



AN EXAMPLE OF A FAST PROGRAM

2007 WORKSHOP ON DIGITAL LIBRARIES FOR EDUCATION, SCIENCE & CULTURE

With key support from the US National Science Foundation, the Fulbright Academy (FAST) and the Moroccan Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research hosted a workshop in Rabat, Morocco in January 2007 with close to 100 experts from 35 institutions.

This workshop focused on internet and access to/ use of digital information in North Africa, also known as the Maghreb region. The goal was to create a "Vision for a Maghreb Digital Library."

The three-day meeting in Rabat had expert panels focusing on national & regional initiatives and priorities, and issues relating to content, collections and end users. Workshop sessions were a key component of the meeting, providing an opportunity for participants break into smaller groups to discuss issues and suggest next steps.

The workshop was initiated by a Fulbright scholar in Morocco asked FAST for assistance. FAST then secured over \$40,000 travel and meeting expenses, selected and recruited the international delegation, compiled the program and helped assure that workshop objectives were met. It was a bi-lingual meeting, with simultaneous translation: English-French.

The meeting followed the format of a 2006 meeting held at the famous library in Alexandria, Egypt, which focused on digital issues for the Arab world. In preparation for our meeting, FAST hosted a planning meeting at the US National Science Foundation, with staff from 20 US-based agencies, organizations and institutions.

The local and international participants made dozens of recommendations for action, and FAST is working with UNESCO and a self-appointed coordinating committee to help implement the most critical recommendations.



SELECTED INSTITUTIONS:

- Algerian Ministry of Scientific Research
 - Columbia University
 - Fulbright Academy of Sci & Tech **
 - Harvard University
 - Memnon Audio Archiving Services
 - Moroccan Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research **
 - Moroccan National Library
 - Moroccan Royal History Institute
 - National Institute for Digital Information, Tunisia
 - National Museum of Nouakchott, Mauritania
 - National Center for Documentation, Tunisia
 - Oregon State University
 - Simmons College
 - Sun Microsystems
 - Thomson Scientific **
 - Tufts University
 - University of Chicago
 - University of Nouakchott
 - University of Massachusetts, Amherst
 - University of Pittsburgh
 - University of Science & Technology, Bab Ezzouar, Algeria
 - University of Science & Technology, Oran, Algeria
 - UNESCO **
 - US Civilian Research & Development Foundation
 - US Department of State – Bureau of Oceans, Environment & Science
 - US Institute for Museum & Library Services
 - US Library of Congress
 - US National Library of Medicine
 - US National Science Foundation **
- ** = Lead Sponsors of the Workshop

Workshop papers & report available at www.FulbrightAcademy.org

KEY OUTCOMES:

- Recognition that the physical and human resource infrastructure needed for digital libraries has benefits to multiple sectors and that training is needed in the region for library sciences and IT.
- Agreement on the need for a common vision in connection with the great cultural richness of the Maghreb area.
- Noted that UNESCO may be able to mobilize the respective governments of the countries concerned in order to move the project forward and fund this activity.
- Commitment by UNESCO to provide staff for follow-up activities.
- Invitations from US institutions to several North African participants to visit the USA and learn from US experiences.
- Recognition that institutions outside of the region have significant holdings related to Maghreb history and culture.
- Agreement on the need to organize a follow-up workshop in one or two years, with support from governments and institutions in Europe, Africa, America and elsewhere, along with the establishment of national committees focusing on topics such as human resources.



COUNTRIES REPRESENTED:

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|------------|----------------|
| Algeria | Morocco |
| Belgium | Tunisia |
| France | United Kingdom |
| Mauritania | United States |