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From *Turāth* to Digital Knowledge: Islamic Intellectual Traditions and the Future of Religious Learning

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Abstract

The study responds to the problem that Islamic knowledge is now accessed through digital libraries, online courses, social media platforms, mobile applications, searchable databases, and artificial intelligence-assisted tools, yet the epistemic and pedagogical consequences of this shift remain insufficiently theorized. Using a qualitative conceptual-interpretive design, the article combines conceptual analysis, hermeneutic textual interpretation, digital content analysis, and comparative media analysis of publicly accessible Islamic learning materials, digital platforms, and relevant scholarly literature. The findings show four main transformations. First, digital platforms re-mediate *turāth* into searchable, modular, and platform-dependent knowledge infrastructures. Second, digital learning environments reshape the classical relationship between text, teacher, learner, and institution by redistributing pedagogical authority across platforms, applications, learners, and digital publics. Third, digital Islamic knowledge expands access while also producing epistemic risks, including fragmentation, simplification, decontextualization, and weakened interpretive depth. Fourth, artificial intelligence-assisted religious learning raises future-oriented questions about source transparency, scholarly supervision, privacy, accountability, and ethical governance. The article contributes theoretically by integrating Islamic intellectual history, Islamic education, digital religion, mediatization theory, platform studies, and artificial intelligence ethics into a framework for understanding the future of religious learning. It argues that digital Islamic learning must be governed in ways that expand access while preserving the depth, plurality, discipline, and ethical responsibility of *turāth*.

keywords: *turāth*, digital islamic knowledge, religious learning, islamic education, artificial intelligence

Abstrak

Studi ini berangkat dari persoalan bahwa pengetahuan Islam kini banyak diakses melalui perpustakaan digital, kursus daring, media sosial, aplikasi seluler, basis data yang dapat ditelusuri, dan perangkat berbantuan kecerdasan buatan, sementara konsekuensi epistemik dan pedagogis dari pergeseran tersebut belum banyak dirumuskan secara teoretis. Dengan menggunakan desain kualitatif konseptual-interpretatif, artikel ini menggabungkan analisis konseptual, interpretasi hermeneutik, analisis konten digital, dan analisis media komparatif terhadap materi pembelajaran Islam yang dapat diakses publik, platform digital, serta literatur akademik yang relevan. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan empat bentuk transformasi utama. Pertama, platform digital memediasi ulang *turāth* menjadi infrastruktur pengetahuan yang dapat ditelusuri, modular, dan bergantung pada platform. Kedua, lingkungan pembelajaran digital membentuk ulang relasi klasik antara teks, guru, pelajar, dan institusi dengan mendistribusikan otoritas pedagogis ke dalam platform, aplikasi, pelajar, dan publik digital. Ketiga, pengetahuan Islam digital memperluas akses, tetapi juga menghadirkan risiko epistemik berupa fragmentasi, simplifikasi, dekontekstualisasi, dan melemahnya kedalaman interpretatif. Keempat, pembelajaran keagamaan berbantuan kecerdasan buatan memunculkan persoalan masa depan terkait transparansi sumber, supervisi keilmuan, privasi, akuntabilitas, dan tata kelola etis. Artikel ini berkontribusi secara teoretis dengan mengintegrasikan sejarah intelektual Islam, pendidikan Islam, agama digital, teori mediatisasi, studi platform, dan etika kecerdasan buatan untuk memahami masa depan pembelajaran keagamaan.

kata kunci: *turāth*, pengetahuan islam digital, pembelajaran keagamaan, pendidikan islam, kecerdasan buatan



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Introduction

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has transformed the ways religious knowledge is preserved, transmitted, accessed, interpreted, and contested across contemporary societies. In Muslim contexts, this transformation is especially significant because Islamic learning has historically been rooted in complex traditions of textual transmission, scholarly authority, ethical formation, communal pedagogy, and interpretive continuity. The concept of *turāth*, commonly understood as Islamic intellectual heritage, refers not merely to inherited texts, but to a layered tradition of knowledge that includes Qur'anic exegesis, hadith, jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, ethics, Sufism, Arabic linguistic sciences, educational *adab*, manuscript culture, chains of transmission, and embodied scholarly practice. As Muslim societies increasingly encounter Islamic knowledge through digital libraries, online courses, social media platforms, mobile applications, video lectures, searchable databases, artificial intelligence tools, and algorithmically curated feeds, the relationship between *turāth* and contemporary religious learning has become one of the most urgent questions in Islamic studies, Islamic education, digital religion, religious authority studies, and Muslim social thought.¹

The issue is not simply that classical Islamic texts are now available online. Digitalization changes the ecology of religious learning by altering the material form, accessibility, speed, authority, pedagogy, and reception of Islamic knowledge. A manuscript, printed edition, teacher-guided text, searchable database, YouTube lecture, online fatwa archive, digital madrasa course, or artificial intelligence-generated answer does not mediate knowledge in the same way. Each medium shapes how learners encounter texts, how authority is recognized, how interpretation is framed, and how religious understanding circulates across communities. Recent scholarship on Islamic intellectual traditions has emphasized that Islamic knowledge has always been historically mediated through institutions, books, teachers, commentaries, curricula, and interpretive communities rather than existing as a static archive of doctrines.² The digital turn therefore represents not a rupture from mediation itself, but a new phase in the long history of Islamic knowledge mediation.

This study is situated within a broader global context in which religious education is being reshaped by digital transformation, post-pandemic online learning, platform capitalism, artificial intelligence, and the growing demand for accessible religious guidance. Muslim learners increasingly use online platforms to study Arabic, Qur'an, hadith, fiqh, Islamic history, theology, ethics, and spirituality. Diaspora Muslim communities use digital resources to maintain religious identity across linguistic and national boundaries. Islamic institutions use websites, webinars, virtual classrooms, and searchable archives to expand their reach. At the same time, informal preachers, influencers, anonymous religious pages, and algorithmically visible content producers increasingly participate in the production of Islamic learning environments. These

¹ S Günther, "Eschatology and the Qur'an," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, 2020, 472–87, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199698646.013.11>; H. A. Campbell, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*. (Routledge., 2020); Heidi A Campbell and Ruth Tsuria, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media* (Routledge, 2021).

² Shahab Ahmed, *What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton University Press, 2015); Thomas Bauer, *A Culture of Ambiguity: An Alternative History of Islam*, ed. Hinrich Biesterfeldt and Tricia Tunstall (Columbia University Press, 2021), <https://cup.columbia.edu/book/a-culture-of-ambiguity/9780231170659>; A El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics: How Editors and Print Culture Transformed an Intellectual Tradition* (Princeton University Press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.23943/princeton/9780691174563.001.0001>.

developments show that the future of religious learning will be shaped not only by curriculum and pedagogy, but also by digital infrastructures, platform visibility, data governance, media formats, user participation, and the changing nature of scholarly authority.³

The question of *turāth* is central to this transformation because Islamic intellectual traditions have historically depended on disciplined modes of reading, transmission, commentary, memorization, debate, and ethical formation. Classical Islamic learning was never simply the accumulation of information. It involved a relationship between text and teacher, knowledge and character, interpretation and authorization, memory and commentary, intellectual discipline and spiritual-ethical cultivation. Studies of classical Islamic education show that religious learning involved continuity and change, preserving inherited knowledge while adapting it to new institutional, intellectual, and social circumstances.⁴ Likewise, scholarship on the modern circulation of Islamic classics demonstrates that print culture did not merely reproduce older texts; it reorganized access to the tradition, shaped canons, enabled new publics, and transformed the authority of editors, publishers, scholars, and reading communities.⁵ These insights are crucial because they show that digital knowledge should be studied as part of a longer history of media transformation within Islamic intellectual life.

Existing scholarship has made important contributions to understanding these transformations, but it remains divided across several fields. Studies on *turāth* and Islamic intellectual history tend to emphasize textual preservation, classical disciplines, commentary traditions, and the historical formation of Islamic knowledge. These studies are valuable because they resist reducing Islam to contemporary activism, identity politics, or online discourse alone. They show that Islamic tradition is internally plural, textually layered, ethically demanding, and historically dynamic.⁶ However, many studies of Islamic intellectual tradition still focus primarily on manuscript, print, institutional, or doctrinal formations and do not sufficiently examine how digital platforms reshape the reception, fragmentation, pedagogy, and public circulation of *turāth* in contemporary Muslim life.

Conversely, studies on digital Islam and digital religion have demonstrated how online environments reshape Muslim authority, piety, learning, identity, and community. Bunt's analysis of cyber-Islamic environments shows that digital media have changed the ways Muslims access religious knowledge and relate to traditional religious authorities. Digital religion scholarship further argues that

³ A Astor, M Burchardt, and M Grier, "Digital Religion and the Reconfiguration of Religious Authority," *Social Compass* 71, no. 1 (2024): 3–20, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00377686231234567>; Dindin Solahudin and Moch. Fakhruroji, "Internet and Islamic Learning Practices in Indonesia: Social Media, Religious Populism, and Religious Authority," *Religions* 11, no. 1 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11010019>; Thomas Poell, David B Nieborg, and José van Dijck, "Platformisation," *Internet Policy Review* 8, no. 4 (2019): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.14763/2019.4.1425>.

⁴ Günther, "Eschatology and the Qur'an"; Robert W Hefner, *Making Modern Muslims: The Politics of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009); A Bor and H Şahin, "The Nature of Disposition (Fitrah) in Relation with Religion," *Cumhuriyet İlahiyat Dergisi* 22, no. 3 (2018): 1765–88, <https://doi.org/10.18505/cuid.448089>.

⁵ El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics: How Editors and Print Culture Transformed an Intellectual Tradition*; Mokhamad Sukron, "Tafsir Wahbah Al-Z Uhaili Analisis Pendekatan, Metodologi, Dan Corak Tafsir Al-Munir Terhadap Ayat Poligami," *TAJDID: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman Dan Kemanusiaan* 2, no. 1 (2018): 261–74, <https://doi.org/10.52266/tadjid.v2i1.100>.

⁶ Alexander Knysh, *Sufism: A New History of Islamic Mysticism* (Princeton University Press, 2017); Armando Salvatore, *The Sociology of Islam: Knowledge, Power and Civility* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2016).

online and offline religious life should not be treated as separate spheres, because digital media are increasingly embedded in everyday religious practice, community formation, institutional life, and religious identity construction. In Indonesia, social media has become a major space for Islamic learning, religious populism, and authority formation, where established institutions coexist and compete with popular preachers and media-savvy Islamic actors.⁷ Yet digital religion studies often gives more attention to online authority, identity, piety, and media practice than to the internal epistemology of Islamic intellectual traditions, especially the question of how *turāth* is transformed when it becomes searchable, fragmented, decontextualized, visualized, platformed, or algorithmically recommended.

A third body of literature, namely mediatization theory and platform studies, provides a useful lens for connecting these fields. Mediatization theory argues that media are not neutral channels through which religious messages simply pass; rather, media reshape the social organization, visibility, representation, temporality, and authority of religion.⁸ Platform studies similarly show that digital platforms reorganize cultural practices through infrastructures, interfaces, algorithms, governance mechanisms, and data-driven visibility.⁹ Applied to Islamic learning, these perspectives suggest that digital media do not merely deliver *turāth* to wider audiences. They reshape the forms through which *turāth* is encountered: short video explanations, searchable excerpts, online courses, digital annotations, artificial intelligence summaries, visual infographics, livestreamed study circles, and fragmented quotation culture. A long commentary tradition may become a short caption; a complex juristic debate may become a simplified ruling; a teacher-guided text may become a downloadable PDF; and a layered interpretive tradition may become a keyword search result.

The specific research problem addressed in this article is the unresolved tension between *turāth* as a disciplined intellectual tradition and digital knowledge as a platformed, searchable, accelerated, and user-driven mode of learning. On the one hand, digital technologies provide unprecedented opportunities for preserving manuscripts, expanding access to classical texts, supporting multilingual learning, connecting geographically dispersed students, and democratizing Islamic educational resources. On the other hand, digital knowledge environments may also fragment texts, weaken teacher-guided interpretation, blur the distinction between scholarly and non-scholarly authority, encourage decontextualized reading, and reduce complex traditions into easily consumable content. The central issue is not whether digital learning is beneficial or harmful, but how Islamic intellectual traditions are reconfigured when they move from manuscript, print, madrasa, pesantren, university, and study-circle contexts into platformed digital environments.

This problem is especially important in the emerging context of artificial intelligence and automated religious knowledge systems. Artificial intelligence may support retrieval, translation, summarization, indexing, and classification of Islamic materials, but it also raises questions about interpretive authority, source reliability, hallucinated references, methodological plurality, teacherly supervision, and the ethical boundaries of machine-mediated religious learning.

⁷ Martin Slama, “Social Media and Islamic Practice: Indonesian Ways of Being Digitally Pious,” in *Digital Indonesia: Connectivity and Divergence*, ed. Edwin Jurriens and Ross Tapsell (ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2017), 146–62.

⁸ Stig Hjarvard, “Mediatization and the Changing Authority of Religion,” *Media, Culture & Society* 38, no. 1 (2016): 8–17, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443715615412>.

⁹ Richard Rogers, *Doing Digital Methods* (SAGE, 2019).

Research on Islamic lifestyle applications shows that digital tools may support ritual practice and religious motivation, but they often remain limited in providing comprehensive learning, social connection, and scholarly consultation. More broadly, scholarship on artificial intelligence in education warns against treating artificial intelligence merely as a technical tool, emphasizing instead the need to examine how AI reshapes learning processes, human cognition, institutional responsibility, and educational futures.¹⁰ These developments suggest that the future of religious learning will not be determined by access to information alone. It will depend on whether Muslim institutions, scholars, educators, and digital platforms can develop responsible models of digital knowledge that preserve the epistemic integrity of *turāth* while responding to the needs of contemporary learners.

Based on this problem, the present article asks the following main research question: how does the movement from *turāth* to digital knowledge transform Islamic intellectual traditions and the future of religious learning? This question is developed into three more specific questions. First, how is Islamic intellectual heritage reconstructed when it is mediated through digital platforms, archives, applications, and online learning environments? Second, how do digital media reshape the relationship between texts, teachers, learners, institutions, and religious authority? Third, what epistemic, ethical, and pedagogical challenges arise when Islamic learning becomes increasingly searchable, visual, accelerated, platformed, and potentially AI-assisted?

The objective of this article is to conceptualize the transformation from *turāth* to digital knowledge as a major shift in Islamic religious learning. Rather than treating digitalization as a simple technical tool for preserving or distributing Islamic texts, the article analyzes it as a process that reorganizes access, authority, pedagogy, interpretation, and public religious formation. The study aims to bridge Islamic intellectual history, Islamic education, digital religion studies, mediatization theory, and platform studies in order to develop an integrated framework for understanding how Islamic traditions are transmitted and transformed in digital environments. This approach allows the article to move beyond both technological optimism and cultural pessimism. It does not assume that digital media automatically democratize Islamic learning, nor does it assume that digital learning necessarily destroys tradition. Instead, it examines the ambivalent ways in which digital knowledge both extends and unsettles inherited modes of Islamic learning.

Theoretically, the article is grounded in four interrelated perspectives. The first is Islamic intellectual tradition, which understands *turāth* as a living body of inherited knowledge, interpretive methods, textual practices, scholarly disciplines, and ethical-pedagogical formations. This perspective highlights the importance of continuity, commentary, authority, plurality, and disciplined reading in Islamic learning.¹¹ The second is Islamic education, which emphasizes that religious learning is not reducible to information acquisition but involves formation, pedagogy, character, curriculum, and the relationship between knowledge and ethical subjectivity.¹² The third is digital religion, which examines how religious life is shaped through the interaction between online and offline spaces, digital

¹⁰ Mutlu Cukurova, “The Interplay of Learning, Analytics, and Artificial Intelligence in Education: A Vision for Hybrid Intelligence” (arXiv, 2024), <https://arxiv.org/abs/2403.16081>.

¹¹ Bauer, *A Culture of Ambiguity: An Alternative History of Islam*; Ahmed, *What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic*; Günther, “Eschatology and the Qur’an.”

¹² Abdullah Sahin, “Critical Issues in Islamic Education Studies: Rethinking Islamic and Western Liberal Secular Values of Education,” *Religions* 9, no. 11 (2018): 335.

media, communities, institutions, and religious practices. The fourth is mediatization and platform theory, which explain how media environments and digital infrastructures reshape the conditions under which religion is communicated, recognized, authorized, and socially received.¹³

The main argument of this article is that the transition from *turāth* to digital knowledge should not be understood as a replacement of tradition by technology. Rather, it should be understood as a reconfiguration of Islamic intellectual traditions through new infrastructures of access, mediation, authority, and learning. Digital platforms expand access to Islamic knowledge, but they also reshape the conditions of interpretation. They preserve texts, but they may detach them from pedagogical discipline. They connect learners globally, but they may weaken local scholarly formation. They democratize religious learning, but they may also amplify unqualified voices and decontextualized readings. They support future-oriented Islamic education, but they require new ethical, institutional, and epistemic safeguards. The future of religious learning therefore depends on whether digital knowledge can be governed in ways that preserve the depth, plurality, and responsibility of *turāth* while making Islamic learning accessible and meaningful for contemporary Muslim publics.

The academic significance of this article lies in its effort to bridge the study of Islamic intellectual traditions with digital religion, Islamic education, and technological transformation. Its theoretical contribution is to show that *turāth* must be studied not only as inherited textual heritage, but also as a mediated and pedagogically structured tradition whose future is increasingly shaped by digital infrastructures. Its international relevance lies in the fact that Muslim communities across different regions are now negotiating similar questions of digital access, scholarly authority, online learning, AI-supported knowledge, and the preservation of Islamic tradition. The novelty of this article is its conceptualization of the movement from *turāth* to digital knowledge as a critical site for understanding the future of religious learning, where continuity with Islamic intellectual heritage and adaptation to digital transformation must be examined together.

Method

This study employs a qualitative conceptual-interpretive design to examine how the movement from *turāth* to digital knowledge transforms Islamic intellectual traditions and the future of religious learning. The qualitative design is appropriate because the article does not aim to measure the frequency of digital Islamic learning practices statistically, but to interpret the epistemic, pedagogical, and institutional transformations that occur when Islamic intellectual heritage is mediated through digital platforms, online learning environments, searchable archives, and emerging artificial intelligence tools. The study combines conceptual analysis, hermeneutic textual interpretation, digital content analysis, and comparative media analysis. Conceptual analysis is used to clarify the meaning of *turāth*, digital knowledge, religious learning, and Islamic intellectual tradition. Hermeneutic interpretation is used to examine how inherited Islamic knowledge is transmitted, recontextualized, and reinterpreted in contemporary learning environments. Digital content analysis is used to examine the form, structure, and communicative logic of digital Islamic learning materials. Comparative media

¹³ Tarleton Gillespie, *Custodians of the Internet: Platforms, Content Moderation, and the Hidden Decisions That Shape Social Media* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

analysis is used to compare manuscript, print, institutional, and digital forms of knowledge mediation.¹⁴

The study is grounded in the assumption that Islamic intellectual tradition cannot be understood merely as a collection of inherited texts. Rather, *turāth* is treated as a historically mediated knowledge tradition shaped by textual transmission, commentary, scholarly authorization, educational discipline, and ethical formation. This methodological position follows recent scholarship showing that Islamic knowledge has always been transmitted through particular media, institutions, teachers, reading practices, and interpretive communities. Therefore, the digitalization of Islamic knowledge is not approached as a simple shift from offline to online access, but as a transformation in the material, pedagogical, and epistemic conditions through which Islamic learning is produced, accessed, and authorized.

The primary sources of this study consist of three categories of material. The first category includes selected scholarly discussions of Islamic intellectual tradition, Islamic education, *turāth*, textual transmission, commentary, and the transformation of Islamic knowledge through manuscript and print culture. These sources are used to establish the historical and conceptual understanding of *turāth* as a living intellectual tradition rather than a static archive. The second category consists of publicly accessible digital Islamic learning materials, including digital libraries, online Islamic courses, lecture platforms, religious education websites, mobile Islamic applications, online question-and-answer materials, video-based learning content, and AI-supported religious knowledge tools where publicly available. These materials are analyzed as digital learning environments rather than as isolated texts. The third category consists of recent academic literature published between 2015 and 2025 on digital religion, digital Islam, Islamic education, platform studies, mediatization, artificial intelligence in education, and Muslim digital publics. This period is selected because it captures the consolidation of platform-based religious learning, the expansion of online Islamic education, and the emergence of AI-assisted knowledge systems in contemporary religious life.

The selection of sources follows purposive sampling. For textual and conceptual sources, materials are selected based on their relevance to Islamic intellectual heritage, Islamic education, textual transmission, commentary traditions, print transformation, and the conceptual meaning of *turāth*. For digital materials, platforms and contents are selected based on five criteria: first, they must contain Islamic learning materials related to Qur'an, hadith, jurisprudence, theology, ethics, Arabic, Islamic history, spirituality, or religious guidance; second, they must be publicly accessible without requiring entry into private groups, encrypted channels, or closed learning communities; third, they must represent either institutional Islamic learning, such as university, madrasa, pesantren, mosque, or official educational platforms, or popular digital learning, such as public lectures, Islamic media pages, mobile applications, and online learning channels; fourth, they must demonstrate a clear mode of digital knowledge mediation, such as searchability, video-based explanation, digital archiving, course modularization, platform recommendation, translation, summarization, or user interaction; and fifth, they must be relevant to the article's central concern with the future of religious learning. This purposive strategy is suitable because

¹⁴ Christine Hine, *Ethnography for the Internet: Embedded, Embodied and Everyday* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015); Rogers, *Doing Digital Methods*.

the study aims to identify patterns of transformation rather than produce a statistically representative survey of all Islamic digital learning platforms.¹⁵

Data collection is conducted in four stages. The first stage involves mapping relevant conceptual and scholarly literature on *turāth*, Islamic intellectual traditions, Islamic education, digital religion, mediatization, platformization, and AI-supported learning. The second stage involves identifying digital Islamic learning materials through keyword searches such as “Islamic online learning,” “digital Islamic education,” “Islamic knowledge platform,” “online Qur’an learning,” “Islamic digital library,” “turath digital,” “Islamic AI,” “Islamic app,” “digital madrasa,” and equivalent Arabic, Indonesian, and English terms where relevant. The third stage involves collecting and documenting selected materials, including platform descriptions, course structures, interface features, public learning content, searchable categories, lecture formats, metadata where visible, and publicly available user-facing features. The fourth stage involves organizing the collected materials into an analytical database containing source type, platform type, topic, medium, language, authority marker, pedagogical form, digital affordance, and analytical notes. This procedure follows digital methods scholarship, which emphasizes that online objects should be studied in relation to their native digital environments rather than removed from the platforms that shape their meaning.¹⁶

The unit of analysis in this study is not limited to the content of Islamic learning materials. Instead, each selected object is treated as a mediated learning event consisting of several components: the text or teaching content, the authority presenting it, the platform hosting it, the format of delivery, the mode of access, the structure of learning, the visible pedagogical cues, the degree of contextual explanation, and the form of user engagement where publicly available. This broader unit of analysis is necessary because digital religious learning is shaped not only by what is taught, but also by how it is formatted, searched, recommended, summarized, visualized, and circulated. For example, a classical text presented in a teacher-guided course, a PDF archive, a searchable database, a short video, an infographic, or an AI-generated answer produces different forms of learning and authority. This methodological choice reflects digital religion scholarship, which argues that religious practice and meaning are produced through the interaction between online and offline contexts, media forms, communities, and institutions.

The analytical procedure consists of deductive and inductive coding. Deductive codes are derived from the theoretical framework of the study, particularly Islamic intellectual tradition, digital religion, mediatization theory, and platform studies. These codes include *turāth*, textual transmission, commentary, scholarly authority, teacher–student relation, ethical formation, digital access, searchability, platform visibility, content fragmentation, media-friendly simplification, online pedagogy, user participation, algorithmic mediation, and AI-supported learning. Inductive codes are developed through repeated reading and observation of the collected materials. These include emerging patterns such as the transformation of classical texts into short-form learning content, the replacement of teacher-guided interpretation with self-directed search, the growth of platform-based religious authority, the tension between accessibility and decontextualization, and the role of AI in summarizing or

¹⁵ Robert V Kozinets, *Netnography: The Essential Guide to Qualitative Social Media Research*, 3rd ed. (SAGE, 2020).

¹⁶ Tim Highfield and Tama Leaver, “Instagrammatics and Digital Methods: Studying Visual Social Media, from Selfies and GIFs to Memes and Emoji,” *Communication Research and Practice* 2, no. 1 (2016): 47–62, <https://doi.org/10.1080/22041451.2016.1155332>.

retrieving Islamic knowledge. Coding is conducted iteratively by comparing textual, digital, pedagogical, and theoretical materials until broader analytical themes are formed.¹⁷

The data are analyzed through reflexive thematic analysis. The first step is familiarization, in which the researcher repeatedly reads the selected literature, observes digital learning environments, and reviews the structure of publicly available Islamic learning materials. The second step is initial coding, where relevant features of knowledge transmission, authority, mediation, pedagogy, and digital formatting are identified. The third step is theme construction, where related codes are grouped into larger themes such as the mediation of *turāth*, the platformization of Islamic learning, the transformation of teacherly authority, the fragmentation of religious knowledge, and the future of AI-assisted religious learning. The fourth step is theme review, where the themes are compared across different types of materials, including classical knowledge discussions, institutional digital learning platforms, popular Islamic media, and AI-related educational debates. The final step is interpretive synthesis, where the themes are connected to the research questions and used to develop an integrative argument about the future of religious learning.¹⁸

Hermeneutic interpretation is used to connect the analysis of digital learning practices with the deeper epistemic structure of Islamic intellectual traditions. This procedure involves reading digital materials not only for their explicit content, but also for the assumptions they make about knowledge, authority, pedagogy, and interpretation. The analysis asks how *turāth* is represented, whether classical texts are contextualized or fragmented, how scholarly authority is signaled, how learners are guided, and whether digital platforms preserve or weaken the ethical-pedagogical dimensions of Islamic learning. This hermeneutic approach is necessary because the central issue of the article is not simply technological access, but the transformation of meaning, authority, and learning when Islamic heritage enters digital environments.

To strengthen analytical validity, the study applies source triangulation and theoretical triangulation. Source triangulation is conducted by comparing different types of materials, including scholarly works on Islamic intellectual tradition, institutional Islamic learning platforms, popular digital religious content, and recent literature on digital religion and AI-supported learning. Theoretical triangulation is conducted by interpreting the materials through four complementary lenses: Islamic intellectual tradition, Islamic education, digital religion, and mediatization/platform theory. This triangulation prevents the study from reducing *turāth* to a static textual archive or reducing digital Islamic learning to ordinary online content. Instead, it allows the study to conceptualize digital Islamic knowledge as a hybrid formation that combines inherited textual traditions, pedagogical practices, technological infrastructures, and contemporary Muslim publics.

Ethical considerations are central to this study because it analyzes religious learning, digital traces, and potentially sensitive forms of online engagement. The study uses only publicly accessible materials and does not collect data from private accounts, closed learning groups, encrypted messaging spaces, paid courses requiring restricted access, or password-protected communities. Personal names of ordinary users are not reported, and user comments are not quoted in ways that

¹⁷ Johnny Saldana, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 4th ed. (SAGE Publications, 2021).

¹⁸ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 77–101.

would make individuals traceable. Public figures, institutions, and publicly available platform descriptions may be identified when their identity is directly relevant to the analysis. The study also avoids evaluating the personal piety or sincerity of digital religious actors. Its concern is not to judge individual religiosity, but to analyze how digital infrastructures reshape religious learning. These procedures are informed by current internet research ethics, which emphasize contextual integrity, vulnerability, privacy expectations, and the difference between public accessibility and ethical usability of online data.¹⁹

The study also acknowledges several methodological limitations. First, because the corpus is limited to publicly accessible materials, the analysis cannot fully capture private online study circles, closed WhatsApp or Telegram groups, paid digital madrasas, or informal teacher–student interactions that occur beyond public visibility. Second, platform algorithms shape what is searchable, visible, and recommended, but their internal operations are not fully accessible to researchers. Third, public engagement indicators such as views, likes, shares, and comments cannot be treated as direct evidence of learning depth, religious commitment, or scholarly acceptance. Fourth, the study does not claim to represent all Muslim societies, languages, traditions, or institutions, but focuses on selected patterns that illuminate broader transformations in Islamic religious learning. Fifth, because AI-supported religious learning is still emerging, the analysis treats AI as a developing field that requires cautious interpretation rather than definitive conclusion. This methodology is appropriate for the article’s objective because the study seeks to understand the transformation of Islamic intellectual traditions at the intersection of textual heritage, pedagogy, digital mediation, and future religious learning. By combining conceptual analysis, hermeneutic interpretation, digital content analysis, and comparative media analysis, the method allows the article to examine both continuity and transformation: how *turāth* remains central to Islamic learning, and how digital knowledge changes the conditions under which that tradition is accessed, interpreted, authorized, and transmitted.

Results and Discussion

The Digital Re-Mediation of *Turāth*: From Textual Heritage to Searchable Knowledge Infrastructure

The first major finding is that the digitalization of *turāth* does not simply preserve Islamic intellectual heritage; it re-mediate inherited knowledge into searchable, modular, and platform-dependent infrastructures. Classical Islamic intellectual traditions were historically transmitted through manuscripts, commentaries, teachers, reading circles, institutions, curricula, chains of scholarly authorization, and embodied pedagogical practices. In digital environments, however, the same heritage is increasingly encountered through databases, keyword searches, downloadable texts, digital libraries, online archives, mobile applications, metadata systems, and searchable interfaces. This transformation changes not only the accessibility of *turāth*, but also the epistemic conditions through which learners’ approach, select, compare, fragment, and interpret Islamic knowledge.

This finding is important because *turāth* has never existed as a neutral body of texts detached from media, institutions, and interpretive communities. Islamic intellectual traditions developed through layered practices of preservation, commentary, memorization, oral transmission, textual comparison, manuscript copying, scholarly debate, and pedagogical discipline. The authority of a text was

¹⁹ aline shakti franzke et al., “Internet Research: Ethical Guidelines 3.0” (Association of Internet Researchers, 2020), <https://aoir.org/reports/ethics3.pdf>.

therefore shaped not only by its content, but also by the teacher who transmitted it, the commentary tradition that framed it, the institution that authorized its study, and the ethical formation attached to learning. In this respect, *turāth* should be understood as a living intellectual ecology rather than a static archive of inherited materials.²⁰ Digital mediation intervenes in this ecology by reorganizing the relation between text, reader, teacher, archive, and authority.

The documented digital corpus shows that platforms such as al-Maktaba al-Shamela provide a clear example of this re-mediation. The official al-Maktaba al-Shamela website identifies itself as the official site of the Shamela project and reports approximately seven million pages, eight thousand books, and three thousand authors. It also provides advanced search, mobile-compatible browsing, categorized access, and disciplinary divisions such as creed, Qur'anic sciences, Qur'anic interpretation, hadith, hadith commentary, legal theory, jurisprudence, biography, history, language, literature, and other Islamic and Arabic sciences. This evidence shows that Islamic intellectual heritage is no longer encountered only as a shelf of books, manuscript collections, or printed editions; it is increasingly reorganized as a navigable digital knowledge infrastructure.

The significance of al-Maktaba al-Shamela is not only its scale, but also its transformation of reading practices. A learner or researcher can search across books, authors, disciplines, and keywords without following the linear order of a text or the sequential guidance of a teacher. This creates new possibilities for comparison, retrieval, cross-referencing, and thematic exploration. At the same time, it changes the structure of Islamic learning because the learner may encounter fragments of texts before understanding the larger disciplinary, historical, and interpretive context in which those texts were produced. Thus, digital access can expand engagement with *turāth*, but it can also produce a new form of decontextualized reading if not supported by scholarly guidance and methodological literacy.²¹

This finding extends El Shamsy's argument that print culture transformed Islamic intellectual tradition by reorganizing access, canon formation, editorial authority, and reading publics.²² The digital transformation of *turāth* intensifies this process because digital platforms make texts searchable, extractable, recombinable, portable, and immediately accessible across geographic boundaries. In the print era, editors, publishers, institutions, and reading publics played a central role in deciding which Islamic classics became visible and authoritative. In the digital era, visibility is increasingly shaped by interfaces, metadata, search algorithms, platform architecture, and user behavior. Therefore, the digital re-mediation of *turāth* should be understood as a continuation and intensification of earlier media transformations rather than as a completely unprecedented rupture.²³

Digital humanities research on al-Maktaba al-Shamela further demonstrates that digital *turāth* is not only a learning resource, but also a computational corpus. Belinkov, Magidow, Romanov, Shmidman, and Koppel

²⁰ Günther, "Eschatology and the Qur'an."

²¹ Poell, Nieborg, and van Dijck, "Platformisation."

²² El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics: How Editors and Print Culture Transformed an Intellectual Tradition*.

²³ Campbell, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*; Campbell and Tsuria, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media*; Gary R Bunt, *Hashtag Islam: How Cyber-Islamic Environments Are Transforming Religious Authority* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018); El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics: How Editors and Print Culture Transformed an Intellectual Tradition*.

developed a large-scale historical Arabic corpus derived from Shamela, containing about one billion words from diverse historical periods, and used it for computational analysis of Arabic textual history. This shows that digital Islamic heritage is increasingly used not only by students of religion, but also by researchers in corpus linguistics, digital humanities, historical Arabic studies, and computational text analysis.²⁴ The transformation is therefore methodological as well as pedagogical: *turāth* becomes available for forms of analysis that were difficult or impossible within manuscript or print cultures alone.

However, this transformation also creates epistemic risks. Searchability may encourage learners to treat Islamic knowledge as a set of retrievable answers rather than as a disciplined tradition of inquiry. Keyword retrieval can make it easier to locate a phrase, ruling, narration, or theological statement, but it does not automatically provide the interpretive framework required to understand its meaning, reliability, genre, historical context, or place within a broader scholarly debate. This is especially important because Islamic intellectual traditions often rely on commentary, disagreement, qualification, and layered interpretation. A passage taken from a book of jurisprudence, theology, hadith commentary, or Qur'anic exegesis may be misunderstood when separated from its authorial intention, disciplinary conventions, and interpretive history.

The logic of digital platforms further intensifies this problem. Platform studies show that digital infrastructures do not merely store content; they shape how content becomes visible, searchable, classifiable, and socially meaningful.²⁵ Applied to *turāth*, this means that the learner's encounter with Islamic heritage is mediated by interface design, search ranking, categories, metadata, and platform affordances. The most accessible text is not necessarily the most pedagogically appropriate text; the most searchable passage is not necessarily the most contextually representative passage; and the most frequently retrieved answer is not necessarily the most methodologically sound interpretation. Digital platforms therefore reorganize the hierarchy of access and attention within Islamic knowledge.

This finding also refines digital religion scholarship. Bunt's concept of cyber-Islamic environments explains how digital technologies reshape Muslim access to religious knowledge and challenge inherited models of authority.²⁶ Campbell and Evolvi argue that digital religion research must examine how religious practices are adapted to digital environments and how digital culture informs offline religious life.²⁷ The present analysis extends these arguments by showing that the digital transformation of Islam is not limited to online preaching, identity, piety, or religious community. It also affects the internal architecture of Islamic intellectual tradition itself. Digital platforms reshape how *turāth* is accessed, categorized, searched, excerpted, compared, and pedagogically received.

This does not mean that digital *turāth* necessarily weakens Islamic intellectual tradition. On the contrary, digital platforms may significantly strengthen Islamic learning by expanding access to rare texts, supporting comparative research, enabling multilingual study, assisting students in locating

²⁴ Yonatan Belinkov et al., "Shamela: A Large-Scale Historical Arabic Corpus" (arXiv, 2016), <https://arxiv.org/abs/1612.08989>.

²⁵ Gillespie, *Custodians of the Internet: Platforms, Content Moderation, and the Hidden Decisions That Shape Social Media*.

²⁶ Bunt, *Hashtag Islam: How Cyber-Islamic Environments Are Transforming Religious Authority*.

²⁷ H A Campbell and L Connelly, "Religion and Digital Media: Studying Materiality in Digital Religion," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Religion and Materiality*, 2020, 471–86, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118660072.ch25>.

sources, and preserving materials that might otherwise remain inaccessible. Digital libraries can also support institutions, scholars, and students who lack physical access to major manuscript collections or specialized academic libraries. For Muslim communities across different regions, including diaspora communities, digital access to *turāth* can help sustain intellectual continuity beyond local educational constraints. The problem is therefore not digitalization itself, but whether digital access is accompanied by interpretive guidance, source criticism, contextual explanation, and responsible pedagogy.

The methodological implication of this finding is that researchers should not analyze digital Islamic learning materials only as digitized texts. They must be studied as platformed knowledge objects. A classical text in a manuscript, printed edition, digital library, PDF archive, mobile application, or searchable database does not function in exactly the same way. Each form produces different practices of reading, citation, retrieval, comparison, and interpretation. Therefore, the study of digital *turāth* requires a method that combines Islamic intellectual history, textual analysis, digital methods, platform analysis, and pedagogy. This approach prevents researchers from reducing *turāth* either to timeless textual content or to ordinary online information.²⁸

For *Islamicate Futures*, the implication is significant. Future-oriented Islamic studies must examine not only how Muslim societies preserve inherited knowledge, but also how they govern its digital circulation. The future of religious learning will depend on whether digital knowledge infrastructures can maintain the depth, plurality, and ethical responsibility of *turāth* while making it accessible to wider publics. If digital platforms are developed without pedagogical safeguards, *turāth* may be fragmented into searchable pieces detached from scholarly formation. If governed responsibly, however, digital infrastructures can become powerful tools for intellectual renewal, public Islamic literacy, transnational learning, and the preservation of Islamic knowledge in changing technological conditions.

Table 1 summarizes the main forms of *turāth* re-mediation in digital Islamic knowledge platforms. The table is not intended to reduce *turāth* to technology, but to clarify how different digital forms reorganize the relation between Islamic heritage, learners, and knowledge infrastructures.

Table 1. Forms of *Turāth* Re-Mediation in Digital Islamic Knowledge Platforms

Digital form	Example of evidence	Knowledge transformation	Analytical implication
Digital library	Searchable Arabic-Islamic books in platforms such as al-Maktaba al-Shamela	Texts become accessible as databases	<i>Turāth</i> shifts from inherited textual corpus to searchable knowledge infrastructure.
Online archive	Categorized religious texts, authors, disciplines, and resources	Knowledge becomes indexed and modular	Learners access tradition through categories, keywords, and metadata.

²⁸ Highfield and Leaver, “Instagrammatics and Digital Methods: Studying Visual Social Media, from Selfies and GIFs to Memes and Emoji.”

Mobile application	Portable Islamic texts, lessons, and references	Learning becomes personalized, mobile, and repeatable	Religious study moves beyond formal institutional learning spaces.
Search engine interface	Keyword-based retrieval across books and topics	Passages become detachable from textual and pedagogical context	Access increases, but interpretive depth may weaken without guidance.
Digital annotation or summary	Short explanatory notes, summaries, and learning modules	Complex tradition becomes condensed and pedagogically simplified	Learning becomes faster, but more vulnerable to reduction and decontextualization.
Computational corpus	Large-scale Arabic-Islamic textual datasets used in digital humanities	<i>Turāth</i> becomes analyzable through computational methods	Islamic intellectual history can be studied through new forms of textual comparison and corpus analysis.

Table 1 demonstrates that digital re-mediation operates at several levels: access, organization, mobility, retrieval, simplification, and computational analysis. These levels show that the transformation of *turāth* is not merely technical. Digital platforms reshape the material, epistemic, and pedagogical conditions through which Islamic intellectual heritage is accessed and learned. The central analytical point is that digital platforms do not simply preserve Islamic intellectual tradition; they reorganize how *turāth* becomes visible, searchable, teachable, and interpretable in contemporary Muslim knowledge environments.

From Teacher-Centered Transmission to Platformed Religious Learning

The second major finding is that digital knowledge reshapes the classical pedagogical relationship between text, teacher, learner, and institution. Islamic learning has historically depended not only on access to books, but also on disciplined reading, teacherly guidance, ethical formation, commentary, debate, memorization, authorization, and sustained participation in scholarly communities. In this tradition, knowledge is not merely information to be acquired; it is cultivated through pedagogical relationships, ethical discipline, and structured learning environments. Digital learning environments, however, increasingly allow learners to access Islamic knowledge directly through videos, podcasts, online courses, lecture clips, religious applications, digital classrooms, Qur’anic learning platforms, and self-directed searches. This transformation changes the social structure of religious learning from teacher-centered transmission into platformed learning ecologies in which teachers remain important, but the conditions of access, sequencing, interpretation, and reception are increasingly mediated by digital infrastructures.²⁹

This transformation should not be interpreted as the disappearance of teachers or institutions. Many scholars, universities, mosques, pesantren, madrasas, Islamic organizations, and religious education initiatives now use

²⁹ Holger Daun and Reza Arjmand, eds., “Handbook of Islamic Education” (Springer, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64683-1>; Abdullah Sahin, “The Future of Islamic Education: A Case for Reform,” *RE Today* 33, no. 3 (2016): 61–64; Md Kabir, Md Rayhan Kabir, and Redwan S Islam, “Islamic Lifestyle Applications: Meeting the Spiritual Needs of Modern Muslims” (arXiv, 2024), <https://arxiv.org/abs/2402.02061>.

digital media to extend their pedagogical reach beyond physical classrooms and local communities. Online platforms can connect teachers with geographically dispersed students, support diaspora Muslim learning, provide flexible access to lessons, preserve lectures for repeated study, and enable learners to follow structured or semi-structured programs that would otherwise be inaccessible. In this sense, digital media can strengthen Islamic education by widening access to religious learning. However, digital platforms also change how teacherly authority is encountered and evaluated. A learner may follow a preacher without knowing the preacher's scholarly formation, consume short clips without completing a structured curriculum, compare conflicting explanations without methodological guidance, or treat popular content as pedagogically sufficient. The issue, therefore, is not whether teachers remain present, but whether their pedagogical authority is preserved, fragmented, or reconfigured in platformed learning environments.³⁰

This shift is visible in the expansion of Islamic learning through digital applications and online educational tools. Studies on Islamic lifestyle applications show that Muslim users increasingly depend on mobile platforms for ritual practice, motivation, religious reminders, learning support, and access to Islamic information. However, such applications do not always provide sufficient support for deeper learning, social connection, or scholar consultation. Kabir, Kabir, and Islam found that many Islamic lifestyle applications still lack features that adequately support autonomy, competence, relatedness, comprehensive learning, and access to scholarly guidance.³¹ This evidence suggests that digital Islamic learning is not merely a matter of content availability. It also depends on whether platforms are pedagogically designed to guide learners, connect them with reliable authority, and support meaningful religious formation.

The emergence of web-based Islamic learning tools further illustrates this transformation. Marenda, Nasikun, and Wibowo developed "Digitory," a web-based application for Islamic history learning that uses time-based and location-based navigation to help learners access historical narratives through interactive digital pathways.³² Although this example focuses on Islamic history rather than the full range of Islamic sciences, it demonstrates a broader pedagogical shift: learners increasingly encounter religious knowledge through interface design, navigation systems, digital maps, semantic relationships, and interactive access. Such tools can make religious learning more engaging and accessible, but they also show that digital pedagogy is shaped by technological architecture. The platform does not simply deliver Islamic knowledge; it organizes the learner's path through that knowledge.

This transformation modifies the role of the teacher. In classical Islamic learning, teachers functioned not only as transmitters of information, but also as interpreters, evaluators, ethical models, and guardians of disciplinary context. They guided learners through difficult texts, clarified ambiguities, situated opinions within scholarly debates, corrected misunderstanding, and cultivated intellectual humility. In platformed learning environments, some of these functions are preserved when online courses include structured curricula, live interaction, teacher feedback, reading assignments, mentoring, and scholarly supervision. However, these functions may be weakened when learning is

³⁰ Elhadi A Al Ghawail, Sadok Ben Yahia, and Mohamed A Alrshah, "Challenges of Applying E-Learning in the Libyan Higher Education System" (arXiv, 2021), <https://arxiv.org/abs/2102.08545>.

³¹ Kabir, Kabir, and Islam, "Islamic Lifestyle Applications: Meeting the Spiritual Needs of Modern Muslims."

³² Dinda Ayu Marenda, Ahmad Nasikun, and Catur P Wibowo, "Digitory, a Smart Way of Learning Islamic History in Digital Era" (arXiv, 2016), <https://arxiv.org/abs/1607.07790>.

fragmented into short videos, motivational clips, isolated quotations, or self-directed searches. The pedagogical question is therefore not whether digital learning has teachers, but whether digital platforms preserve the teacher's role as guide, contextualizer, and ethical authority.

The transformation also changes the status of learners. Digital learners are no longer only students located within a classroom, halaqa, pesantren, madrasa, mosque, university, or study circle. They are also platform users who browse, select, pause, replay, save, share, comment, compare, and move between multiple sources of religious knowledge. This gives learners greater agency and flexibility, but it also places greater interpretive responsibility on them. A learner may construct a personal Islamic curriculum from different platforms without knowing how those materials relate to disciplinary hierarchy, madhhab difference, theological orientation, or scholarly method. In this context, Islamic learning becomes more personalized, but also more vulnerable to fragmentation. Learners need not only access to digital content, but also religious literacy, source evaluation, and awareness of scholarly method.³³

The Indonesian context provides an important empirical illustration of this shift. Studies on Indonesian digital Islam show that social media has become a productive space for Islamic learning, religious populism, and the reconfiguration of authority, where established scholars and institutions coexist with popular preachers, influencers, and media-savvy Islamic actors.³⁴ In this context, religious learning increasingly takes place through Instagram posts, YouTube sermons, TikTok clips, WhatsApp groups, online *kajian*, podcast discussions, and short motivational religious content. These media forms do not simply transmit Islamic teachings; they reshape the style, pace, emotional tone, and public reception of religious knowledge. A short lecture clip may circulate more widely than a long teacher-guided study session, and a charismatic preacher may become more visible than a formally trained scholar because platform culture rewards clarity, emotional immediacy, and public engagement.³⁵

This Indonesian pattern reveals that platformed religious learning is not only a technological phenomenon, but also a social and cultural formation. Learners do not simply consume religious knowledge; they participate in its circulation by reposting lecture clips, commenting on religious advice, sharing quotations, debating interpretations, and recommending teachers or channels to others. This creates a new form of public pedagogy in which audiences become secondary mediators of Islamic knowledge. Such participation can support wider Islamic literacy and peer learning, but it can also amplify partial understanding, decontextualized quotations, affective polarization, or unverified religious claims. Digital religious learning therefore requires a stronger culture of scholarly literacy: learners must know not only what to study, but also how to evaluate sources, authority, context, method, and pedagogical reliability.

This finding refines contemporary debates in Islamic education by showing that the future of religious learning cannot be understood only through curriculum reform, institutional modernization, or access to online resources. It must also be

³³ Muhammad Ridwan Rizqullah, Ayu Purwarianti, and Alham Fikri Aji, "QASiNa: Religious Domain Question Answering Using Sirah Nabawiyah" (arXiv, 2023), <https://arxiv.org/abs/2310.08102>; Sahin, "The Future of Islamic Education: A Case for Reform."

³⁴ Solahudin and Fakhruroji, "Internet and Islamic Learning Practices in Indonesia: Social Media, Religious Populism, and Religious Authority."

³⁵ Eva F Nisa, "Social Media and the Birth of an Islamic Social Movement: ODOJ (One Day One Juz) in Contemporary Indonesia," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 46, no. 134 (2018): 24–43, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2017.1416758>.

understood through the redistribution of pedagogical authority across teachers, learners, digital applications, social media platforms, and public audiences. Islamic education in digital contexts is no longer organized exclusively around the formal classroom or the traditional study circle. It increasingly occurs across hybrid spaces where formal instruction, informal learning, popular preaching, app-based reminders, user participation, and algorithmically visible content overlap. This hybrid condition challenges Islamic education to develop models that preserve ethical formation, scholarly depth, and pedagogical sequence while responding to the flexibility and accessibility demanded by contemporary learners.

At the same time, platformed religious learning must be understood as an ambivalent development. On the positive side, it expands access for learners who cannot attend formal institutions, live in minority or diaspora settings, face economic or geographic barriers, or seek flexible learning alongside work and family obligations. It also allows lectures to be preserved, revisited, translated, and shared across communities. On the negative side, platformed learning may weaken curriculum continuity, reduce complex disciplines into short content, blur the difference between trained scholarship and popular religious performance, and encourage learners to rely on fragmented learning pathways. Thus, digital Islamic learning produces both democratization and disorientation: it opens knowledge to wider publics while also requiring new forms of pedagogical governance.³⁶

The methodological implication of this finding is that researchers should not study digital Islamic learning only by analyzing the doctrinal content of lectures, applications, or courses. A more adequate analysis must examine the entire learning ecology: the teacher profile, institutional affiliation, course sequence, interface design, video format, user pathway, comment section, sharing practices, mobile affordances, and the relationship between online learning and offline religious formation. This approach is especially important because platformed learning makes the boundary between formal education, informal piety, religious entertainment, and public pedagogy increasingly difficult to separate. For Islamic studies and Islamic education research, this means that textual analysis must be combined with pedagogical analysis, platform observation, and attention to learner practices.³⁷

For *Islamicate Futures*, this finding is significant because the future of Islamic learning will not be determined only by the survival of classical texts or the expansion of online access. It will also depend on the ability of Muslim institutions, scholars, and educators to design digital learning environments that preserve depth, sequence, context, and ethical formation. The challenge is to build digital religious learning models that combine accessibility with scholarly responsibility. If digital platforms operate only according to speed, popularity, and convenience, Islamic learning may become fragmented and shallow. If they are shaped by responsible pedagogy, however, they can become powerful tools for transnational learning, public Islamic literacy, lifelong education, and the renewal of Islamic intellectual traditions in contemporary Muslim societies.³⁸

To clarify this transformation, Figure 1 presents an analytical model of the shift from classical Islamic learning to platformed religious learning. The figure does not suggest that digital platforms replace teachers or institutions. Rather, it

³⁶ Rizqullah, Purwarianti, and Aji, “QASiNa: Religious Domain Question Answering Using Sirah Nabawiyah.”

³⁷ Marenda, Nasikun, and Wibowo, “Digitory, a Smart Way of Learning Islamic History in Digital Era”; Sahin, “The Future of Islamic Education: A Case for Reform.”

³⁸ Daun and Arjmand, “Handbook of Islamic Education”; Kabir, Kabir, and Islam, “Islamic Lifestyle Applications: Meeting the Spiritual Needs of Modern Muslims.”

shows that pedagogical authority is redistributed across texts, teachers, platforms, learners, applications, and digital publics.

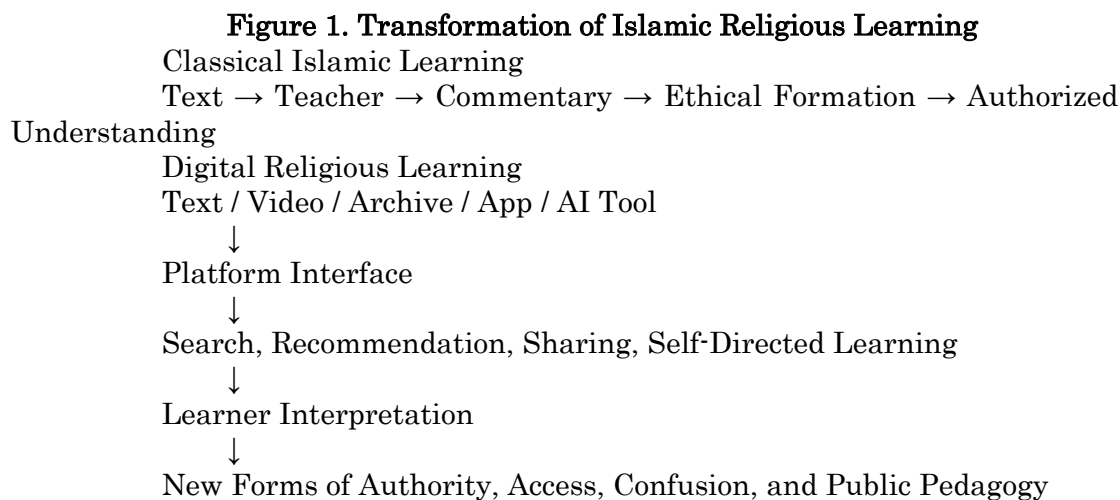


Figure 1 demonstrates that digital learning does not eliminate Islamic pedagogy, but it redistributes pedagogical authority across multiple actors and infrastructures. In the classical model, the teacher mediates the relation between text and understanding through commentary, discipline, and ethical formation. In the digital model, the learner encounters knowledge through a wider ecology that includes applications, course platforms, interface design, lecture archives, recommendations, and public participation. This redistribution creates new possibilities for access and public learning, but also new risks of fragmentation, decontextualization, and weak scholarly supervision.

The central analytical point is that the transformation from teacher-centered transmission to platformed religious learning is not simply a technological change. It is a restructuring of Islamic pedagogy, authority, and learning practice. Digital environments extend the reach of teachers and institutions, but they also relocate part of the learning process into platform infrastructures and user-driven pathways. The future of religious learning therefore depends on whether Muslim educational actors can transform digital platforms into ethically guided, intellectually disciplined, and pedagogically responsible spaces for Islamic knowledge.

Fragmentation, Simplification, and the Epistemic Risks of Digital Islamic Knowledge

The third major finding is that digital Islamic knowledge expands access to *turāth*, but it also increases the risk of fragmentation, simplification, and decontextualized interpretation. Classical Islamic intellectual traditions often require slow reading, commentary, comparison, methodological discipline, teacherly guidance, and awareness of legitimate disagreement. Digital media, by contrast, tend to favor speed, brevity, visual clarity, searchability, portability, and immediate usefulness. As a result, complex theological, legal, philosophical, ethical, or exegetical discussions may be reduced into short captions, video clips, infographics, searchable excerpts, app-based reminders, automated summaries, or simplified answers. This does not mean that digital learning is inherently superficial, but it does mean that digital formats reshape the form, depth, sequence, and reception of religious understanding.

This finding is visible in the way digital Islamic knowledge is increasingly accessed through search interfaces, short-form religious content, online question-answering systems, lecture clips, and Islamic mobile applications. In digital libraries, learners may search for a single term across thousands of texts without necessarily reading the larger work, commentary tradition, or disciplinary context in which the term appears. In social media environments, religious knowledge often appears as short statements, moral reminders, visual quotes, or compressed explanations designed for rapid circulation. In AI-assisted or application-based learning environments, religious information may be summarized, categorized, recommended, or retrieved according to user convenience rather than pedagogical sequence. These examples show that the problem is not merely the presence of digital media, but the way digital formats reorganize attention, interpretation, and authority in Islamic learning.³⁹

This finding refines mediatization theory by showing that media do not only transform the public visibility of religion; they also transform the internal form of religious learning. Hjarvard argues that media reshape religious authority by imposing their own formats, temporalities, and communicative expectations upon religious communication.⁴⁰ In the case of digital Islamic learning, these expectations include brevity, immediacy, clarity, affective appeal, visibility, and shareability. A long commentary tradition may become a short explanation; a complex juristic disagreement may become a binary ruling; a layered theological debate may become a motivational quote; and a teacher-guided text may become a decontextualized search result. Platformization further intensifies this problem because algorithms, interfaces, categories, and search functions shape which materials become visible and how users encounter them.⁴¹

The issue of fragmentation is especially important because *turāth* is not only a body of inherited texts, but also a tradition of interpretive relationships. Classical Islamic knowledge depends on connections between text and commentary, source and method, teacher and learner, debate and discipline, law and ethics, theology and spirituality, memory and understanding. Digital access may weaken these relationships when learners encounter isolated passages without knowing their genre, authorial context, school affiliation, historical debate, or interpretive limits. A learner may retrieve a legal statement without understanding its madhhab framework, quote a theological claim without knowing its polemical context, or circulate a hadith-related statement without being able to evaluate its authenticity, commentary, or usage. In this sense, fragmentation is not simply a technical feature of digital media; it is an epistemic risk for religious learning.⁴²

This finding also extends scholarship on Islamic intellectual tradition. Ahmed emphasizes the complexity and ambiguity of what counts as “Islamic,” while Bauer highlights ambiguity as a significant feature of Islamic intellectual culture.⁴³ Digital simplification may weaken this ambiguity by privileging clarity, certainty, and quick answers. The epistemic risk is not merely that learners receive inaccurate information, but that they may lose awareness of interpretive

³⁹ Al-Maktaba al-Shamela, “Al-Maktaba Al-Shamela,” July 9, 2026, <https://shamela.ws/>; Belinkov et al., “Shamela: A Large-Scale Historical Arabic Corpus.”

⁴⁰ Hjarvard, “Mediatization and the Changing Authority of Religion.”

⁴¹ Gillespie, *Custodians of the Internet: Platforms, Content Moderation, and the Hidden Decisions That Shape Social Media*; Poell, Nieborg, and van Dijck, “Platformisation.”

⁴² Ahmed, *What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic*.

⁴³ Thomas A4 - Biesterfeldt Bauer Hinrich A4 - Tunstall, Tricia, *A Culture of Ambiguity: An Alternative History of Islam* (Columbia University Press, 2021), <https://cup.columbia.edu/book/a-culture-of-ambiguity/9780231170659>; Bauer, *A Culture of Ambiguity: An Alternative History of Islam*.

plurality, scholarly disagreement, textual layering, and historical context. Islamic intellectual traditions often preserve disagreement not as a weakness, but as part of the discipline of knowledge. Digital formats, however, may encourage learners to prefer definitive statements over interpretive nuance. In this respect, digital Islamic learning may unintentionally narrow the intellectual plurality that has historically characterized *turāth*.

The risk of simplification becomes more visible in short-form digital religious content. Platforms built around short videos, captions, infographics, and shareable reminders encourage religious knowledge to be expressed in concise, emotionally resonant, and visually memorable forms. Such formats may be pedagogically useful when they introduce basic concepts, motivate learners, or guide users toward further study. However, they become problematic when complex knowledge is reduced into detached statements without source explanation, methodological framing, or awareness of disagreement. A short video may help learners become interested in a topic, but it cannot replace sustained engagement with texts, teachers, commentaries, and structured learning. Thus, simplification is not inherently harmful; it becomes epistemically risky when it replaces rather than supports disciplined learning.⁴⁴

Algorithmic recommendation further complicates this problem. Digital platforms often make religious knowledge visible through popularity, engagement, user history, search optimization, and platform-specific ranking systems. Gillespie argues that platforms shape public discourse through hidden decisions about moderation, visibility, and content governance.⁴⁵ Poell, Nieborg, and van Dijck similarly show that platformization reorganizes cultural practices through digital infrastructures and data-driven logics.⁴⁶ Applied to Islamic learning, this means that the most visible content is not always the most reliable, contextually grounded, or pedagogically appropriate. Learners may encounter Islamic knowledge according to what is engaging, popular, or algorithmically recommended, rather than according to scholarly sequence, interpretive reliability, or educational need.

AI-assisted religious knowledge introduces another layer of epistemic risk. Tools that retrieve, summarize, translate, or answer religious questions may support access to Islamic knowledge, especially for learners who need quick orientation or multilingual assistance. However, AI-supported systems may also flatten disagreement, hallucinate references, detach texts from context, or present probabilistic outputs as if they were authoritative religious explanations. Research on Islamic question-answering systems such as QASiNa demonstrates the growing interest in religious-domain natural language processing, while research on Islamic lifestyle applications shows that digital tools increasingly serve Muslims' religious and spiritual needs but may still lack adequate features for deeper learning, scholarly consultation, and community connection.⁴⁷ These developments suggest that AI can assist religious learning, but it must be governed by human scholarly review, transparent disclosure, and pedagogical safeguards.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Solahudin and Fakhruroji, "Internet and Islamic Learning Practices in Indonesia: Social Media, Religious Populism, and Religious Authority."

⁴⁵ Gillespie, *Custodians of the Internet: Platforms, Content Moderation, and the Hidden Decisions That Shape Social Media*.

⁴⁶ Poell, Nieborg, and van Dijck, "Platformisation."

⁴⁷ Rizqullah, Purwarianti, and Aji, "QASiNa: Religious Domain Question Answering Using Sirah Nabawiyah"; Kabir, Kabir, and Islam, "Islamic Lifestyle Applications: Meeting the Spiritual Needs of Modern Muslims."

⁴⁸ Cukurova, "The Interplay of Learning, Analytics, and Artificial Intelligence in Education: A Vision for Hybrid Intelligence."

The problem, therefore, is not digital access itself, but unguided access. Digital tools can help learners search, compare, store, translate, and revisit Islamic materials. They can support students who lack physical access to libraries, teachers, or institutions. They can also help preserve Islamic knowledge and expand its availability across languages and regions. Yet access without method can produce shallow confidence. A learner may feel informed because materials are easily available, while lacking the interpretive skills required to evaluate sources, distinguish genres, recognize scholarly disagreement, or understand the limits of a digital summary. This condition shows why digital religious learning requires not only digital literacy, but also epistemic literacy: the ability to understand how Islamic knowledge is produced, transmitted, qualified, and responsibly interpreted.⁴⁹

The Indonesian case again provides an important illustration. Social media has become a major arena for Islamic learning, moral advice, Qur'anic motivation, religious lifestyle content, and public religious debate. Studies of Indonesian digital Islam show that platforms can support piety, learning, and community, but they also encourage the rise of popular religious authority, affective communication, and religious populism.⁵⁰ In such contexts, learners may encounter Islamic knowledge not through a structured curriculum, but through emotionally compelling content, viral explanations, charismatic speakers, and peer circulation. This can strengthen public Islamic literacy, but it can also blur the boundary between serious learning, religious entertainment, motivational communication, and ideological persuasion.

This finding has important theoretical implications. It shows that the digital transformation of *turāth* is not only a question of preservation, access, or dissemination. It is also a transformation of epistemic form. Mediatization theory helps explain how religious learning is shaped by media formats; platform studies explain how infrastructures and algorithms organize visibility; Islamic intellectual history explains why context, commentary, and plurality matter; and Islamic education explains why learning requires formation rather than information alone. By bringing these fields together, this article argues that digital Islamic knowledge must be analyzed as a mediated epistemic environment rather than as a neutral container of religious content.

The methodological implication is equally significant. Researchers should not study digital Islamic knowledge only by collecting online texts or counting digital content. They must examine how the content is formatted, excerpted, recommended, summarized, visualized, circulated, and interpreted by learners. A passage from *turāth* in a searchable database, a quotation card on Instagram, a short YouTube explanation, an AI-generated summary, and a teacher-guided online course may all contain Islamic knowledge, but they do not produce the same pedagogical or epistemic effect. Therefore, research on digital Islamic learning should combine textual analysis, platform analysis, pedagogical analysis, and attention to user pathways. This methodological expansion is necessary because the risks of fragmentation and simplification are not always visible in the content

⁴⁹ Daun and Arjmand, "Handbook of Islamic Education"; Cukurova, "The Interplay of Learning, Analytics, and Artificial Intelligence in Education: A Vision for Hybrid Intelligence."

⁵⁰ Slama, "Social Media and Islamic Practice: Indonesian Ways of Being Digitally Pious"; E F Nisa, "Creative and Lucrative Da'wa: The Visual Culture of Instagram amongst Female Muslim Youth in Indonesia," *Asiascape: Digital Asia* 5, no. 1–2 (2018): 68–99, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22142312-12340085>.

alone; they appear in the relation between content, format, platform, learner, and authority.⁵¹

For *Islamicate Futures*, this finding is central because the future of Islamic learning depends not only on making *turāth* accessible, but also on preserving the conditions that make *turāth* intelligible. Future-oriented Islamic studies must therefore ask how digital platforms can support slow reading, contextual explanation, scholarly disagreement, ethical formation, and disciplined learning in environments dominated by speed, searchability, and automated summarization. If digital Islamic knowledge continues to expand without interpretive safeguards, learners may gain access to more materials while developing weaker capacities for judgment. If digital pedagogy is designed responsibly, however, digital platforms can become tools not only for dissemination, but also for deeper Islamic literacy, comparative learning, and the renewal of intellectual responsibility.

Table 2 summarizes the main epistemic risks and pedagogical safeguards in digital Islamic learning. The table is included because this sub-section develops a comparative argument between digital tendencies, their risks, their impact on learners, and the safeguards needed to preserve responsible engagement with *turāth*.

Table 2. Epistemic Risks and Pedagogical Safeguards in Digital Islamic Learning

Digital tendency	Epistemic risk	Impact on religious learning	Required pedagogical safeguard
Searchability	Texts are detached from context	Learners may read excerpts without method	Contextual notes and guided reading pathways
Short-form video	Complex debates become simplified	Learners may prefer certainty over nuance	Links to longer lessons and source explanation
Algorithmic recommendation	Popularity shapes visibility	Authority may follow engagement rather than scholarship	Source verification and authority markers
AI summarization	Summaries may flatten disagreement or hallucinate sources	Plurality may be hidden or distorted	Human scholarly review and transparent disclosure
Self-directed learning	Learners lack curriculum structure	Knowledge becomes fragmented	Modular curriculum and teacher-supported progression
Visual religious content	Religious ideas become affective and easily shareable	Learners may confuse memorability with reliability	Visual content should be linked to sources and explanations
Application-based learning	Religious practice becomes convenient and personalized	Learning may remain shallow without community or consultation	Apps should include scholarly references, learning pathways, and consultation options

⁵¹ Cukurova, “The Interplay of Learning, Analytics, and Artificial Intelligence in Education: A Vision for Hybrid Intelligence”; Highfield and Leaver, “Instagrammatics and Digital Methods: Studying Visual Social Media, from Selfies and GIFs to Memes and Emoji.”

Table 2 demonstrates that the epistemic risks of digital Islamic knowledge are not caused by digital media alone, but by the absence of pedagogical safeguards. Searchability, short-form video, algorithmic recommendation, AI summarization, and mobile applications can all support religious learning when they are embedded in responsible pedagogical design. However, when they operate without context, source verification, teacherly supervision, or methodological transparency, they may weaken the interpretive depth of *turāth*. The main analytical point is that the digital future of Islamic knowledge requires not only broader access, but also stronger interpretive infrastructures that preserve context, plurality, scholarly responsibility, and ethical learning.

Toward Future-Oriented Islamic Learning: Ethics, AI, and the Governance of Digital Knowledge

The fourth major finding is that the movement from *turāth* to digital knowledge raises future-oriented questions about ethics, artificial intelligence, institutional responsibility, and the governance of Islamic learning. Digital Islamic knowledge is no longer limited to websites, online lectures, digital libraries, or mobile applications. It increasingly includes AI-assisted search, automated translation, text summarization, question-answering systems, recommendation algorithms, retrieval-augmented generation, personalized learning tools, and conversational religious assistants. These technologies may support wider access to Islamic knowledge, but they also raise serious questions about authority, accuracy, bias, privacy, source reliability, accountability, and the boundaries of machine-mediated religious interpretation.⁵²

This finding is directly relevant to *Islamicate Futures* because it shows that the future of Islamic learning will depend on how Muslim institutions govern digital knowledge infrastructures. AI may help classify large Islamic corpora, translate classical texts, support multilingual learning, retrieve relevant passages, generate preliminary summaries, and assist learners in navigating complex materials. In this sense, AI can become a useful auxiliary tool for Islamic education, especially when it supports access, search, translation, and comparative reading. However, AI systems may also generate inaccurate references, flatten interpretive disagreement, ignore school-based differences, reproduce cultural or theological bias, and present probabilistic summaries as if they were authoritative religious knowledge. The central issue is therefore not whether AI can process Islamic texts, but whether it can do so under scholarly, ethical, and institutional safeguards.

The rise of religious-domain question-answering systems illustrates both the promise and the risk of AI-assisted Islamic learning. Research on QASiNa, a religious-domain question-answering dataset based on *Sīrah Nabawiyyah*, shows that Islamic materials are increasingly being adapted for natural language processing and AI-based educational systems.⁵³ More recent work on Fanar-Sadiq, a grounded Islamic question-answering architecture, explicitly recognizes that large language models can answer religious questions fluently but may hallucinate, misattribute sources, or fail to preserve jurisprudential nuance. The project therefore uses retrieval-grounded methods, citation verification, and specialized modules for different Islamic query types, including Qur'anic lookup,

⁵² Rizqullah, Purwarianti, and Aji, "QASiNa: Religious Domain Question Answering Using Sirah Nabawiyyah"; Cukurova, "The Interplay of Learning, Analytics, and Artificial Intelligence in Education: A Vision for Hybrid Intelligence."

⁵³ Rizqullah, Purwarianti, and Aji, "QASiNa: Religious Domain Question Answering Using Sirah Nabawiyyah."

fatwa-style answers, zakat calculation, and inheritance-related questions.⁵⁴ This development confirms that AI can support Islamic learning only when it is constrained by reliable sources, transparent retrieval, and humanly accountable design.

The ethical problem is especially significant because Islamic learning is not merely informational. A religious answer may affect ritual practice, moral conduct, family decisions, financial obligations, theological understanding, and communal trust. If an AI system provides an inaccurate answer about prayer, inheritance, zakat, marriage, lawful and unlawful conduct, or theological belief, the error is not simply technical; it may produce practical, moral, and religious consequences. This distinguishes Islamic AI learning tools from ordinary educational technologies. In this context, accuracy must be understood not only as factual correctness, but also as fidelity to source, interpretive context, scholarly disagreement, and the limits of what a machine can responsibly answer.

Global AI ethics discussions emphasize transparency, accountability, human oversight, fairness, privacy, reliability, safety, and explainability as central principles for responsible AI governance. UNESCO's recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence emphasizes values such as human rights, human dignity, transparency, accountability, privacy, fairness, and inclusive governance.⁵⁵ Similarly, the OECD AI Principles emphasize human-centered values, robustness, transparency, explainability, and accountability as requirements for trustworthy AI.⁵⁶ These global principles are useful, but they must be critically translated into Islamic educational and ethical categories such as *amānah* or trust, *ʿadl* or justice, *maṣlaḥah* or public benefit, *adab* or ethical discipline, *taḥqīq* or verification, scholarly responsibility, and protection of religious understanding.

The concept of *amānah* is especially relevant for governing digital Islamic knowledge. In Islamic ethical terms, knowledge is a trust that must be transmitted responsibly, not merely circulated efficiently. AI systems that retrieve, summarize, or generate Islamic explanations must therefore be designed with explicit awareness that religious knowledge is not neutral data. It carries normative, spiritual, and communal weight. The principle of *amānah* requires that AI tools disclose their limitations, identify their sources, avoid pretending to possess scholarly authority, and clarify whether their outputs are educational, informational, or advisory. Without this transparency, users may mistake machine-generated fluency for scholarly competence.

The principle of *ʿadl* is also central. AI systems may reproduce biases from training data, overrepresent certain schools, marginalize minority interpretations, or simplify intra-Muslim diversity. In Islamic learning, fairness does not mean presenting all views as equally valid without method. Rather, it requires responsible representation of recognized scholarly diversity, clear identification of interpretive scope, and avoidance of distortion. For example, an AI tool that answers questions in Islamic law should not erase the difference between legal schools, local fatwa authorities, minority contexts, or contextual conditions. Justice in AI-mediated Islamic learning therefore requires both technical fairness and

⁵⁴ Umar Abbas et al., "Fanar-Sadiq: A Multi-Agent Architecture for Grounded Islamic QA" (arXiv, 2026), <https://arxiv.org/abs/2603.08501>.

⁵⁵ UNESCO, "Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence" (Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2021), <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381137>.

⁵⁶ OECD, "Corporate Governance and Value Creation" (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2019).

epistemic fairness: the fair representation of Islamic knowledge traditions according to their own disciplinary structures.

The principle of *maṣlaḥah* offers another important ethical framework. AI may serve public benefit by expanding access to Islamic education, helping students search texts, supporting people with limited access to scholars, assisting multilingual learners, and preserving large Islamic corpora. However, public benefit cannot be separated from harm prevention. If AI tools spread inaccurate religious guidance, weaken scholarly authority, violate user privacy, or encourage unverified self-fatwa practices, their benefits become ethically compromised. Therefore, AI use in Islamic learning should be evaluated not only by efficiency and accessibility, but also by its impact on trust, understanding, religious responsibility, and communal welfare.

The concept of *adab* further shows why Islamic AI governance cannot be reduced to technical safety. In Islamic intellectual traditions, *adab* refers not only to manners, but also to the ethical discipline of learning, speaking, interpreting, and transmitting knowledge. AI systems cannot possess *adab* in the human sense because they do not have moral consciousness, spiritual responsibility, or embodied accountability. However, AI learning environments can be designed to support *adab* by encouraging careful reading, source verification, humility before scholarly disagreement, and referral to qualified teachers when questions exceed informational support. A future-oriented Islamic learning system should therefore not only answer questions quickly but also teach users how to approach knowledge responsibly.

The governance question is therefore not whether Islamic learning should use digital technology, but under what conditions, with what safeguards, and under whose authority. A future-oriented model of Islamic learning must distinguish between digital tools that assist learning and technologies that claim interpretive authority without scholarly accountability. AI may support retrieval, classification, translation, summarization, indexing, and preliminary explanation, but it cannot replace the pedagogical responsibility of teachers, scholars, institutions, and interpretive communities. This finding extends digital religion studies by showing that the future of religion online is not only about identity, piety, visibility, or media practice, but also about knowledge governance, educational ethics, and institutional accountability.⁵⁷

Institutional responsibility is crucial because individual users cannot be expected to solve all problems of AI-mediated Islamic knowledge on their own. Muslim universities, fatwa councils, Islamic educational institutions, pesantren, madrasas, digital library projects, and scholarly organizations need to develop standards for source selection, citation transparency, review procedures, data protection, theological scope, and human supervision. AI tools designed for Islamic learning should identify whether their sources are Qur'anic texts, hadith collections, classical commentaries, legal manuals, contemporary fatwas, academic literature, or popular online content. They should also indicate when a question requires human scholarly consultation rather than automated response. Such institutional governance can prevent AI from becoming an unregulated substitute for religious authority.

Human oversight must therefore become a non-negotiable principle in digital Islamic learning. In ordinary AI ethics, human oversight is often discussed as a way to ensure accountability, reduce harm, and allow intervention when systems

⁵⁷ Campbell, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*; Campbell and Tsuria, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media*.

fail.⁵⁸ In Islamic learning, human oversight has an additional epistemic and religious function: it protects the interpretive integrity of religious knowledge. Qualified scholars, teachers, and institutions must remain responsible for reviewing how Islamic texts are selected, how disagreement is represented, how religious answers are framed, and how users are directed toward deeper learning. The future of Islamic AI should therefore be scholar-supervised rather than machine-authorized.

Privacy is another important governance issue. Religious questions often involve intimate matters: worship, sexuality, marriage, family conflict, mental distress, financial obligations, doubts of faith, and personal moral struggle. If Islamic learning applications or AI religious assistants collect user data without adequate protection, they may expose sensitive spiritual and personal information. Responsible Islamic AI governance must therefore include clear data policies, privacy protection, minimal data collection, user consent, and safeguards against commercial exploitation. The ethical principle of *amānah* requires that users' religious vulnerabilities not become raw material for surveillance, profiling, or monetization.

This finding also has methodological significance for researchers. Studies of digital Islamic knowledge should not focus only on the content generated by AI systems, but also on the governance architecture behind them. Researchers need to ask: What sources are used? Who verifies the answers? How are disagreements represented? What happens when the system is uncertain? Are users told when the answer is generated by AI? Does the system provide traceable citations? Are there mechanisms for correction, appeal, or scholarly review? How is user data stored? These questions show that the study of Islamic AI requires a combination of Islamic studies, digital religion, AI ethics, platform studies, educational research, and governance analysis.

For *Islamicate Futures*, this finding contributes a future-oriented framework for understanding Islamic learning in the age of AI. The issue is not merely technological adoption, but the ethical shaping of knowledge infrastructures. Islamic intellectual traditions can remain alive in digital environments if AI tools are designed to support rather than replace human learning, if they preserve context rather than flatten complexity, and if they strengthen rather than weaken the relationship between learners, teachers, texts, and institutions. In this sense, the future of *turāth* depends not only on digitization, but on governance: who designs the tools, who verifies the knowledge, who bears responsibility for error, and who protects the learner from misguidance.

A future-oriented model of Islamic learning should therefore include at least six governance principles. First, source transparency: users must know which texts, databases, fatwas, or scholarly materials inform an answer. Second, human scholarly oversight: AI outputs should be reviewed, limited, or supervised by qualified scholars when they address religiously consequential matters. Third, contextual integrity: answers should indicate legal school, genre, historical context, and the presence of disagreement where relevant. Fourth, privacy protection: users' religious questions and personal data must be protected from misuse. Fifth, epistemic humility: AI systems should clearly state uncertainty and avoid presenting themselves as religious authorities. Sixth, pedagogical orientation: AI tools should direct learners toward deeper study, teachers, and reliable institutions rather than encouraging isolated self-interpretation.

⁵⁸ Natalia Díaz-Rodríguez et al., "Connecting the Dots in Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence: From AI Principles, Ethics, and Key Requirements to Responsible AI Systems and Regulation" (arXiv, 2023), <https://arxiv.org/abs/2305.02231>.

The main analytical point is that the future of religious learning depends on the ability of Muslim scholars, institutions, and educators to build ethical digital knowledge systems that expand access while preserving the depth, plurality, and responsibility of *turāth*. AI can help learners navigate Islamic knowledge, but it must not become an autonomous religious authority. Digital Islamic learning will be academically and ethically meaningful only if it is governed by transparency, accountability, scholarly supervision, data protection, and Islamic ethical commitments. The movement from *turāth* to digital knowledge therefore requires not only technological innovation, but also a renewed theory of Islamic knowledge governance for the age of artificial intelligence.

Conclusion

This article has examined the movement from *turāth* to digital knowledge as a major transformation in Islamic intellectual traditions and the future of religious learning. The study has shown that digitalization does not merely preserve or distribute Islamic heritage in new technical formats. Rather, it reconfigures the material, epistemic, pedagogical, and institutional conditions through which Islamic knowledge is accessed, interpreted, authorized, and transmitted. In this sense, the transition from *turāth* to digital knowledge should not be understood as a replacement of tradition by technology, but as a restructuring of Islamic learning through searchable infrastructures, platformed environments, fragmented media formats, and emerging AI-assisted knowledge systems.

The findings answer the research objective by demonstrating four interconnected patterns of transformation. First, digital platforms re-mediate *turāth* by transforming inherited textual heritage into searchable, modular, and database-driven knowledge infrastructures. Second, digital learning environments reshape the classical relationship between text, teacher, learner, and institution by redistributing pedagogical authority across teachers, platforms, applications, learners, and digital publics. Third, the expansion of digital Islamic knowledge produces epistemic risks, especially fragmentation, simplification, decontextualization, and the weakening of interpretive depth when access is not accompanied by scholarly guidance. Fourth, the rise of AI-assisted religious learning introduces urgent questions of ethics, accuracy, privacy, source transparency, human oversight, and institutional governance. Taken together, these findings show that the future of Islamic learning depends not only on wider access to religious knowledge, but also on the quality of the interpretive and ethical infrastructures that guide such access.

The theoretical contribution of this article lies in its integration of Islamic intellectual history, Islamic education, digital religion, mediatization theory, platform studies, and AI ethics into a single analytical framework. By doing so, the article contributes to Islamic studies by conceptualizing *turāth* not only as inherited textual heritage, but also as a living intellectual and pedagogical tradition whose future is increasingly shaped by digital mediation. It also contributes to digital religion studies by shifting attention from online piety, identity, and religious visibility toward the internal epistemic transformation of Islamic knowledge itself. The article therefore advances a future-oriented understanding of Islamic learning in which continuity with tradition and adaptation to digital transformation must be analyzed together.

The academic significance of this study is that it moves beyond both technological optimism and cultural pessimism. Digital platforms can expand access to Islamic knowledge, support transnational learning, preserve large textual corpora, and assist learners who lack direct access to formal institutions.

However, digital environments can also detach texts from context, weaken teacher-guided interpretation, amplify popular but unqualified authority, and reduce complex traditions into simplified or automated answers. The central challenge, therefore, is not whether Islamic learning should enter digital environments, but how digital knowledge can be governed in ways that preserve the depth, plurality, discipline, and ethical responsibility of *turāth*.

The broader implication of this article is that Muslim scholars, educational institutions, digital platform developers, and religious authorities need to treat digital Islamic learning as a matter of knowledge governance. Future Islamic learning systems should not be designed only for speed, accessibility, and convenience, but also for source transparency, contextual integrity, scholarly supervision, privacy protection, epistemic humility, and pedagogical formation. AI can support retrieval, translation, classification, summarization, and preliminary learning, but it should not replace the interpretive authority of qualified teachers, scholars, and institutions. The preservation of *turāth* in the digital age therefore requires not only technological innovation, but also ethical and institutional responsibility.

Future research should examine more specific cases of digital Islamic learning across different Muslim societies, languages, institutions, and platforms. Further studies may investigate how learners actually use digital Islamic resources, how teachers adapt classical pedagogies to online environments, how Islamic institutions govern AI-supported learning tools, and how different traditions of Islamic scholarship respond to automated religious knowledge systems. Comparative research between institutional and popular platforms would also help clarify how authority, pedagogy, and interpretation are negotiated in digital Muslim publics. By pursuing these directions, future scholarship can deepen understanding of how Islamic intellectual traditions may remain intellectually rigorous, ethically responsible, and socially meaningful in an increasingly digital and AI-mediated world.

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