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# Islam In the Digital Age

## E-Jihad, Online Fatwas and Cyber Islamic Environments

Gary Bunt

The Internet is an increasingly important source of information for many people in the Muslim world. Many Muslims in majority and minority contexts rely on the Internet -- including websites and e-mail -- as a primary source of news, information and communication about Islam. As a result, a new media culture is emerging which is having a significant impact on areas of global Muslim consciousness. Post-September 11th, this phenomenon has grown more rapidly than ever.

Gary R. Bunt provides a fascinating account of the issues at stake, identifying two radical new concepts: Firstly, the emergence of e-jihad ('Electronic Jihad') originating from diverse Muslim perspectives -- this is described in its many forms relating to the different definitions of 'jihad', including on-line activism (ranging from promoting militaristic activities to hacking, to co-ordinating peaceful protests) and Muslim expression post 9/11;

Secondly, he discusses religious authority on the Internet -- including the concept of on-line fatwas and their influence in diverse settings, and the complexities of conflicting notions of religious authority.

"The Internet is very big in the Arab world. After Al-Jazeera, it is the second most important source of dissenting opinion. Literally, millions of people in the Muslims world rely on web-sites to get their information and fatwas. A whole new life of cyber Imams and a new culture is emerging through Internet programmes and will have a profound effect on Arab consciousness. This book documents all this and examines various sites and offers the first comprehensive analysis of the impact of the Internet on Islamic culture."

Zia Sardar, author of *Postmodernism and the Other* and *Why Do People Hate America*

For more information about Islam in the Digital Age please visit [www.virtuallyislamic.com](http://www.virtuallyislamic.com)

**Gary R. Bunt is a lecturer in the Department of Theology, Religious Studies and Islamic Studies, University of Wales, Lampeter, United Kingdom. He has published two related books: *Virtually Islamic: Computer-mediated Communication and Cyber Islamic Environments* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2000) and *The Good Web Guide to World Religions* (London: The Good Web Guide, 2001), as well as a number of articles and book chapters on 'Cyber Islamic Environments'.**

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