

e-Islam: the Spanish Public Virtual Sphere

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Abstract:

The increasing presence of Islamic content in cyberspace has made it possible for an ever-expanding Muslim public space to be established. This process is connected to the phenomenon of globalisation, which in turn has generated a process of growing glocalisation, wherein content in cyberspace has not only been globalised – making it accessible from any Internet platform around the world – but opening a channel for the expression of local issues. In Spain, institutionalised Islam has found new routes for communication, information and visibilisation with these new technologies. However, as this paper will show, its strategy is based on traditional mass media models of communication, namely the one-way and one-to-many communication models. This leaves room for other types of actors to use strategies based on different communication models: two-way and many-to-many, taking better advantage of the potential in new information and communication technologies to more easily find a niche in Spanish Muslim cyberspace.

Keywords:

public sphere, Muslim minorities, Islam, websites, information and communication technology, Spain

1. Introduction

Hundreds of thousands of individuals start their day using new information and communication technologies to search for information or services in cyberspace[1], where content of all types intermingles via numerous forms of expression[2]. This content has revealed a growing presence of Islam and Muslims expressing their identity, their sense of belonging and their way of understanding Islam through their participation in cyberspace. In the academic world, research and studies in this field are still not very well developed, which is mainly due to two obstacles that have made this task more complicated:

- the rapid expansion and evolution of new information and communication technologies and the appearance of new applications to complement them; and
- the lack of any methodology adapted to these new interactive resources.

Despite this, several authors have approached this topic from different points of view. Dale Eickelman and Jon Anderson (2003), Olivier Roy (2003) and Gary Bunt (2000, 2003, 2009) are among the scholars who have pondered this topic. However, research discussing the Spanish sphere is practically non-existent, despite the growing presence of Islamic content in Spanish in cyberspace.

1.1. Globalisation and new information and communication technologies

The increasing presence of Islamic content in Spanish related to new information and communication technologies falls within the context of globalisation. Indeed, in the first stages of the development of computer communication, the presence of religious content was observed (Campbell 2006). In this respect, globalisation has made it possible for a growing number of users to gain access to any content, regardless of time and space. However, there are many exceptions to this, since several obstacles exist that limit global access to cyberspace, such as the double digital divide and the censorship of new information and communication technologies.

The double digital divide refers to the gap between people with unequal access to new information and communication technologies (Scholz et al. 2008:457-509). This double divide is due to the fact that part of the population does not have access to these new technologies as a result of two main factors. The first factor is related to the geographic area from which the user wishes to gain access to cyberspace; at this time, there is unequal access to the new technologies across large geographic areas. Importantly, this inequality is in relation to the different economic, political and social development of different areas in the world. The second factor is based

on individual social issues. This phenomenon is not associated with a person's geographic situation, since it occurs in all parts of the world. This second digital divide is related to personal characteristics such as age, sex, qualifications and economic conditions.

Censorship results in part from the elements that affect the first factor of the digital divide relating to the social and political characteristics of states; it is not a consequence of their development as states per se, but rather of the desire on the part of state authorities to control the media to which their citizens have access. Controlling the Internet as a means of communication is more complicated than controlling the mass media. The mass media is usually under state control, since it requires considerable financial and technological investment, which is not as significant in the case of the Internet. Although state authorities are less able to censor the Internet, different countries including China and Saudi Arabia do have mechanisms for censoring and blocking cyberspace content[3].

For some researchers, the greater laxity in controlling media content resulting from the appearance of new information and communication technologies has brought about the appearance of a new public sphere in the Muslim world. New ideas are circulating in this new space that are potentially anti-establishment vis-à-vis the central message that has predominated up to now (Eickelman and Anderson 2003). This could entail the appearance of a path "...to the renegotiation and redefinition – if not (re-)invention of religious authority..." (Scholz et al. 2008:465).

1.2. The Islamic virtual public sphere

Beginning as early as the appearance of Web 1.0[4], Islamic content was being produced by users with greater ability to exploit cyberspace, and consumed by users with a growing ability to navigate this space. However, the turning point came with the appearance of Web 2.0 in the early years of the 21st century. The arrival of Web 2.0 produced a fundamental change: the creation of the *prosumer*. The concept of a prosumer merges

the producer and the consumer of a product into a single person. Internet users no longer maintain the classic producer-consumer relationship, but rather now unite both characteristics in one individual. One special characteristic of this definition, from the point of view of economics and consumption, can be transferred to the world of communications, where the equation is similar, with information senders and receivers.

Web 1.0 offered one-way communication, with one sender and many receivers (the one-to-many model). The move to Web 2.0 brought about an essential change in communication, from one-way to two-way communication, while one-to-many, with its single sender and multiple receivers, changed to many-to-many (Eickelman and Anderson 2003). Senders became, in turn, receivers, thus creating the new figure. The user in this role does not only send, but also becomes a receiver, while the user-receiver also sends. This has led to the appearance of countless blogs[5], podcasts (Scholz et al. 2008:457-509), videocasts[6], forums, (El-Nawawy and Khamis 2009) and chatrooms with Islamic content.

Although this development has clearly opened up an expanding space for expression, this does not mean that it has paved the way to global democratisation and revolutionary anti-establishmentarianism, as authors such as Roy (2003) have discussed in detail. Eickelman and Anderson (2003), however, have shown that a public sphere has opened up where new ideas and positions are flowing and that new voices that once could not be heard have found a space on the Internet through blogs, videos, chatrooms and forums. New voices and ideas can now be heard, even if, as Roy has noted, the message is becoming homogenised. Indeed, despite the tendency towards homogenisation, the expansion and proliferation of voices unheard before the appearance of new information and communication technologies can take their message to a global level. In this respect, Internet sites have appeared with positions that distance themselves from Muslim orthodoxy, such as stances that are feminist (<http://feminismeislamic.org/>) or homosexual (<http://amho.es/>), that advocate progressive views and even those that feature preachers with no official studies (<http://amrkhaled.net/newsite/>).

It is possible that this new space for expression is dedicated more to publicity than to debate, as Mohammed El-Nawawy and Sahar Khamis (2009) have noted. These researchers sought key conceptual tools in the works of Jurgen Habermas and Lincoln Dahlberg to reach conclusions regarding the lack of a discursive rational-critical debate, in this way qualifying the concept of an Islamic public sphere. However, it must be added that in part, new information and communication technologies are simply one more form of the media and that, just as occurs with the other mass media (radio, television, the printed press), senders/broadcasters are trying to reach the largest audience possible (Informe Semanal). This could assume some dependence on the public as far as content is concerned, although only to a point, since there is a broad range of material on the Internet that does not share this need and this contribution is, to a large extent, non-profit. Much of this altruistic material is related to blogs, videoblogs and podcasts.

2. e-Islam in Spain

2.1. Methodology

The goal of this paper is to discover the characteristics of the Spanish Islamic virtual public sphere. To this end, an online observation of Islamic sites in Spain was carried out over the last year and the sites were contrasted with the Spanish Islamic institutional panorama in the offline world. Once this comparison was made, an analysis of the characteristics of these online platforms was done, focusing on the users' interaction mechanisms. Another part of the research focused on the search for individual and group platforms in the virtual world and an analysis of the characteristics of their content in order to decode their degree of diversity.

2.2. The glocalisation of the Islamic public sphere

In the context of the new information and communication technologies, where globalisation and transnationality predominate, voices emerged suggesting that the time had come when all content and products would

follow a process of homogenisation[7] as a consequence of globalisation. This globalising homogenisation did not, however, occur as predicted, but rather resulted in a process of glocalisation where local events became global through the media (the combination of global and local produces “glocal”). This study argues that the model of the Islamic virtual public sphere in Spain be inserted into this context, since - despite the transnational aspect and external influences - there is an element of idiosyncrasy in the situation of Muslims in Spain that makes it possible to create a smaller local space, albeit within a globalising context. [8]

2.3. The Islamic virtual public sphere in Spain

The Islamic virtual public sphere is exactly as Jan Scholz described for the general world of Islam on the Internet: “it is not a mere reproduction of structures existing in the “real world”. Dominant authorities within the Muslim world are [...] underrepresented on the World Wide Web.”[9] (Scholz et al. 2008:464).

Indeed, the Islamic public sphere does not merely represent what occurs offline, as is clearly seen in several specific points:

- The large number of personal blogs proliferating in the Spanish Islamic public sphere highlights the capacity for individual participation in the online world. The potential impact of these opinions becomes transnational and global. This reflects the great inclusive capacity of this new emerging sphere with regard to the participation of citizens.
- These differences between the offline and online worlds are also seen in the world of institutionalised Islam. The online sphere reveals the important role of the Spanish Islamic Board (Junta Islámica) and its entire milieu[10] in comparison with other organisations like the Spanish Federation of Islamic Religious Entities (FEERI), which is totally missing from the virtual public sphere, and Union of Islamic Communities in Spain (UCIDE), which is not among the first sites produced by searches, since it

has opted for a blog format. These characteristics do not mirror the process of Muslim institutionalisation occurring in Spain in the offline world, where the importance of UCIDE and FEERI, both of whom signed the Cooperation Agreement between the Spanish State and the Islamic Commission of Spain (CIE) and have acted as intermediaries for the administration for the purpose of monitoring the agreement, is greater than for the Spanish Islamic Board.

- Another aspect to consider is the globalisation of cyberspace, which has led to the increased participation of external actors using the new information and communication technologies in the Spanish Islamic public sphere:

- Some external actors produce Islamic content for consumption in the original language, including websites accessed from Spain in a foreign language or with advanced translation tools.[11]
- Some external actors offer their content translated from another language into Spanish.[12]
- Other external actors influencing the Spanish Islamic virtual sphere are native Spanish speakers who are not addressing Spaniards, but rather residents in their own country of origin.[13] Despite this, these sites are available for any user browsing the Internet from Spain and, since search engines list them among their top results, Spanish users can access these sites while searching for Islamic content.

2.3.1. Institutionalised Islam online

As in the offline world (Bravo 2010), institutionalised Islam has produced a process to create websites that parallels the creation of new groups. Thus, for example, UCIDE not only maintains its website (<http://es.ucide.org/home/>), but has also carried out a process for creating Internet sites and blogs associated with this organisation.[14] The virtual sphere also reflects a trend occurring offline with FEERI, which is undergoing

a process of low representation, since the group's web domain (<http://www.feeri.info/>) is up for sale. It ceased operations in March 2008 (Semanario Islámico 2008), after operating for several years.

At the same time, websites from groups that are not incorporated into the main Spanish Muslim federations or the CIE are being produced. [15] Groups that have decided to create Internet sites include the site of the Valencia Community's Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (CISCOVA <http://www.ciscova.org/>) in 2009,[16] the site for the Islamic Federation of the Autonomous Regions of the Balearic Islands (<http://www.federacionislamica.com/>) created in 2008, and the Federation of Muslim Communities of Castile-La Mancha's site (FECOM <http://www.fecomclm.com/>).

Other types of associations, cultural centres and institutions within institutionalised Islam have also sought a way to reach a greater public despite their small size. This group is very diverse, ranging from mosques offering online information, like the Granada Mosque, which created its own website (<http://www.mezquitadegranada.com/>) in 2008, to women's groups like the Union of Muslim Women in Spain (UMME), which created its own site (<http://umme.es/index1.html>). It is also possible to find websites and blogs from local associations like the website of the Torre Pacheco Islamic Clemency Cultural Association, whose website (<http://www.islamclemencia.org/>) was created in 2010.

One important element to consider when analysing these web sites is that the absence of some key groups like CIE and FEERI in the virtual sphere indicates that this form of media is not a priority for the communication strategies of these organisations. However – and bearing in mind that this medium makes it possible for users to interact and provide feedback on information – the lack of a presence on the Internet also means a lack of proximity, accessibility and interaction for these organisations with their base and with citizens in general, since they are closing the door to this type of communication, despite the relatively low cost of the service.

For organisations that can be found in the virtual sphere, such as those analysed above, it is clear that they are carrying out an experimental communication process. The question that must be asked in this respect, then, is: what type of communication do these organisations offer through their websites?

The UCIDE's website offers their information as if it were a traditional form of mass media like television, radio and the printed press, despite the fact that users can browse their content. The possibility of interaction is blocked for the receiver/user, as the site does not offer any channels for feedback in the communication loop. In this respect, communication is established following the one-way model with one sender and many receivers. The result is a communication model like a notice board on which contents are posted, which in this case is in the virtual sphere, reflecting the traditional communication model with one sender and one or more receivers, with one message and very little dynamism. The same occurs with the UCID Castile-La Mancha blog. The virtual platforms established by UCID Valencia, UCID Catalonia, UCID Murcia, UCID Extremadura and UCID Basque Country allow some minimal participation by users. These platforms let users send e-mails to the administration and post comments on some of the content published by the administrators. CISCOVA, FECOM, the Granada Mosque and the Torre Pacheco Islamic Clemency Cultural Association[17] offer similar options to contact the website administrators using a form. The Islamic Federation of the Autonomous Regions of the Balearic Islands offers an e-mail address to contact the organisation, while UMME offers a consultancy service that can be accessed using e-mail, and the website promises a forum in the future.

In this context, the role of the Spanish Islamic Board and the Webislam website (<http://www.webislam.com/>) merit discussion. The Spanish Islamic Board, despite its relatively low importance in the institutionalising process in Spain (Bravo 2010), maintains the Webislam.com portal. This is one of the most important websites in the Spanish Islamic virtual sphere. [18] Unlike the sites analysed above, Webislam offers an Internet site with more possibilities for interaction. One of the routes for this interaction is using a

form to contact the members of the board of consultants. This mechanism is similar to that offered by the Torre Pacheco Islamic Clemency Cultural Association. However, Webislam's interaction goes further: one part of this website is designed to promote user interaction. This section is divided into nine sections: 'I'm the journalist', 'Surveys', 'Breaking News', 'Most Viewed', 'Most Voted', 'Bulletin', 'Corrections', 'Contact' and 'Chat'.

The 'I'm the journalist' section offers users the chance to work as a journalist, sending in news, comments, opinion articles, videos, and more. Different forms are available to send in these collaborations. The same section invites users to be correspondents or consultants, to report on events, cultural spots, business and associations. Here, it is particularly interesting that the user does not only provide feedback, but also becomes part of the editorial team and has a direct impact on the website's contents. The second section, 'Surveys', lets users participate in successive surveys. The third section, 'Breaking News', presents the latest news stories offered on Webislam. Although it is included in the section established for participation, this particular activity is not interactive, since users cannot affect the content. The fourth and fifth sections, 'Most Viewed' and 'Most Voted', list the news items most often viewed and voted by users. This section is interactive, since this list is created from user participation. The first of these options records the number of times that a certain piece of content has been accessed, while the second lets the user evaluate the content by casting a vote.

The 'Bulletin' section lets users subscribe to, or cancel a subscription to, a news bulletin that is sent by e-mail. This section does not provide any space for significant direct interaction, although it does promote user loyalty, which encourages proximity and indirect interaction. Entering the 'Corrections' section opens a form that the user can send to the website administrators with a proposal to correct some content. The user, then, once again can affect the content. The eighth section is dedicated to contacting the board of consultants mentioned above, while the ninth section, 'Chat', lets users contact other users to exchange impressions and connect. The Webislam forum, which is open to different types of debate, is found in another area of the website. Webislam's broad promotion of participation sets this site apart

from other sites on the Internet promoted by institutionalised Islam and serves as an example of two-way and many-to-many communication.

Despite Junta Islámica's efforts trying to renew its communication platform and style it can be considered that the communication strategies of the Spanish institutionalized organizations are poorly adapted to the new requirements of the Spanish Muslim community. This is because these types of cyber environments are based on a traditional view of media, based on a monolithic top-down view of power (Cambridge 2010), but a great number of Muslims in Spain feel misrepresented by the community leaders and therefore have decided to go online by their own using the potential of the web 2.0 apps.

2.3.2. The rise of new forms of expression

After this analysis of institutionalised Islam, it is time to study the voices rising outside of the institutional setting.[19] This phenomenon is very representative of the virtual sphere and has opened new forms of expression for other types of opinions that have very little presence in the offline public sphere, but in the online public sphere have the potential for global impact. The most notable of these new expressions of online Islam concerns blogs.

Many blogs have been created in the Spanish Islamic virtual sphere. These include examples like Islamgurea (<http://www.islamgurea.blogspot.com/>) by Daud Khan, a Spanish convert, who has also created other blogs: Islamgurea TV (<http://islamgureavideo.blogspot.com/>) and Jardines del Alma (<http://losjardinesdelalma.blogspot.com/>). There are also blogs by individuals connected to the Spanish Islamic Board, such as the blogs posted by Ndeye Andujar (<http://ndeyeandujar.wordpress.com/>) and Abdennur Prado (<http://abdennurprado.wordpress.com/>). All of these blogs are by Muslim converts in the Spanish Islamic virtual sphere as are - as the very names suggest - *Diario de una conversa* (Diary of a Convert), posted by Tasmin Mus (<http://diariodeunaconversa.blogspot.com/>) and *Conversos al Islam* (Converts to Islam) by Zaynatbl (<http://conversosalislam.blogspot.com/>). A large number of these blogs, as can be seen, are created

by individuals using their own names, while others express their opinions in groups, such as Karbala, a blog dedicated to “Shiite Muslims across Spain” (<http://shiahispania.blogspot.com/>). This blog is produced by Pedro González, Jafar Abdellah, Salvador Jafer, Alí and Tawhid and is associated with the Al-Qaim Islamic Centre.

In all of the blogs discussed to this point, the contributions predominantly represent a religious point of view and the world of believers. However, other approaches come from different spheres, such as the blog Araboislámica (<http://www.araboislamica.blogspot.com/>), which is based in a university setting. Nine professors from the University of Alicante connected with Arabic and Islamic studies and Arabic language studies use this forum to put forth their approach to Arabic and Islamic culture and history. The Spanish Islamic virtual sphere also offers examples of websites inscribed within these new forms of expressions of Islam. Examples include the site from Hashim Cabrera, a Muslim convert with connections to the Spanish Islamic Board, who has his own website (<http://www.hashimcabrera.com/>).

Several open forums are also available to discuss topics related to Islam and Muslims. These spaces serve as a meeting point for different opinions, and the debates proposed are extremely diverse. Examples include Mundomusulmanas (<http://mundomusulmanas.creatuforo.com/>), Musulmanas e Islam (Muslims and Islam) (<http://musulmanaseislam.6forum.info/forum.htm>), Foro de musulmanas (Muslim forum) (<http://www.musulmanas.org/foro/index.php>), and Musulmanas Artes Aplicadas (Applied Muslim Arts) (<http://artesanaplicadas.foro.espana.com/portal.htm>). These forums particularly focus on topics relating to women.

This shows that many Muslims in Spain are trying to express their way of understanding Islam and their concerns using a new model of communication bottom-up, because they want to take part in the decision-making process, because a great number of them feel misrepresented by the traditional Spanish Muslims associations. Therefore, Spanish Muslims are creating an interlinking cyber-network trying to create a pluralistic debate arena.

2.3.3. Commercial Islam online

This last section devoted to the different Muslim forms of expression in the Spanish virtual sphere presents commercial variations appearing on the Internet. This form of participation provides a possibility for creating Islamic businesses that currently focus on selling products related to culture and, specifically, to Islamic literature. These initiatives include online bookshops like e-Andalus (<http://www.e-andalus.com/joomla/>) and Islam Libros (<http://www.islamlibros.com/>), as well as Madrasa Editorial (<http://www.madrasaeditorial.com/>). These few initiatives could in the future expand to different areas such as the promotion of Islamic banking online, the sale of *halal* products through new technologies, and Islamic religious products.

3. Conclusions

This study has discussed different topics affecting the Islamic virtual public sphere in Spain. It has shown that this sphere is ruled by the same trends as the offline public sphere, but that there are significant differences that make this a field of special interest. New information and communication technologies offer a public space, but that does not mean that they cease to be a medium for communication. In this respect, the presence and absence of actors in the online sphere make it possible to learn about the groups seeking greater media impact. Here, CIE and FEERI are behind in their media impact using the new technologies, as they are in the public offline sphere. In turn, the presence of different actors and their forms of communication in the Islamic public virtual sphere make it possible to know the perspective of the different actors with respect to the medium itself. It also reveals the relationship between the different actors and potential users and bases, corroborating Malcolm McLuhan's famous saying, "the medium is the message" (McLuhan and Fiore 1967).

Most of the institutionalised Islamic organisations in Spain have chosen to consider only the communicative aspects of the new technologies, as if they were dealing with the mass media, following the one-to-many and one-way models. However, other actors displaced by the institutionalising process,

such as the Webislam and Spanish Islamic Board sites, have opted to use the many-to-many and two-way models. The concern on the part of the administrators of these websites to consider this medium as a fundamental mechanism in their communication strategies can be seen in how they have positioned their sites high on the results pages of the most widely used search engines in Spain. This, of course, means that the site receives more visitors.

Additionally, the adoption of new information and communication technologies has created a public sphere for expressing opinions found outside official channels. It may be that this sphere does not manage to achieve the depth of what Habermas and Dahlberg term a rational-critical public sphere, as El-Nawawy and Khamis suggest, but it does create a space for a diversity of opinions with a potential for global impact, which were limited to a smaller sphere before these new technologies appeared. The appearance of these new forms of expression is contributing a range of different opinions from individuals who could not find a way to express themselves through institutional channels.

This study has shown that institutionalised Islam in Spain uses the one-way and one-to-many communicative model in the Spanish virtual Islamic sphere, making the participation of voices outside the editorial current of these Internet sites impossible. Whether it is because these individuals and groups do not feel represented by these institutions, or because these institutions do not provide channels for expression, this fact has facilitated the appearance of new Muslim voices that have found a niche to communicate their opinions through the new information and communication technologies, thus satisfying a demand that existed before.

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Notes

[1] According to Eurostat 2008, in Spain, 46% of the total population used the Internet to search for information about goods and services. This figure was 50% for the entire European Union population. Eurostat data available from the Ministerio de Industria y Comercio: “*Observatorio Nacional de las Telecomunicación y de la Sociedad de la Información.*” 2010. <<http://www.ontsi.red.es/index.action>>

[2] The contents available through new information and communication technologies are particularly diverse. Some of the different forms of audiovisual communication that can be found thanks to this new technology include Internet sites, blogs, podcasts, videoblogs, e-mail, chatrooms and forums.

[3] In this respect, a sample of information produced in Spain relating to photographs of the March 11 2004 terrorist attack is appropriate here. At that time, Judge Del Olmo ordered the website ogrish.com, where these photos appeared, to be blocked, although they could later be found on other websites and peer-to-peer (P2P) platforms like e-mule. More information can be found at: Noticiasdot.com. “*Imágenes y Videos Del 11-M Siguen En Ogrish.Com.*” November 2004. <http://www.noticiasdot.com/publicaciones/2004/1104/0211/noticias021104/noticias021104-14.htm>

[4] To learn about the difference between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0, as well as the history of the creation of the concept of Web 2.0, see: O’Reilly, Tim. “What is Web 2.0. Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software.” *O’Reilly Media* Sep/30/2005 2005 Web. <<http://oreilly.com/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html#mememap>>

[5] Examples of blogs can be found on the Internet through a simple search that includes the words Islam and blog. However, some authors have already focused on analysing this phenomenon, for example: The Research, Information and Communication Unit. “Estimating Network Size and Tracking Information Dissemination Amongst Islamic Blogs.” (2010)

[6] These examples are from: www.islamictube.net

[7] For a broader reflection on globalisation and glocalisation, see: Klein, Naomi. *No Logo: El Poder De Las Marcas*. Paidós, 2000.

[8] Many studies have shown the differences that affect Muslims in Spain and the external interferences in and influences on the group in Spain. However, neither the globalising context nor the many differences between Muslim groups in the setting should be lost sight of.

[9] For more information on the debate between ‘real’ and ‘virtual’, see Calleja, Gordon. “Virtual Worlds Today: Gaming and Online Sociality.” *Online Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet* 3.1 (2008)

[10] The Spanish Islamic Board sponsors several Internet sites like: <http://www.juntaislamica.org/>; <http://www.alagua.org/>; <http://www.webislam.com/>; <http://www.institutohalal.com/>; and <http://www.vidahalal.com/>, as well as several blogs by their members.

[11] Google Translate, for example, lets users see a translation of the content as if it were the Internet site itself.

[12] A large number of sites with these features exist, such as the Shiite site Al-Islam. org from the Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project at: <http://www.al-islam.org/> which offers a version translated into Spanish at: http://www.al-islam.org/index.php?inl_language=spanish.

[13] One example that illustrates this point is Islam.com.mx from the *Centro Cultural Islámico de México, A.C.*, at: <http://www.islam.com.mx/index.php>.

[14] In their original Spanish: UCIDValencia (<http://www.ucidvalencia.org/>), UCIDCataluña (<http://ucidecatalunya.blogspot.com/>), UCIDMurcia (<http://ucidmurcia.blogspot.com/>), UCIDExtremadura (<http://islamextremadura.blogspot.com/>), UCIDPaís Vasco (<http://assalambilbao.blogspot.com/>), UCIDCastilla-La Mancha (<http://islamancha.blogspot.com/>). This list does not include the websites for UCIDCeuta, UCIDCastilla León, UCIDAragón and UCIDMadrid.

[15] It is important to remember that the Islamic Commission of Spain (CIE) is the Spanish organisation that represents Muslims to the state, and is formed jointly by the UCIDE and the FEERI. This organisation does not have an active website. Doing an Internet search to find this site using the acronym CIE on google.es or es.yahoo.com can produce an error, since a search using CIE produces results linked to the address of the Islamic Community in Spain, which uses the acronym CIE in its site heading, although it is not related to the Islamic Commission of Spain, but to the Granada Mosque (contact data for this website available at: <http://www.cislamica.org/contactanos/index.html>).

[16] Data on creating a website were obtained from the sites themselves. If this information is not available at the site, a search was done at alexa.com to obtain it. If I have not included this information, it is because none of these sources provided it.

[17] The Torre Pacheco Islamic Clemency Cultural Association offers the option of making contact using a form or e-mail. This virtual platform is unique in that it offers the option of sending the question via a form to a specific person at the association, since consultations can be sent directly to an individual.

[18] In the main Spanish search engines, google.es and es.yahoo.com, Webislam.com appears in the top positions if the search is done using the keyword 'Islam'. None of the Internet sites for the associations described in this section are included among the top ten results produced by the search engines if the search is done using the Spanish keywords: 'Islam', 'musulmán' or 'islámico'.

[19] Here, I have considered all of the examples with cyber-Islamic content that are not directly associated with any organisation, although they may have an indirect relationship with organisations and institutions.