TEXTO DIGITAL
Revista de Literatura, Linguística, Educação e Artes

Arabic digital literature: reality, challenges, future

Literatura árabe digital: atualidade, desafios, futuro

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Abstract: Digital literature did not emerge until the artform engaged with the media during the last half of the twentieth century. One can say that digital literature emerged before the modern computer, yet it did so through other media like radio, television, and cinema. The contemporary conception of digital literature emerged when Tibor Papp presented his first poetic work 'The Computer's Richest Hours' on ten screens in 1985. This poem is considered the first digitally animated work of this type, with the author interlacing sound, image, movement, and interactivity. In the United States, Michael Joyce produced the first such digital work in narrative terms in his 1987 poem, 'afternoon, a story,' using the Storyspace computer program.[1] Its first appearance in the Arab world was Jordanian Mohamad Sanajleh's 2001 novel, *Shadows of the One* (*Dhilāl al-Wāhid*), which was soon followed by numerous other digital works from authors from various nations. Digital literature has greatly invigorated culture in the West since the beginning of the twenty-first century and one can say the same of the Arab world too, though the gap between the two cultures remains vast in terms of innovation, theorization, and criticism. This study aims to shed light on the contemporary state of Arab digital literature in terms of creativity and critique, theory and practice. It then turns to the challenges it faces, before examining its prospects in the immediate years ahead.

Resumo: A literatura digital não surgiu até que a forma de arte interagisse com a mídia durante a última metade do século XX. Pode-se dizer que a literatura digital surgiu antes do computador moderno, mas o fez através de outras mídias como rádio, televisão e cinema. A concepção contemporânea da literatura digital surgiu quando Tibor Papp apresentou sua primeira obra poética "The Computer's Richest Hours" em dez telas em 1985. Este poema é considerado o primeiro trabalho digitalmente animado deste tipo, com o autor entrelaçando som, imagem, movimento, e interatividade. Nos Estados Unidos, Michael Joyce produziu o primeiro trabalho digital em termos narrativos em seu poema de 1987, " afternoon, a story ", usando o programa de computador *Storyspace*. Sua primeira aparição no mundo árabe foi o romance de 2001 da Jordânia Mohamad Sanajleh, *Shadows of the One* (*Dhilāl al-Wāhid*), que foi logo seguido por numerosas outras obras digitais de autores de várias nações. A literatura digital revigorou muito a cultura no Ocidente desde o início do século XXI e pode-se dizer o mesmo do mundo árabe também, embora a lacuna entre as duas culturas continue vasta em termos de inovação, teorização e crítica. Este estudo pretende lançar luz sobre o estado contemporâneo da literatura digital árabe em termos de criatividade e crítica, teoria e prática. Em seguida, ele se volta para os desafios que enfrenta, antes de examinar suas perspectivas nos próximos anos.

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[1] Jamil Hamdawi (2016), *Digital Literature Between Theory and Practice*, Riyadh: Al-Aluka, 91-93.

Reality

The first foray into digital literature in the Arab world was at the hands of Jordanian author Muhammad Sanajla, who has now published a total of four works of digital fiction: two novels, *Ẓalāl Wāḥid* (Sole Shadow) (2001)[2] and *Chat* (2005)[3]; an interactive short story entitled *ṣaqīʿ* (Frost) (2007);[4] and *Ẓalāl al-ʿāshiq* (Shadows of the Lover) (2016),[5] published on a website built for the work.

Other Arab digital authors worth mentioning are Egyptian science fiction writer Ahmad Khalid Tawfiq, who published a story named *Qiṣṣat Rabʿ Mukhīfa* (Scary House Story) (2005);[6] Muhammad Shuika, the Moroccan author of *Iḥtimālāt* (Possibilities) (2009);[7] Moroccan Ismaʿil al-Buyahyawi, author of *ḥafnāt Jamr* (Handfuls of Embers) (2015);[8] Labiba Khammar, author of hyperlink story *Ghuraf wa-Marāya* (Rooms and Mirrors) (2017);[9] and others.

In addition, a few Arabic collaborative novels written by several young authors have been published, such as *ʿAlā Qad Liḥāfak* (As Far as Your Blanket)[10] and *al-Kanaba al-ḥamrāʾ* (The Red Sofa).[11]

Arab authors have also made noteworthy contributions to the development of digital poetry, such as Moroccan author Munʿim al-Azraq, who has released numerous visual digital poems such as *Sayīdat al-Māʾ* (The Water Woman), *al-Dunū min al-ḥajar al-Dāʾirī* (The Advent of the Circular Stone), *Nabīdh al-Layl al-Abyaḍ* (The Wine of the White Night), and others, all

2. Muhammad Sanajla, *Ẓalāl Wāḥid* (Sole Shadow), Arab Union for Internet Writers, accessed 10 April 2018, http://www.arab-ewriters.com/diglit.php#lit1/.
3. Muhammad Sanajla, *Shāt* (Chat), Arab Union for Internet Writers, accessed 10 April 2018, http://www.arab-ewriters.com/diglit.php#lit1.
4. Muhammad Sanajla, *Ṣaqīʿ* (Frost), Arab Union for Internet Writers, accessed 10 April 2018, http://www.arab-ewriters.com/diglit.php#lit1.
5. Muhammad Sanajla, *Ẓalāl al-ʿĀshiq* (Shadows of the Lover), Sanajleh-shades.com, accessed 10 April 2018, http://sanajleh-shades.com/mohammad-sanagleh-winning-bet.
6. Ahmad Khalid Tawfiq, *Qiṣṣat Rabʿ Mukhīfa* (Scary House Story), accessed 10 April 2018, http://www.angelfire.com/sk3/mystory/.
7. Muhammad Shuika, *Iḥtimālāt* (Possibilities), Chouika.com, accessed 10 April 2018, https://www.chouika.com/Page1.htm.
8. Ismaʿil al-Buyahyawi, *Ḥafnāt Jamr* (Handfuls of Embers), Zanoubya.blogspot.co.il, accessed 10 April 2018, http://narration-zanoubya.blogspot.co.il/2014/07/blog-post_6682.html.
9. Labiba Khammar, *Ghuraf wa-Marāyā* (Rooms and Mirrors), Labiba-meroires.blogspot.co.il, accessed 10 April 2018, https://labiba-meroires.blogspot.co.il/?m=0.
10. Anon., *ʿAlā Qad Liḥāfik* (As Far as Your Blanket), Le7afak.blogspot.com, accessed 10 April 2018, http://le7afak.blogspot.com/2006/03/blog-post.html.
11. Bilal Husni, *al-Kanaba al-Ḥamrāʾ* (The Red Sofa), Knbahmra.blogspot.com, accessed 10 April 2018, http://knbahmra.blogspot.com.

of which were published in the forum of *al-Mirsāʾ*.[12] [13] [14] Interactive poetry has been the least successful form of digital literature, in that only three poems have been published. Iraqi poet Mushtaq ʿAbbas Miʿn is the leading Arab author of this form of Arab poetry, having released two poems entitled *Tabārīḥ Raqamiyya li-sīra Baʿdha ʾAzraq* (Digital Agonies to Turn Some Blue) (2007) and *Lā Mutanāhiyyāt al-Jidār al-Nāri* (No Limits to the Firewall) (2017).[15] [16] Munʿim al-ʾAzraq released a single interactive poem entitled *Shajarat al-Būghāz* (The Harbor Tree) in 2014.[17] These three poems represent the extent of Arabic attempts at interactive poetry.

As regards Arabic literary criticism, numerous academic studies have been published examining the creation and development of Arabic digital literature through the lens of Western theories, and there have also been some attempts to present new perspectives. In addition, there have been proposals to digitize historical and classic texts, especially the Qurʾan. Furthermore, there has been effort by some critics to translate various terms and expressions into existing literary forms.

Some of the more accomplished studies in the field include *Min al-Naṣṣ ʾilā al-Naṣṣ al-Mutarābiṭ* (From Text to Hypertext) (2005) by Saʿid Yaqtin; *Madkhal ʾilā al-ʾAdab al-Tafāʿulī* (Introduction to Interactive Literature) (2006) by Fatima al-Briki; *al-ʾAdab al-Raqmi, ʾAsʾila Thaqāfiyya wa Taʾammullāt Mafāhīmiyya* (Digital Literature, Cultural Questions and Conceptual Speculation) (2009) by Zuhur Karam; *Taʾaththur al-Internet ʿAlā Ashkāl al-Ibdāʿ wa al-Talaqqī* (The Impact of the Internet on Creativity and Reception) (2011) by Iman Yunis; and *al-Raqmiya wa-Taḥawwulāt al-Kitāba* (The Digital Era and the Transformation of Writing) (2015) by Ibrahim Milhim, among others. A number of articles have also been published on various websites by well-known critics in the Arab world, including by Muhammad Aslim, Muhammad al-Dahi, Labiba Khammar, al-Sayyid Najm, Ahmad Fadl

12. Munʿim al-Azraq, *Sayyidat al-Māʾ* (The Water Woman), Imzran.org, accessed 10 April 2018, http://imzran.org/mountada/.

13. Munʿim al-Azraq, *al-Dunū min al-Ḥajar al-Dāʾirī* (The Advent of the Circular Stone), Imzran.org, accessed 10 April 2018, http://imzran.org/mountada/.

14. Munʿim al-Azraq, *Nabīdh al-Layl al-Abyaḍ* (The Wine of the White Night), Imzran.org, accessed 10 April 2018, http://imzran.org/mountada/.

15. Mushtaq ʿAbbas Miʿn, *Tabārīḥ Raqamiya Li-sīra Baʿdha Azraq* (Digital Agonies to Turn Some Blue), Dr-mushtaq.iq, accessed 10 April 2018, http://dr-mushtaq.iq/My-poetry-works/Interactive-digital/.

16. Mushtaq ʿAbbas Miʿn, *Lā Mutanāhiyyāt al-Jidār al-Nāri* (No Limits to the Firewall), Dr-mushtaq.iq, accessed 10 April, http://dr-mushtaq.iq/My-poetry-works/Interactive-digital/.

17. Munʿim al-Azraq, *Shajarat al-Būghāz* (The Harbor Tree), Imzran.org, accessed 10 April 2018, http://imzran.org/digital/cajar/01.html.

Shablul, Saʿid al-Wakil, ʿAbir Salama, Samar al-Duyub, Muhammad Hindi, Maha Jarjur, and others.

Despite efforts by both Arab authors and critics, studies in this field point to a major gap between the West and the East, both in terms of the number of digital literary texts published and the volume of academic studies produced. Only a very small number of Arab authors have attempted to produce digital works so far and no more than thirty texts have been published to this date. In contrast, hundreds of books and texts have been published in the West. The same divide can be seen in the number of specialized websites and electronic magazines, as we will show later in this study.

Challenges

The emaciated character of the digital literary oeuvre in the Middle East, compared to that of the West, is the result of a number of factors characterizable under one heading: the 'digital divide.'[18] This is manifest in all the various aspects of social life.[19] A number of challenging factors underlie this divide and they are powerfully intertwined and overlapping, as we will examine.

We can distinguish two general types of challenge digital literature in the Arab world faces. The first relates to factors extrinsic to literature, such as the economic, pedagogic, and political. The second are intrinsic aspects of digital literature production itself.

(a)   Extrinsic challenges

Digital literature is considered Western in origin and relatively young – no more than four decades old. As a result, few Arab writers have explored the potential of the form very well, with some never having even read examples, whether Western or Arab. There are also very few Arabic studies of the form. The United Arab Emirates University is the only institution

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[18] This term initially appeared in localized contexts, having been devised in the United States in 1995 in the famous US Commerce Department report *Falling through the Net*. This drew attention to the great difference in the usage of information and communication technology, particularly the Internet, across the various communities in America, notably the relatively low uptake among indigenous blacks and migrants from Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America, as well as Asia. This term soon became deployed beyond local and national contexts into the analysis of regional and international dimensions and applied to the range of technological disparities between the developed and developing worlds in this regard (Nabil Ali and Nadia Hijazi (2005), *The Digital Divide*, 26.)
[19] Ibid., 32.

regionally conducting any teaching on the topic, something which contrasts with what happens in universities in the United States, Italy, Spain, France, and other countries, that have sought to incorporate digital literature into their programs as a key area. The lack of an equivalent reception in Arab academic institutions – as the bastions of literature endowing forms with a legitimacy that enables innovation, study, and criticism – for the meagre level of study of digital literature is one of the key factors impeding it from flourishing and holding it back.

Another powerfully impeding factor is the reluctance to teach and study the digital literacy skills that would constitute the basis for any creativity in this area.[20] Studies indicate there is a broad disparity between countries in the number of individuals and organizations devoted to developing these skills. Annual OECD reports confirm the Arab nations to be among the stragglers in this regard.[21] The principal reason for this may be the reluctance of most schools in the region to move toward e-learning. This is a prerequisite to providing an enormous economic and technological resource in order to establish an infrastructure and for schools to obtain their own communication networks, to distribute smart tablets in the classroom, to swap text and exercise books for e-books, and to train teachers in the required new skills to change their ways and systems of teaching.[22] Meanwhile, Europe has focused on realizing these aims since the beginning of the twenty-first century: the European High Commission established a venture entitled 'Designing Tomorrow's Education' in their primary and secondary schools, as part of a plan for Electronic Europe, back in 2001.[23]

The first challenge is to change the teaching programs and methods and make them fit for twenty-first-century learning skills, with all the concomitant material implications. We cannot aspire to authoring and developing an indigenous Arabic digital literature until we found a new generation versed in the architecture and alphabet of information technology, equipped with enabling skills, conscious of its foundations, capable of influencing the virtual world, engaged in research and learning, and therefore firm-footed in its innovative and exploratory visions. This responsibility lies with the education ministries as well as universities and the various educational institutions. At the same time, however, it requires massive levels of

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[20] Yoram Eshet-Alkaka (2004), 'Digital Literacy: A Conceptual Framework for Survival Skills in the Digital Era,' in *Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia*, 93-106.

[21] Refer to relevant pages on www.oecd.org and http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4821091,00.html.

[22] Ibrahim Mulhim (2005), *Digitalization and Transformations in Writing: Theory and Practice*, Irbid: 'Alam al-Kutub al-Hadith, 41.

[23] European Union, 'E-Learning: Designing Tomorrow's Education' https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/BG/ALL/?uri=URISERV:c11046, last accessed 14 May 2019.

economic support currently lacking in many Arab countries, such as Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon, which stand at the forefront of hard-copy literary creativity.

Another significant barrier to digital literature's acceptance and furtherance in the Arab world is the connection made between this type of literature and the conception of globalization as a new form of human existence under the American flag and a call to freedom from self-delusion and identity.[24] In this regard, those who reject it see digital literature as a product of globalization that threatens local cultures and identities since it aspires to assimilation and uniformity in literary form and style. This represents such a great risk because it means 'the negation of literary identity,' a creativity representative of those who fashion it. If people become uniform in art, expression, and identity, there will be no distinctive creativity. Thus, for such critics, globalization is antithetical to literature, art, culture, and identity. Digital literature's association with the concept of globalization provides a motive for its rejection and for a preference for literature in tangibly physical form and content.

The political situation also plays a role in this context. The Arab world is preoccupied today with quandaries and crises more important than the issue of digital literature. Arab peoples are struggling to liberate themselves and determine their own fate. They face challenges that are matters of life or death, survival or extinction. Do such people have the time to think about innovation and creativity? What is happening in Syria, or Egypt, or Iraq or Palestine, as examples, can interrupt, even paralyze any creative movement within them. It is almost as if digital literature becomes a refuge in such circumstances. A simple example can illuminate this idea further.

A few months after the 25 January Revolution in Egypt, many hard copy poetry collections and novels were published that were said to describe the revolution. Would it have been possible to issue digital literature to so immediately describe the revolution in the midst of such bloody events? The answer is of course not, and not only because it needs economic resources, the Internet, technical endeavor and considerable expenditure. Above all, it needs the space for intellectual and spiritual calm, and a very great deal of time. This makes the printed word more able to meet the needs of the Arab writer and more suited to the capabilities and possibilities of the moment.

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[24] 'Izzat al-Sayyid Ahmad (2000), *The Collapse of the Claims of Globalization*, Damascus: Ittihad Kuttab al-'Arab, 67.

The last challenge concerns the lack of a critical movement that keeps pace with digital literature in the Arab world. This is due to the lack of Arab digital literary production, reliance on Western criticism at the level of theory without practice, and a lack of familiarity with the fundamentals and tools for such criticism.[25] Western digital literary production bears no comparison with what is produced in the East in terms of the multiplicity of genre, variety and volume of composition, and the nature of the technique. Therefore, any critical practice based on this literary oeuvre often cannot be applied to what exists by way of Arabic digital literature, which often makes random and arbitrary turns, being confined to a theoretical framework without examples and models to which to relate.

(b)   Intrinsic challenges

Intrinsic challenges relate to the very nature of digital literature itself, and the changes it entails in systems of creativity. In addition to this, many of the concepts and terms related to digital literature remain somewhat recondite, not only in the Arab but also the Western experience. This is because they are new and require careful reflection, and the crystallization of the literary establishment's thinking on contemporary digital texts. This will require a great deal of time, especially in relation to Arab literature, suffering as it does from a meagre quantitative experience in this regard.

Fear of this new phenomenon also wards writers and critics off digital literature. Almost every innovation in literature is met with reservation, on the part of writers and critics alike, until it solidifies and establishes itself on the literary scene. If we review the innovatory movements that have arisen in literature generally, we find that these them faced with rejection and resistance in their beginnings. This happened with the pioneers of the modern poetry movement in the middle of the last century, for example. Nazik al-Mala'ika relates these issues in contemporary Arab poetry to this subject. He mentions the difficulties faced by poets rebelling against the classic archetypes and escaping formal constraints, challenging traditional and predetermined models with the romantic search for individualism and independence. They sought out themselves in lines of poetry and new topics that realistically addressed collective concerns; people like Lacker Sayyab, Abd-al-Wahhab al-Bayati, and

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[25] 'Ayida Nasrallah and Iman Younis (2015), *Artistic and Literary Interactivity in Digital Literature: the Poem 'Shajar al-Bughāz' as an Example*, Markaz Abhath al-Lugha al-'Arabiya, Bayt Birl College, 135.

others. However, the innovatory movement they urged encountered many difficulties before the situation stabilized and it could impose itself by force.[26]

It is no surprise that in its early stages digital literature encountered the same invective, hostility and rejection. This was so to such a degree that certain pen and paper fanatics launched an all-out assault on digital literature. They claimed that the word was the backbone of the literary text and that a multiplicity of forms led to a deterioration in the artistic value of writing. The argument was also that literature thereby loses much of its seductive power and is robbed of one of fundamental aspect of the imagination. Jordanian digital writer Mohamad Sanajleh provides us with an answer to such objections:

> Thus, I am not afraid of the evolution of creativity through technological development. On the contrary, it makes me more able to express myself because the use of previously unavailable tools can provide the means to reach out to humanity. It does not even frighten me to turn it into a game, because reaching this level means that the cultural context I live in obliges me to do so. What does scare me is to empty this game of its human content.[27]

This means that literature is the literature of each time and place, and creativity is a human experience sensitized to humanity and its present-day issues, regardless of the form and type of this creativity, regardless of its mechanisms and methods. No harm comes, therefore, in the use of technology alongside words in any literary work, providing that it enhances a writer's ability to serve the text's sense and redolence. It is not simply for external decoration or contrived and artificial furnishing of the text. It must be an organic element and a basic component of the text. In this way it can enrich any text, enlarge its inference and nuance, render it more intense, fertile, and vital. In this regard, Moroccan critic Zohour Kiram says:

> We cannot sacrifice the essence of literature for the sake of technology, and we should not lose the artistic and aesthetic pleasure in literature because of technology, because literature remains, in all ages, more coupled to the conscience, and is so through its human, aesthetic, and artistic dimensions.[28]

Arab creative artists' frustration with and reluctance to embrace digital literature may also lie in their concept of this process of innovation, which they see as a threat to their heritage and the customs handed down by their forefathers. Acceptance of digital literature means

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[26] Nazik al-Mala'ika (1976), *Issues in Modern Arabic Poetry*, Baghdad: Dar al-Nahda, 38.
[27] Mohamad Sanajleh (2005), *The Realist Digital Novel*, Amman: Al-Mu'assasa al-'Arabiya lil-Dirasat wal-Nashr.
[28] Zouhour Kiram (2014), *Digital Literature: Cultural Questions and Conceptual Reflections*, Cairo: Ru'ya lil-Nashr wal-Tawzi'a.

accepting change in many conceptions related to the process of creativity, and this is not a simple matter. It requires us to abandon many long-established ideas. The most important of these is the exclusive relationship between the text and its producer. The digital writer is evidently not the sole proprietor of the text, but works with an entourage of programmers, experts, and perhaps other artists. Digital literature also means abandoning the pride attached to a yellow-paged heritage and the relation of craft to the printed word in poetic or novelistic form. Digital literature furthermore means accepting the idea of the reader participating in the text's production and interacting with it in various ways, adding to or changing it. Breaking from these constant principles is tantamount to discarding what our forebears discovered. It requires a wholesale revolt. Hence, it is not strange that this literature, because of the changes it demands, meets with reservation, even rejection from the many Arab writers and critics who cling to tradition and authenticity.

We believe, on the contrary, that creativity means entering the unknown, the unforeseeable, the unlimited, and that those who try to create in derivative ways are not actually creative but rather imitative. Digital discourse, therefore, conceived holistically, entails deviating from the accepted creative writing traditions in form, substance, and process. We live not only in a postmodern, but a post-human era, because humans are no longer the sole ones in control. Information technology has become a partner in all things, and we need to look at the computer beyond being a mere production tool not just as a tool for text production tool, but as a partner.

This concept of innovation cannot, in our view, put an end to heritage and build on its ruins. The new does not need to nullify the old, but can preserve all of its authenticity, can stand alongside it without abnegating it. The birth of the interactive poem for example, does not supersede the classical *'amudi* forms that still attract the attention of readers, critics and creative people. To this day, the short story accompanies the novel without one dominating the other. Acceptance of digital literature, therefore, does not necessarily mean the elimination of the Arabic literary heritage, but rather the acceptance of the evolutionary character of literature and an inevitable consequence of technological developments.

Future

Most studies indicate that Arab societies suffer from the vast digital divide that separates them from the developed world and prevents them from keeping pace with global quantitative and qualitative developments in culture and creativity. This is because the nature of digitization in the West differs from that in the East. Digitalization in the Western world is a logical result of objective social development in various material and conceptual fields. It is also the result of the search for greater range and scope in creativity, development, aesthetics, expression, and pleasure. In the Arab world, digitization is only applied within the principles of tradition and 'nature.' Unfortunately, Arab societies are still living in an age of consumption without production, and there is still a long way to go before they can compete with Western digital literature. We cannot deny this reality, dangerous in all its dimensions, that will mark the future of Arab culture and the Arab individual in a constantly changing world.

We hear a new term circulated among intellectuals every day to characterize this era, its people, and the major transformations experienced by societies in various parts of the world. They include 'the post-human era,' 'the era of the digital revolution,' 'the information age,' 'the digital human,' 'the cyborg,' 'the knowledge society,' and the 'media society.' This is not to mention the terminology that foregrounds the civilizational forms and patterns of the old era, such as 'the end of the paper age,' and many more. Amid this confusion of terminologies arising out of such transformations, it is necessary to reflect on the future of the Arab society and the Arab individual. It is necessary to examine the possibilities of adapting to all of these changes naturally and to be capable of quantitative and qualitative transformation. This requires in-depth study and research covering all areas, but here we will focus most of our attention on literature.

We have already stated that digital literature is an evolutionary process in all its transformations and developments. The process of change must therefore be gradual, wholesome, natural, and at the same time free of confusion. This requires us to work on several levels:

- We need to work harder to teach about this type of literature and how it is produced and communicated, within higher education institutions, because academic research will ensure its viability a modern and modernist phenomenon. It will lend it legitimacy, facilitate its acceptance and dissemination, and protect it from fanatics and opponents citing non-academic reasons.

- The opening of real and virtual, academic and non-academic workshops to teach and learn digital writing as is the case in some Western countries.

- The devotion of academic and scientific websites and magazines to disseminating research, analyses, and creative contributions in the field of digital literature in order to raise awareness of it.

- The introduction of this genre of literature into schools through concern with children's digital literature in order to prepare a generation capable of assimilating literature in its new form and conceptions.

Based on this, we will inexorably move towards the technology, whether we like it or not, and it will thus become more accessible and desirable to future generations than it is to present ones, because the next generations will have grown up with and within the technology. It will be part of the framework of daily life. The social media phenomenon confirms that the individual has become more entwined with the virtual individual in order to acquire knowledge, create exchange, and establish bonds of virtual friendship. We are required writing using the tools of the age and express the human of this era in its technological entity and in the virtual world. We also need to address the subject of digital literature through analysis, inquiry, and critique.