

20/11/2000

Islamic digital library closer to reality thanks to Sun Microsystems

A WORLDWIDE Islamic digital library is edging closer to reality with Malaysia and several Middle East nations taking the lead with the assistance of American software giant Sun Microsystems Inc.

Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Morocco have expressed their interest to work with Malaysia in providing the Islamic materials online, Sun director of science office Dr John Gage said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is "extremely interested" in the virtual library, Gage told reporters as he emerged from a half-an-hour meeting with the Prime Minister in Langkawi yesterday.

"We've been talking about this digital library for a number of years because it has been a challenge for everyone to agree on one method in bringing the materials together."

It was only after the Internet's arrival a few years ago that librarians finally agreed on a harmonious method to consolidate precious Islamic materials virtually.

However, Gage pointed out the difficulties in putting the digital library in place.

"There are still many issues of scholarship, librarianship and cultural preservations that must be addressed.

"The hard part is to bring all collections of Islamic materials together... how do you take that very valuable materials and convert them into digital forms. All librarians must be consulted."

In response to Sun's commitment in making the digital library a reality, he said: "Sun is completely committed."

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