

Educational and Cultural Role of Arab Virtual Document Exhibitions

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Abstract

Archival institutions are legally authorized to preserve educational, historical, or archival documents. Under this context, this research explores the role and interest of Arab archival institutions in displaying official documents on their websites. This study delves into focusing on the service provision of archival institutions by providing a virtual exhibition of their documents. Method of content analysis helps this research analyze the exhibition's characteristics, for instance, display of document type, size, metadata availability, research tools and instruments, and engraving the possibility to copy, download, or print documents. The sample size of the research included ten archival institutions in Arab, including Oman, Jordan, UAE, Tunisia, KSA, Iraq, Qatar, Libya, and Morocco. These institutes were selected based on the presence of archival document websites that provide text documents, photographs, and visual recordings. The analysis of the research uncovered the aspect that Arab archival institutes differ in their interest in exhibiting virtual documents and the type/number of documents available to the public. However, almost 50% of archival institutes provide metadata for displayed documents. They provide advanced characteristics, such as enlargement of images, search, download, and sharing, available in 33.3% of virtual exhibitions. This study recommends the establishment of control to select displayed documents compatible with different users. Moreover, the display of images and documents should include descriptive data that explains the nature and context of document creation and preservation. Virtual exhibition visitors must be surveyed with their aspirations under consideration of the archival institute's policies and country-specific document management laws.

Keywords: Educational Service, Online Arab Content, Virtual Document Exhibition, Arab Archival Institutes, Archival Institute Services.

Introduction

Archival institutions have the authority to preserve documents that have educational, historical, or archival value. Archival institutions, such as National and Regional Archives, carry out various tasks and activities under legislative control. The tasks include developing, organizing, preserving document collection and making them available to researchers and the public. Moreover, archival institutions highlight the document's historical importance and emphasize that history can only be understood by referring to documents (Williams 2006). Archival documents provide information on all aspects of national history and private and public life activities. In addition to preserving documents, archival institutions provide various information services, such as reference services, publishing documents, publications, studies, and participation in seminars and conferences. These institutions also organize document exhibitions in archives or websites and online or virtual document exhibitions. These events help introduce beneficiaries to valuable and rare manuscripts (Burcak Senturk 2021).

Document exhibitions are essential in archival institutions. These exhibitions spread awareness of the nation's documentary and cultural heritage. Organizing exhibitions on archival materials raises the nation's interest in documents' historical and educational value. Documents, maps, and photographs help to develop an understanding of historical events. The individuals responsible for the preservation of the documents also write and edit documents, such as diaries and letters, to make the visitors feel for the characters who edited them. These documents clarify and provide explanation to the public with information related to scientists, artists, and poets (Stemers et al. 2002).

Moreover, organizing document exhibitions helps spread awareness of archival institutions and their role in preserving documentary heritage and national memory, demonstrating the importance of documents, and interacting with the public at local and national events. An important step taken into consideration

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when planning a document exhibition is selecting documents with historical and documentary value. These documents cast a visual impact on the public, where the physical condition of the documents holds value. The exhibition program in the Archives has specific objectives. For instance, an archival institution may select documents for exhibition that are of commemorative importance to a nation's traditions. These events are commemorated where the participation of other nations helps strengthen cultural relations (Sfundo Cele, Stewart and Asiedu 2024).

Archival institutions lend samples of their rare documents to other institutes in order for them to display and return under controlled security. According to the United States National Archives document lending policy, the borrower is responsible for all expenses incurred while securing and transporting documents. In addition, the borrower is not authorized to use these documents for purposes other than display. They are also not allowed to mark, remove existing signs or vital information, or use adhesives to manipulate document information (NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION 2015). In contrast, filming is permitted under written consent from the National Archives (National Archives 2015). Likewise, documents must be kept safe where safety standards are met with suitable preservation conditions, humidity, and appropriate temperature. The National Archives of France refers to two types of physical exhibitions of documents (Archives Nationales France 2021). The first is a permanent document exhibition in the archives building, through which the most famous documents in the national archives are displayed. Second, temporary exhibitions based on document collections in the National Archives (National Archives 2024). Each year, the United States National Archives requests cultural and other institutions to borrow items from the documentary collections for provisional exhibitions. This requires pre-exhibition preparatory work on selecting documents and securing their transfer if the exhibition is outside the Archives. Therefore, it appreciates virtual exhibitions of documents in most cases (National Archives 2015).

When reviewing several foreign National Archives' websites, the researchers found interest in virtual exhibitions of documents, which is proven by the diversity of archival documents. These include manuscripts, public and private records, maps, photographs, and seals.

Research Problem

The research problem lies in exploring the extent of Arab archival institutions' interest in displaying documents on their websites, describing and analyzing their characteristics, and presenting suggestions that enhance the positive aspects while addressing weaknesses.

Research Objective

This research aims to investigate Arab archival institutions' interest in virtual exhibitions and evaluate their characteristics. These characteristics include document type, availability of descriptive metadata, tools to search for exhibition documents, availability of document enlargement, and copy/print/upload/share via social media. The research also seeks to draw suggestions for other Arab archives on how to plan and implement their virtual exhibitions efficiently.

Literature Review

Researchers have found numerous studies that dealt with document exhibitions in archival institutions. However, these studies did not address the virtual exhibitions of documents in Arab archival institutions. Regarding the concept of document exhibition, (Lemay and Klein 2012) narrate the general idea of the exhibition, which is to make available to the public a collection of objects of a cultural or artistic nature that have been collected and displayed in a place equipped and dedicated to general knowledge. According to (Silver 1997), a virtual or online exhibition is a dynamic online media collection related to a specific topic, concept, or idea. The materials and media in the exhibition are presented attractively, inviting the audience to explore the exhibition's contents for learning or entertainment.

(Cruz-Lara, Chen, and Hong 2002) define exhibition as a series of web pages that contain multiple media, such as videos. Each web page is called an exhibition item. In archives management, a virtual exhibition

means presenting archival materials as educational ideas and facts, presenting digital content grouped by source and provenance locally or accessed remotely, and the content is usually unique (Foo et al. 2009). In addition, several steps should be followed when planning exhibitions: identifying the target audience, selecting the exhibition's theme, determining the exhibition's schedule, and selecting the materials to be displayed. The virtual exhibition of documents aims to provide access to copies of essential documents, such as photographs, text documents, and visual and audio recordings, from archives' holdings related to a particular period, subject, event, or person.

Organizing an online exhibition has objectives similar to physical exhibitions, but a virtual exhibition offers a better advantage. From the perspective of archival studies specialists, archival institutions' online document exhibitions are distinct from physical exhibitions organized on or outside the archival institution. One of the benefits that archival institutions aim for from virtual document exhibitions is to provide an excellent alternative model for original archival materials, which opens new horizons for beneficiaries, including learning, research, sharing, downloading, and others (Foo et al. 2009). Unlike physical exhibitions, virtual exhibitions are not time-constrained; the Archives are not obligated to specify the opening and closing times of the exhibition. However, the virtual exhibition may be available 24 hours a day. The physical exhibition extends for a limited period that is determined before the exhibition is organized, while the virtual exhibition has no restrictions on the duration. Virtual document exhibitions also offer other advantages, such as protecting documents that are in poor physical condition and have research value (Cruz-Lara, Chen and Hong 2002) and increasing the amount of information in a virtual document exhibition compared to a physical one, as hyperlinks in a virtual exhibition can access other comprehensive databases on the topics covered. Therefore, visitors have access to a wide range of research elements (Béland, 2024). In addition, virtual document exhibitions help provide a closer relationship between visitors to virtual exhibitions and those who have passed away, as many archival materials are written in their owners' hands, for example, letters, diaries, and other personal documents (Allyn et al. 2024). In about 5,000 archival institutions in the United States, manuscript materials are available to learn about the lives of painters, poets, immigrants, workers, and others from cultural, social, or professional communities (Aubitz et al., n.d.).

Regarding the characteristics of virtual document exhibitions, online document exhibitions that provide a wide range of documents are an excellent way to show that archival institutions have interesting documents in different fields, such as politics, military affairs, and diplomacy. It is preferable to diversify documents in virtual archive exhibitions. For example, photographs or other graphic materials can help improve the visual quality of the presentation. In contrast, text messages and documents that must be read fully attract the attention of many audiences, especially if they are rare or associated with famous figures or essential events in national history (Allyn et al. 2024). It is preferable that the provided text is short and encourages quick reading. However, images and illustrations allow user interaction, and the time of downloading images, files, or video folders is fixed and fast (Lemay and Klein 2012). Digital documents can be compiled in the Archives' virtual exhibition from diverse archival collections or cultural heritage institutions, classified and stored in the virtual exhibition. (Cruz-Lara, Chen, and Hong 2002) emphasize that exhibition items can be produced from the digital archive of the archival institution and presented in different forms and methods suited to the diversity of beneficiary categories (Shorman and Al-Shoqran 2019; Salah Elsayw 2019)).

Historians and archivists must commit to educating diverse audiences at the target group level, from researchers to curious people. This reflects that these institutions' primary task is to make their holdings accessible to the public (Cruz-Lara, Chen, and Hong 2002). Therefore, the holdings provided in document exhibitions must be convenient to the intellectual and age level of the beneficiaries, so what is offered to students differs from what is offered to researchers (Al-Sharif 2017). Understanding matters concerned with the virtual exhibitions, it is essential to diversify that these topics may be covered by documents exhibitions, whether economic, political, or social, and choose a period or an appropriate historical event related to the exhibition (Al-Sharif 2017). The challenge in each case is to choose the material that can be displayed, which should have educational, archival, and documentary value and a visual effect accepted by the visitor or viewer of the exhibition (Allyn et al. 2024).

In terms of metadata, it is essential to enable and support all storage and processing, creation of virtual exhibitions, and sharing media. For example, when developing online document exhibitions, they should

be accompanied by metadata to describe the exhibition's contents, its management, and access to information. Metadata systems such as Dublin Core and encrypted archival metadata can be used to support different needs. These include document, technical, archival, and administrative metadata. Although Dublin Core is an essential and well-established metadata standard for source detection used by almost all systems, it does not explicitly deal with archives requiring detailed metadata elements (Foo et al. 2009). Researchers have sought to design and develop a virtual archival exhibition system to meet the needs of different user groups. This was based on a database of descriptive data of XML marking language and the use of Dublin Core elements (DC) and non-DC elements to describe and provide customized information adequate with each archival material. In addition, a virtual exhibition is created based on pre-defined exhibition identification data and descriptive data of archival material stored in the database (Yang, Ramaiah, and Foo 2007). Regarding how documents are displayed in the virtual exhibition, a change in document display size (enlargement) and maximum impact must be allowed. For this reason, such exhibitions are significantly complementary to physical exhibitions, especially in the context of cultural institutions such as museums, archives, and libraries (Allyn et al. 2024).

The previous studies focused on multiple aspects of archival exhibitions, including the characteristics of virtual exhibitions, such as enlarging images, printing, uploading images, sharing images in the exhibition, search characteristics (search tools, metadata), and target groups. This study benefited from a review of previous studies in building a tool to analyze and evaluate the characteristics of virtual document exhibitions. Likewise, it is distinguished by its focus on the characteristics of virtual exhibitions of Arab archival institutions to evaluate them, address their shortcomings, and enhance their positive aspects.

Methodology

To explore the extent of Arab archival institutions' interest in virtual document exhibitions, the study used a content analysis method through a proposed list of points to describe and evaluate the characteristics of online document exhibitions. The study data was collected, reviewed, and analyzed between January 2024 to March 2024. The study was guided by the practices of some foreign National Archives in organizing and making their virtual exhibitions available. The proposed list was peer-reviewed by three professors specializing in documents and information studies at Sultan Qaboos University and Cairo University. However, the list included the following points:

- The extent to which the archival institution provides virtual exhibitions of its documents.
- The name of the exhibition.
- The targeted categories of beneficiaries.
- The types of documents.
- Number of documents in the exhibition.
- Metadata for each document.
- Availability of the search tool.
- The user is allowed to use the following characteristics: enlargement, clarity of image, copy, download, print, and share media.

Inclusion Criteria

The study included nine Arab National Archives of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Libya, Morocco, Qatar, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates. These Archives were selected because they have websites that provide examples of their archival documents.

Exclusion Criteria

The study excluded Archives whose websites were inactive, such as the Historical Documents Center in Kuwait, the National Archives Foundation in Lebanon, and the National Archives in Egypt.

Results and Discussion

The primary function of archival institutions, mandated under the country's archival legislation, is the physical preservation of documents. However, it performs many other functions that support and relate to this primary function, such as evaluation, classification, accessibility, and dissemination of documents. However, retaining documents of historical value is not enough, since it is essential to publicize, promote and make them accessible to potential beneficiaries (Foucher 2020). In addition, among the most popular online publishing tools, virtual exhibitions occupy a privileged position as an undeniable promotional tool that can play a leading role in promoting archival holdings. Also, documents can be significantly accessed when posted online (Béland, 2024). The following Table 1 shows the document exhibitions submitted by Arab archival institutions on their websites.

Regarding virtual document exhibitions in Arab archival institutions, in Table 1, the study found that only 10 Arab archival institutions have documented exhibitions on their websites through which they provide forms of their archival documents: text documents, photographs, and visual recordings. This shows a weak reality compared to the number of National Archives in our Arab world, standing at 22 Arab National Archives, other than regional archives and historical document centers that share part of the National Archives' interests. The archival institutions included in this study presented 15 virtual exhibitions. Few were limited to one document type, such as the Picture Library, Media Library, and Manuscript Library; each had subject files, documents, photographs, and visual recordings associated with characters, places, or events. From there, the King Abdulaziz Foundation, Darah, presented 3 exhibitions: 20%, including documents and manuscripts, a photo library, and a video library, followed by the National Center for Archives & Records of Saudi Arabia, the Archives of Morocco, and the National Archives of the UAE. In comparison with examples of foreign archival institutions, the British National Archives offers several virtual exhibitions on its website on selected historical topics, exhibitions of drawings and lithographs, and some famous historical figures (Central Library 2019; hazineeditor 2015).

Based on the results from Table 1, the study found that the names given by archival institutions to their virtual exhibitions varied, including archives, historical archives, photo galleries, video galleries, video libraries, photo libraries, photos and documents, exhibitions, and private files. The National Archives of the UAE also held a virtual exhibition of documents in 2020 under the Gulf Digital Archive (Arabian Gulf Digital Archive 2024) to display documents and historical materials about the history of the UAE and the Arabian Gulf. The exhibition aims to serve researchers, students, and those interested in exploring the history of the Arabian Gulf by providing access to documents and research tools (UAE National Archives 2024).

Table 1: Virtual Document Exhibitions on Arab Archival Institutions' Websites

	Country	Archival institution	Virtual Exhibition		
			Exhibition Name	Number of exhibitions in Archives	(%)
1.	Iraq	Iraqi National Library and Archives	Exhibitions	1/15	6.6%
2.	Jordan	National Library and Records Center	Photos & documents	1/15	6.6%

3.	Saudi Arabia (KSA)	The National Center for Archives & Records	-Photo Gallery -Video Gallery	2/15	13.55%
4.	Saudi Arabia (KSA)	King Abdulaziz Foundation (Darah)	-Video Library -Photo Library -Documents & manuscripts	3/15	20%
5.	Libya	Libyan Center for Archives and Historical Studies	Photo Gallery	1/15	6.6%
6.	Morocco	Archives of Morocco	-Photo Gallery -Video Gallery	2/15	13.55%
7.	Oman	National Records and Archives Authority	- Manuscripts Gallery	1/15	6.6%
8.	Qatar	Document Archives- the National Library	Archival documents	1/15	6.6%
9.	Tunisia	National Archives	Special documents	1/15	6.6%
10.	United Arab Emirates (UAE)	National Archives	-Historical Archives -Arabian Gulf Digital Archive	2/15	13.3%
Total virtual exhibitions				15	100

According to Table 2, the types of documents in the virtual document exhibitions varied to include text documents, photographs, maps, drawings, visual recordings, and others. The most representative type of documents was in virtual archive exhibitions (persons, places, objects, illustrations, diagrams, and maps), followed by text documents and video recordings. Finally, other information sources, such as manuscripts, prints, and press clippings, were absent in the exhibitions. This is consistent with (Allyn et al. 2024), which emphasizes the diversification of archival material in online document exhibitions. Text documents include correspondence, reports, notes, testimonies, and private and government documents. Images and drawings include photographs of persons, places, objects, illustrations, diagrams, and maps. The essential documents published by the Tunisian National Archives include a decision by First Marshal Ahmed Bay to end slavery in Tunisia in 1846 and another document on the rules of procedure of the Trade Union Company (Archives Nationales de Tunisie 2022).

The media collections on the websites of some of the study's archival institutions were divided into two categories: photo library and media library, each of which contains thematic files, documents, photographs, and visual recordings related to personalities, places, or events. The beneficiary can explore several factors: location, subject, and period. This organization is consistent with the practice of some of the world's National Archives, such as The UK (Central Library 2019), where the photo library is classified according to themes. Therefore, users can choose the intervals they have been interested in since the Middle Ages (National Archives UK, 2024).

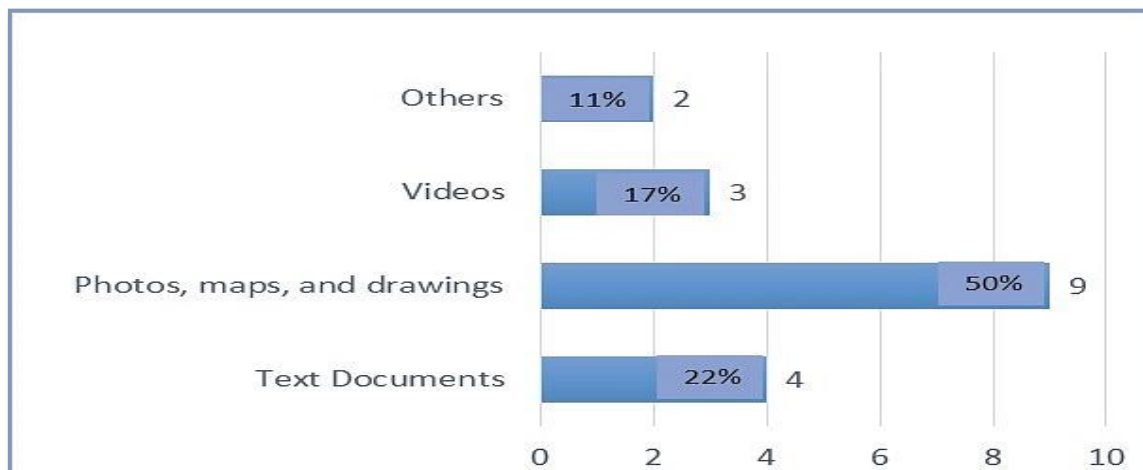
The most important types of documents at Arab Virtual Exhibitions of Study Archives are photos; 50%, followed by text documents; 22%, video; 17%, and 11% for other categories; manuscripts, books, prints, press clippings, and periodicals, as illustrated in Figure 1. Although the representation of text documents in the archives exhibitions of the study is 23%, specialists (Allyn et al. 2024) emphasize the importance of its substantial presence in virtual exhibitions due to the importance and scarcity of some of them as well as their fame and sometimes their archival and historical value. Around 44% of the study archives offer search engines allowing the public to search virtual exhibitions such as Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. However, 50% of the study archives provide descriptive data or metadata in the search result with images of documents or text documents. This shows that 50% of archives do not provide descriptive data

or metadata that defines and clarifies the documents or images available through the virtual exhibition. Comparing this to what one of the distinguished foreign archives offers in presenting virtual exhibitions, such as the (National Archives of Australia NAA 2024), it offers with its virtual exhibitions a search engine that allows simple search (with keyword, document date), advanced search fields including document level; document, file, series, and document creator, in addition to searching with a list of topics arranged alphabetically to review documents.

Table 2: Document Types at Arab Virtual Exhibitions of Study Archives

N.	Country	Archival institution	Types of documents in virtual exhibitions			
			Text Documents	Photos, maps, and drawings	Videos	Others
1.	Iraq	Iraqi National Library and Archives		√		
2.	Jordan	National Library and Records Center	√	√		
3.	KSA	The National Center for Archives & Records		√	√	
4.	KSA	King Abdulaziz Foundation (Darah)		√	√	
5.	Libya	Libyan Center for Archives and Historical Studies		√		
6.	Morocco	Archives of Morocco		√	√	
7.	Oman	National Records and Archives Authority				√
8.	Qatar	Document Archives- the National Library	√	√		√
9.	Tunisia	National Archives	√	√		
10.	UAE	National Archives	√	√		
Total virtual exhibitions			4	9	3	2
%			22%	50%	17%	11%

Figure 1: Types of Documents at Arab Archival Institutions' Virtual Exhibitions



According to Table 3, the most common documents in virtual document exhibitions are text documents; 76.5%, followed by photos, maps, and drawings; 20.8%, then video recordings; 0.2%. Except for the Document Archives at the National Library of Qatar and the National Library and Records Center of Jordan, the volume of documents in virtual exhibitions of the archival institutions of the study is very low compared to the number of archival institutions surveyed. Compared to the British National Archives, only 5% of the collections that have been digitized are available on its website. Video recordings accounted for 0.2% of the media found in virtual exhibitions of study archives. 25 27 videos belonged to the King Abdulaziz Foundation (Darah) and the Archives of Morocco (QSAN, 2024).

Additionally, the video topics monitored by the study include Rabat, the Morocco Archives induction film, and Arar's video in their memory, which document the oral history of Arar in Saudi Arabia (The National Center for Archives and Records, Saudi Arabia 2016). The photo library of some archival institutions included photographs of Archives events only, but not of archival holdings. For instance, (The National Center for Archives and Records 2016) in Saudi Arabia's photos library contains more than 200 photographs of events organized by the Center, the same as in the Iraqi National Library and Archives. In other cases, although there are few images, they are of great historical significance, such as the Libyan Center for Archives and Historical Studies, which provided eight photographs related to the Italian occupation of Libya (Central Library 2019).

Table 3: A Sample Number of Documents in the Virtual Exhibitions of the Study Archives

N.	Country	Archival institution	Text Documents	Photos, maps, and drawings	Videos	Others
1.	Iraq	Iraqi National Library and Archives		100		
2.	Jordan	National Library and Records Center	12	8		
3.	KSA	The National Center for Archives & Records		201	2	
4.	KSA	King Abdulaziz Foundation (Darah)	3	17	14	
5.	Libya	Libyan Center for Archives and Historical Studies		8		
6.	Morocco	Archives of Morocco		1	11	
7.	Oman	National Records and Archives Authority				17
8.	Qatar	Document Archives- the National Library	14418	2392		476
9.	Tunisia	National Archives	18			
10.	UAE	National Archives	66	4		
		Archive website				
		Electronic Exhibition	7	1230		
Total			14524	3961	27	493
%			76.4%	20.8%	0.2%	2.6%

At the level of technical characteristics of virtual exhibitions of Arab archival institutions, Table 4 shows that virtual exhibitions provide the characteristics of enlarging document viewing, printing images, uploading, sharing, and other media. Various characteristics can be studied in virtual exhibitions, as illustrated in Table 4, such as the availability of zoom-in document display, photo printing, uploading, sharing, and other media. The researchers selected the most prominent ones to explore their presence in virtual exhibitions of the Arab archival institutions. Regarding the benefits available to visitors to virtual exhibitions, the study focused on the most valuable benefits to the exhibition visitor: enlarging the displayed images, copying, searching, downloading, and sharing. The archival institutions in the study agreed to enable

beneficiaries to print photos of documents from the virtual exhibition; 100%, followed by uploaded or copied characteristics; 90%, then the image zoom characteristic; 80%, and lastly, sharing images on social platforms; 40%.

The archival institutions included in the study and providing the features of enlarging, copying, downloading, and participating in their virtual exhibitions are the National Center for Archives and Records (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), the Electronic Exhibition of the Arabian Gulf in the UAE National Archives, and the Libyan Center for Archives and Historical Studies (Libyan Center 2024). The study also found that only 2% of archival institutions, 22.2%, allowed visitors to enlarge images several times, including the Qatar Digital Library Archive and the Arabian Gulf Digital Archive in UAE (Qatar Digital Library, 2024). It allows for double enlargement, and the rest of the archives allow for one-time enlargement with good resolutions, except for the UAE National Archives, where the images of text documents on its website were of poor clarity and accuracy even after enlargement. Regarding the feature of sharing photos and media in the archive's virtual gallery, the study found that 40% of the archival institutions surveyed allow beneficiaries to share photos on social platforms.

Table 4: Features of Presentation, Printing, Uploading, and Participation in Online Document Exhibitions

N.	Country	Archival institution	Zoom	Print	Copies	Download	Share	Total
1.	Iraq	Iraqi National Library and Archives		√	√	√		3/5
2.	Jordan	National Library and Records Center	√	√				2/5
3.	KSA	The National Center for Archives & Records	√	√	√	√	√	5/5
4.	KSA	King Abdulaziz Foundation (Darah)	√	√	√	√		4/5
5.	Libya	Libyan Center for Archives and Historical Studies	√	√	√	√	√	5/5
6.	Morocco	Archives of Morocco	√	√	√	√		4/5
7.	Oman	National Records and Archives Authority	√	√	√	√		4/5
8.	Qatar	Document Archives- the National Library	√	√	√	√	√	5/5
9.	Tunisia	National Archives		√	√	√		3/5
10.	UAE	National Archives	√	√	√	√	√	5/5
Total Number of Archives/Feature			8/10	10/10	9/10	9/10	4/10	
Percentage (%)			80%	100%	90%	90%	40%	

Based on Table 5, only four, with 44% of the study Archives, provided tools or search engines that allow the public to search their virtual exhibitions: Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. Sometimes, the archive uses a simple search tool such as in King Abdulaziz Foundation (Darah) (Saudi Arabia) and the UAE National Archives (Documents Gallery on the Archives website), where it can be searched by year

and month or by choosing from thematic categories; fort, education, exchange of congratulations, and Galaf. In other cases, the study's archives used simple, advanced, expert, or research methods, such as the National Library and Records Center (Jordan), the Document Archives of the National Library (Qatar), and the Digital Archives of the Arabian Gulf (UAE National Archives). Only four Archives, with 44% of the study Archives, provide descriptive metadata in the search results for images of documents. The study by (Foo et al. 2009) confirmed the importance of providing virtual exhibitions with descriptive metadata on documents and multimedia to describe and indicate their whereabouts.

Table 5: Search Characteristics in Virtual Archive Exhibitions of the Study

N.	Country	Archival institution	Tool/Search Engine	Descriptive Data
1.	Iraq	Iraqi National Library and Archives		√
2.	Jordan	National Library and Records Center	√	√
3.	KSA	The National Center for Archives & Records		
4.	KSA	King Abdulaziz Foundation (Darah)	√	√
5.	Libya	Libyan Center for Archives and Historical Studies		
6.	Morocco	Archives of Morocco		
7.	Oman	National Records and Archives Authority		√
8.	Qatar	Document Archives- the National Library	√	√
9.	Tunisia	National Archives		
10.	UAE	National Archives	√	
Total			4/10	5/10
%			40%	50%

Regarding the categories of beneficiaries, none of the Arab archival institutions included in the study allocated an age or type of target audience to whom the content of the virtual exhibition was directed. In addition, the study found that the archival institutions surveyed should have noticed the needs of beneficiaries, focusing only on the Archives' participation in various events, such as conferences, seminars, and meetings. This indicates the lack of a real vision that reflects the goals of the archives and the needs of the beneficiaries of virtual exhibitions, which can be linked to the archives itself, conservation, discovery, education, and others.

Conclusion

Archival documents convey information about a historical event, person, or institution and document people's public and private lives, which is part of national memory. Virtual exhibitions are one of the main methods archival institutions use to spread awareness of important and rare documents. It aims to educate the public and enhance the values of belonging and citizenship and their research and scientific value. Virtual exhibitions thus complement the mission of physical document exhibitions organized by the archives. Archival institutions can overcome space and time constraints and allow visitors to access samples of documents and information sources preserved in archival institutions. The interest of Arab archival institutions in virtual document exhibitions varies, and so do the forms, numbers, and types of documents available through these exhibitions and the technical characteristics available in the exhibitions (availability of metadata, search engine, photocopying, uploading, and sharing images of documents. Holding virtual exhibitions by Arab archival institutions enhances the value of the archives to the public. Furthermore, it spreads awareness of its documents as an essential source of historical and research information, supports discovery and learning, and other opportunities beyond what the archives' physical exhibitions can offer. Although the study revealed weak interest in virtual exhibitions among Arab archival institutions, the researchers believe that virtual archives exhibitions, like foreign archives exhibitions, can grow if those in charge of them realize their importance and the possibility of implementing them, taking into account the controls for organizing documents exhibitions and the controls specified by archival legislation in the country.

Study Recommendations

Considering the results of the study and to enhance the level of provision of virtual exhibitions for Arab archival institutions, the study recommends the following:

- Arab archival institutions' officials should not be confined to material exhibitions in or outside the archives. Instead, they should consider virtual exhibitions as an alternative that could provide advantages to the material archives, for instance, providing many persons with simultaneous access to a document, solving problems of preservation and availability of scarce or unsatisfactory documents (fragility, damage), reducing the costs and requirements of organizing physical exhibitions of documents or lending documents outside the archive; (insurance, shipping).
- Arab archival institutions' policy should include criteria for selecting documents utilized in the virtual documents exhibition, considering the needs of the public, from visitors to virtual archive exhibitions.
- The diversification of documents at the archives' virtual exhibitions matches the diversity of audiences and age differences. They focus on important historical documents and divide them into topics of public interest.
- Focus on models of documents and photographs that support national identity and document national events, which will enhance the public's awareness of the importance and role of the archival institution and its documents.
- A periodic survey of visitors' needs for virtual exhibitions will ensure that the archives meet the needs of document exhibition beneficiaries.
- Organizing virtual archive exhibitions by topic, with the possibility of retrieval by several factors (venue, subject, period) or according to the list of words of a function, where the public can choose any of them.
- Enlargement of documents in the archive's virtual exhibition allows visitors to zoom in on photos and access textual templates of historical documents, some of which may be written in small fonts or have unclear letters and words.
- Allow sharing of images in the archives virtual exhibition considering the controls determined by archival legislation at the national level.]
- The virtual Archives exhibitions must include descriptive metadata indicating what these documents are and the context for their creation and preservation.
- Promote Archive exhibitions on the archive's website or social platforms to familiarize the public with them and attract as many visitors as possible.
- Establish partnerships between archival and other information institutions, such as libraries and museums, and organize document exhibitions associated with specific topics, personalities, or events.

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