On the Managed Cluster Service (MCS)

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

Customising your MCS 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 Clock, Language, Region Options.
3. Click on Region and Language.
4. Click the Keyboards and Languages tab.
5. Click the Change Keyboards button.
6. Click Add to add an Arabic keyboard.

7. Scroll down until you find the keyboard you want and select it by clicking the checkboxes.
8. Close each window in turn by clicking OK.
9. 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 when a window into which you can type is open.
Using the Arabic Keyboard in MS Word

Start MS Word. Click the language keyboard indicator and select your Arabic keyboard. On Word’s Home tab click the 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.

Viewing Arabic on the Web

The site http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/ is a convenient page to test your browser settings.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/ is a suitable site to test your settings for viewing Persian text.

If a page appears garbled, try pulling down Encoding from the View menu (only possible with some browsers). 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. Most sites should have a header telling your browser what encoding to use and you will not need to alter your settings manually.

E-mail

Hermes Webmail, Thunderbird and MS Outlook can all send and receive Arabic. All three are available on the MCS 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.

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.

Do I need to install an MS Office Language Pack on my computer?

Probably not; this is only needed if you want to change the language of your program menus or if you want proofing tools (spellcheck etc.) which are not already bundled with the version of Office which you have on your computer.
If you need proofing tools for a particular language the simplest way to check this is to enable the language keyboard as described on the first page of this leaflet. This will automatically enable the associated tools in Office if they are installed. Start up Word, then switch keyboards and type something with a spelling error. If check spelling as you type is turned on Word will flag up the mistake.

Some language packs are free to download but others require payment, so it’s worth checking whether you actually do need the functionality they add to Word before spending any money.

**Further Advice**

If you have any problems using the MCS for foreign language work or need any further advice, please contact the University Information Services Literary and Language Support specialist on 35029 or by emailing ll-support@uis.cam.ac.uk

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