

Capacities of Cyberspace for Religious Education

Author: Dr. Abbasali Barati¹

Reccive: 07/10/2017

Accept: 12/10/2017

Abstract

Regarding the functions of the religion in contemporary world, the cyberspace can play a decisive role in teaching, research and call for the religion.

Also in regard of practice of the religion and serving the humanity, this technology could be utilized and used as a very helpful instrument, but it depends on how to understand the religion and how to implement it. Ethics and Etiquette is needed for usage of this instrument.

While we find that some of the extremists and terrorists are using it against the humanity and even against the fame and image of the religion, this makes a duty for the higher experts in the field of the ICT and cyberspace and also religious leaders to protect the younger generation and the future of the mankind.

Key Words: Religious Education, Cyberspace, Capacities

What is Capacity?

Your capacity for something is your ability to do it, or the amount of it that you are able to do (collinsdictionary).

What do we Mean by Cyberspace?

Cyberspace Theory in all nomination means all of the things which are related to the computer and Internet.

The word "cyberspace" is credited to William Gibson, who used it in his book, Neuromancer, written in 1984.

1. Professror of the Al-Hikmah Institute, Al-Mustafa International University,
barati36@yahoo.com

Gibson defines cyberspace as a consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation, by children being taught mathematical concepts.

A graphical representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system. Unthinkable complexity. Lines of light ranged in the non-space of the mind, clusters and constellations of data.¹

Today in the world a great amount of data and information is exchanged by the Cyberspace in the field of personal communication and even in media and mass communication.

What is Religious Education or Instruction?

In secular usage, religious education is the teaching of a particular religion (although in England the term religious instruction would refer to the teaching of a particular religion, with religious education referring to teaching about religions in general) and its varied aspects: its beliefs, doctrines, rituals, customs, rites, and personal roles.

In Western and secular culture, religious education implies a type of education which is largely separate from academia, and which (generally) regards religious belief as a fundamental tenet and operating modality, as well as a prerequisite for attendance (collinsdictionary).

What Do we Mean by IS?

By IS here we mean the Information Society.

A society in which information replaces material goods as the chief driver of socio-economics.²

1. Berkley Publishing Group, 1989, p. 128.

2. <https://www.igi-global.com/>

How Can the Cyberspace Help the Religion?

Helping the aims and objectives of the religion:

As we know and the scholars of the principles of the Jurisprudence clarified, the religion has 5 aims and objectives for protection amongst the society:

1. Souls
2. Intellects
3. Dignities
4. Properties
5. Values

The cyberspace can help protection of these items by increasing the knowledge (information) and relations (communication).

Helping Impelimentation of the Justice

According to the holy Quran the most important goal of Shariaa (practice) of the religion is to impeliment the Justice.¹

In this regard we should notice to a phenomenon which is called cyberjustice. But what does mean this phrase?

The phenomenon of cyberjustice covers a wide range of possibilities, and therefore, its definition should be broad enough to convey the width of its scope.

In its broadest sense, “cyberjustice” refers to the integration of information and communications technologies (ICTs) to dispute resolution processes – whether they be judicial or extrajudicial.

With respect to the extrajudicial sphere, cyberjustice regards online dispute resolution or ODR, which is essentially the migration, onto the Internet, of alternative dispute resolution, i.e. negotiation, mediation and arbitration.

1. Holy Quran, 57/25.

But cyberjustice also has to do with the introduction of IT in the traditional justice system to serve its various stakeholders (parties, lawyers, judges, court administrators, etc).¹

Cyberspace and Humanism

One of the most important Goals of the religion after Justice is Philanthropy and humanitarianism, Quran depicts this one the second goal of the religion.²

In this field also cyberspace can help to find the needy people and people in disastrous situations and help them quickly.

Aids for the Relatives and Kin People

The religion considers helping and relief for the kin people the third goal for the religion and the important commandment of Allah.³

Seeking Knowledge

Another important duty in a religion like Islam is to increase the knowledge of the individuals and collectives continuously⁴, and the cyberspace is the best vessel and media for the access to the knowledge in a rapid and certain way and we know that our world is turning to the e-learning in a tremendous way.

It is supposed to change 85% of the learning and training to virtual and electronic learning in coming decades.

- What will a classroom look like in fifty years?

Hundreds of years ago, no one could have possibly imagined some of the exciting, effective learning technologies we have today.

1. <http://www.academic-foresights.com/Cyberjustice.html>.

2. Holy Quran, 16/90.

3. Ibid.

4. Holy Quran, 20/114.

In just the last few decades, there have been dramatic technological advances that are changing the nature of the classroom, how students learn, and how teachers teach.

Resources are more readily accessible and content is more engaging than ever before. In this blog post, I outline four of the most popular elearning trends of 2014 (including MOOCs, mlearning, virtual reality technology, and gamification) that could lay a foundation for the future state of schools, as well as speculate what classrooms, learning platforms, and teacher roles might be like in the future.¹

To Know God

The essential belief and creed in the religion specially Abrahamic religions is to know and believe in God.

The cyberspace can help to know God by making the latest and newest discoveries and inventions available for the users to help them become familiar with order and wisdom in the creation of the world and even to know that this world is not self-dependent on none-dependent but it is based and designed on the best order and technology possible, then the planner and manufacturer of the world which we call him God for sure and scientifically approved is a high tech architect and engineer.

Then all of the other religious beliefs are constructed and based on this belief.

Ethics and Etiquette

This is another important and even the most important part of the religion which is visible for the people and in Islam it is told to be the finest and the highest amongst the religions.²

1. <https://elearningindustry.com/elearning-future-what-will-elearning-look-like-2075>.

2. Bokhari, Sahih, Adab, 273- Al-Hakim, Mostadrak, 4187.

We know that the exchange of knowledge can increase the level of Ethics and Ethiquette amongst the users and make them world citizens with a better quality.

For this purpose even a branch of knowledge is established in called Syber ethics.¹

The Ten Commandments of Computer Ethics (PDF).²

Cyberethics is the philosophic study of ethics pertaining to computers, encompassing user behavior and what computers are programmed to do, and how this affects individuals and society.

For years, various governments have enacted regulations while organizations have defined policies about cyberethics.³

Pilgrimage and Rituals

One of the important aspects of the religion is the rituals and pilgrimages. Cyberspace can help to encourage the believers to become familiar with the pilgrimage sights and practices and even can do vritual visit and pilgrimage as we know today.

Networking and Friendships and Fellowships

One the popular activities in the religious life is to find co-religious and fellow people and make friendships with them, and it is inevitable that the cyberspace can increase the possibilities in this regard.

Today we have a lot of the groups and channels and chat-rooms belonged to the religious people in the world.⁴

1. Computer Ethics Institute, 1992.

2. Ibid, Retrieved 2008-05-01.

3. International Journal of Cyber Ethics in Education (IJCEE), <https://www.igi-global.com/>

4. cf.Banton, 6 (1969), 12, The Religious Experience, 1996, 38, Banto, 1996.

Religious Research

One of the most important aspects of the religious orientation and communications of the mankind is the research and investigation about the religion.

It is clear that the most powerful mean for gaining information and research about the religion is the web because you can find many datas and information available on the internet about the religion not existing in the books of paper based periodical and documents in addition of millions of books and other materials even manuscripts digitalized today rather than the on-line libraries and digital libraries and e-books prepared by the IT and ICT and huge possibilities for inter libraries connection was not possible without the cyberspace.

What kind of Religion?

I like to have attention of the dear audiences and readers that we have to fix a definition for the religion we mean in this article and we find in suitable for this age and the mankind, because there are deviated forms of the religion can use or even abuse of the religion, Even not all kind the religions are useful and bevalent for the mankind.

The religion of today should be convenient to the world society today who is multi-cultural, multi-ethnis and ever-changing and rapidly changing.

So all kins of superstition and zeal and fanaticism or racism and arrogance and selfishness in a religion and for sure violence and extremism can make the religion inconvenient to the contemporary world.

The most dangerous problem of our contemporary world is that the devices are progressed and the Ideas and Dogmas are backwrded.

Because or perhaps in spite of both the importance and difficulty of addressing the future of the information age, there has been no shortage of attempts to do so.

These attempts break down roughly into three categories. The first contains those who would project from the capabilities generated by information technology where the information age might go.

Let's call these people technologists. Prominent in this category would be Microsoft's Bill Gates. His best-selling book—*The Road Ahead*—is a good example of suggesting how technological advances might affect our lives in the years ahead.

Other examples in this genre include Nicholas Negroponte's *Being Digital* and Michael Dertouzos' new book, *What Will Be: How the New World of Information Will Change Our Lives*.¹

Conclusion

For making peace and co-operation between the religion and ICT or cyberspace we need a better co-operation between religious leaders and educators from one hand and the the highest councils and boards of the ICT and IS (Information Society) in the world to prevent abuse of this technology against the humanity and the mankind and also against the religion and the prestige of it.

We know that how the extremist and terrorist groups are using the web against the real message of the religion.

While the real and progressive religions like Islam and Christianity and Judaism are calling for passion and mercy and helping needy people and poor and deprived people and encouraging Justice and knowledge and integrity, some of the misguided portions of the societies like "IS"

1. Negroponte, Knopf, 1995- Dertouzos, 1997.

and "Al-qaeda" and "Boko-Haram" organizations are using the religion for their in-human activities and are using the cyberspace in the widest range.¹

This phenomena should be controlled and even uprooted to gain peace and prosperity.

This is for sure satisfaction of the Almighty God and salvation in here and here-after.

References

1. **Holy Quran.**
2. Banto, M, **Dimensions of the Sacred**, 1996.
3. Berkley Publishing Group, (1989), New York.
4. Bokhari, **Sahih**, Adab, 273; Al-Hakim, **Mostadrak**, 4187.
5. cf. Banton, M, **The Religious Experience of Mankind**, 6 (1969), 12.
6. Karim Benyekhleif: <http://www.academic-foresights.com/Cyberjustice.html>
7. Negroponte, Nicholas, **Being Digital**, (1995), Knopf., Dertouzos, Michael L., **What Will Be: How the New World of Information Will Change Our Lives**, Harper San Francisco, 1997.
8. Reprinted in Tambiash, S. **The Religious Experience**, 1996, 38.
9. Weimann, Gabriel (Author), Hoffman, Bruce (Foreword), **Terrorism in Cyberspace: The Next Generation**, Paperback Amazon-Books, April 21, 2015.
10. <https://elearningindustry.com/elearning-future-what-will-elearning-look-like-2075>
11. <https://www.igi-global.com/>

1. Weimann and Hoffman, 2015.