On the Managed Cluster Service (MCS)

To read and type Arabic text on the MCS Macintosh computers you need to set your System Preferences to enable an input menu which will allow you to enter Arabic characters using the standard English keyboard.

1. From the Apple Menu (top left) pull down System Preferences > Language & Region.
2. Click the Keyboard Preferences button then the Input Sources tab.
3. A list of installed keyboards and input methods will appear.
4. Click the + button to install more keyboards and select the one you want to add from the list which appears.
5. Click the **Keyboard** tab and check the box by “Show Keyboard and Character Viewers”.

6. Close **System Preferences**.

7. A menu headed by a British Union Flag icon will appear in the top right of the screen. If you click on it you will see the list of input methods that you added in step 4.

8. Start up the word-processor application you intend to use and open the document in which you want to type Arabic. **WARNING**! Not all word-processing programs can cope with Arabic. You may find that you need to use a specialised program such as Nisus Writer instead of Word.

9. Click once on the keyboard menu to drop down a complete menu of the available keyboards.

10. Click on the Arabic keyboard. You should notice that the keyboard icon changes to a crescent moon. This will switch back to the British flag whenever the cursor is placed in an area where it is not possible to type Arabic letters.

**Finding the keyboard locations of the characters**

To discover the keyboard positions of the various characters and diacritics select the **Keyboard Viewer** from the keyboard menu and then change to the Arabic keyboard. You will see a diagram keyboard layout showing the positions of the various characters.

You should find that the system automatically selects the correct letterforms and ligatures, depending on neighbouring characters. Nisus Writer supports this, but many versions of Word do not. You will need to experiment with holding down the alt and shift keys to find the complete set of characters.

Note that if you want to type combinations of languages which use the same characters but arrange them differently on the keyboard (e.g. French and German), it probably makes sense to choose just one input method so that you can touch-type.

**Viewing Arabic on the Web**

Point your browser at a suitable Arabic page, such as [http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/) or
http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/ If the web page has a correct header which tells your browser what character encoding it uses, then the browser should automatically switch to a display of Arabic letters. If this doesn’t happen, you can try selecting Text Encoding from the View menu and experimenting with likely possibilities (e.g. Arabic (Windows) is probable if UTF-8 doesn’t work).

Email

1. Both Hermes Webmail and Apple Mail can support foreign language email. An alternative would be to send your Arabic text as an attachment.

2. Enter the email address to which you want to send your message in the “To:” field (remember this needs to be in Roman letters).

3. Place the cursor in the body of the message and switch to the Arabic keyboard.

4. Type your message.

5. You can use Arabic characters in the “Subject:” field if you wish, but many email programs will fail to display them correctly when they receive your message. The best thing to do is to experiment to find what best suits the people with whom you exchange messages most frequently.

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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