

Working with Arabic or Persian text (Windows)

Last revised August 2010

On the Public Workstation Facility (PWF)

The computers running Windows all have suitable fonts for displaying documents and web pages containing Arabic text.

Customising your PWF Desktop to Read and Write Arabic Text

You should only need to do this once and the settings will be retained in your roaming profile. If the profile ever needs to be reset or deleted, simply repeat the steps to install Arabic.

1. Click the **Start** menu button at the bottom left of the screen and select **Control Panel** from the menu which pops up.
2. Click on **Date, Time, Language and Regional Options**.
3. Click on **Regional and Language Options**.
4. Click the **Languages** tab.
5. Click the **Details** button.
6. Click **Add** to add an Arabic keyboard.
7. Pull down the **Input languages** menu to select the keyboard you want (you may need to scroll up and down to find it). Close each window in turn by clicking **OK**.
8. You should now find that Arabic appears on the pop-up menu which opens when you click on the taskbar keyboard language indicator which appears as the letters **EN** on the bottom right of the screen. The list is not in alphabetical order, so you may need to look carefully to find it.

Using the Arabic Keyboard in MS Word

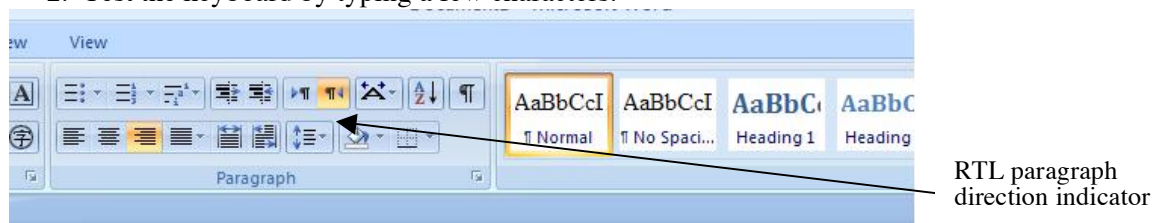
Start MS Word. Click the language keyboard indicator and select your Arabic keyboard. From Word's **Format** menu select **Paragraph** and click the radio button labelled **Right-to-left** to set the correct typing direction and cursor action. Test the keyboard by typing a few characters.

If you are familiar with touch-typing using the Arabic keyboard, you can just go ahead and start typing. However, if you need help with locating characters, you can make use of the **MS Visual Keyboard**.

1. Select the **Word and Text Processing** folder from the **Start** menu.
2. Click the **MS Visual Keyboard** program.
3. Use the Keyboard Language indicator to change to the Arabic keyboard.
4. You should see the Visual keyboard change to Arabic.



1. Click the **Right-to-left** paragraph direction indicator to set the correct typing direction and cursor action.
2. Test the keyboard by typing a few characters.



Viewing Arabic on the Web

The site <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/> is a convenient page to test your browser settings. Many web pages will automatically tell your browser what encoding they are using, but this cannot be relied upon. If the page is labelled with the correct encoding your browser will normally select suitable local fonts and display it without any need for action on your part. However, this sometimes does not happen and you may need to set the encoding explicitly.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/> is a suitable site to test your settings for viewing Persian text.

If the page appears garbled, try pulling down **Encoding** from the **View** menu. Click on **More** to see all the encodings which the browser knows about and select one of the Arabic possibilities. The one you need will vary from page to page, because you are telling the browser the encoding of the *emitting* site, not the method you use locally to display Arabic.

E-mail

Hermes Webmail, Thunderbird and MS Outlook can all send and receive Arabic. All three are available on the PWF in the Email and Messaging folder.

Thunderbird and Outlook are able to send Arabic text in a variety of encodings. You may need to exchange some test messages with your colleagues to discover the optimum language settings, which may vary depending on the operating system they are using. Try the default setting first. If none of the Arabic character sets is successful it is worth trying the two Unicode options, UTF-8 or UTF-7.

E-mail is most likely to work if both parties are using the same kind of computer (i.e. both Macs or both PCs).

Hermes Webmail is designed to be simple and straightforward, so is probably the best option if you are not confident about changing your settings. It will transmit email in Unicode, which is the most modern standard.

We have found that **Thunderbird** is generally the best of the three programs if you prefer to be able to customise your email settings.

Further Advice

If you have any problems using the PWF for foreign language work or need any further advice, please contact the Computing Service Literary and Language Support specialist on 35029 or by emailing ll-support@ucs.cam.ac.uk

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