Heritage Collection freely available to educators, scholars and the general public through the WDL website.

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Qatar National Library – Bridging with knowledge Qatar’s Heritage and Future

Qatar National Library (QNL) is a non-profit organization under the umbrella of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF). QNL is supporting Qatar on its journey from carbon-based economy to knowledge-based economy by providing resources to students, researchers, and the community in Qatar. It was announced in November 2012 by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development.

QNL carries out its mission through three functions, National Library, University and Research Library and a Metropolitan Public Library of the digital age. The National Library function collects and provides access to global knowledge relevant to Qatar and the region. It also collects, preserves and provides access to heritage content and materials about Qatar and the region. The University and Research Library function supports education and research at all levels by providing printed and digital library materials for students and researchers. Metropolitan Public Library delivers library services and information for everyone to enjoy reading, meet people and become information literate.

Learn more about Qatar National Library online at www.qnl.qa

Twitter: @QNLlib

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheQatarNationalLibrary

Library of Congress and World Digital Library

Proposed by Librarian of Congress James H. Billington and launched in 2009, the WDL makes significant primary materials from countries and cultures around the world freely available on www.wdl.org. More than 170 libraries, museums, and archives in 79 countries are WDL partners.

Founded in 1800, the Library of Congress is the nation’s oldest federal cultural institution. The Library seeks to spark imagination and creativity and to further human understanding and wisdom by providing access to knowledge through its magnificent collections, programs, publications and exhibitions. Many of the Library’s rich resources can be accessed through its website at www.loc.gov.