



Halal ***pages***

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HALAL INDUSTRY
RESEARCH
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Halal pages

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The Dire Need For A Portal On Halal Matters

A One-Stop Source of Information On the Concept of Halal?



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One possible reason why non-Muslims, in particular, do not understand various Islamic teachings and concepts is the failure of Muslims to explain in a clear and concise manner the meaning and significance of Islamic teachings, concepts or principles that are put across. Explanations using language which is simple and easily understood will help to develop a greater understanding of Islam, its practices and culture.



Another possible reason why some Muslims and most non-Muslims don't know what some things in Islam mean is because of their difficulty in locating appropriate information on the subject concerned. This difficulty is further enhanced because the information being sought after could be scattered in a variety of sources. Some of the sources might not be within easy reach or access. It therefore becomes incumbent on Muslims to take appropriate action to pave the way for a better understanding of Islam.

The potential of the halal industry will be further enhanced if efforts therefore are directed toward the establishment of a one-stop source of information on the concept of halal and its many dimensions in our daily lives. We have the existence of portals on the Internet, which function as gateways to some aspect of knowledge. Portals are not only one stop sources of information but they also lead to other sources of information on the same topic. The scope of a portal has broadened to make their presence necessary and useful. It is proposed that a portal on

halal matters be set up in order to educate the world on the importance of conforming to the concept of halal in our lives. By doing so non-Muslims particularly will appreciate that halal products and services are also good for them in view of hygienic practices and the retention of wholesomeness in halal food products, for example.

To understand better what a portal is the following excerpt from an Internet source will help clarify the concept further:

"Portal is a term, generally synonymous with gateway, for a World Wide Web site that is or proposes to be a major starting site for users when they get connected to the Web or that users tend to visit as an anchor site. There are general portals and specialized or niche portals. Some major general portals include Yahoo, Excite, Netscape, Lycos, CNET, Microsoft Network, and American Online's AOL.com. Examples of niche portals include Garden.com (for gardeners), Fool.com (for investors), and SearchNetworking.com (for network administrators).



A number of large access providers offer portals to the Web for their own user. Most portals have adopted the Yahoo style of content categories with a text-intensive, faster loading page that visitors will find easy to use and return to. Companies with portal sites have attracted much stock market investor interest because portals are viewed as able to command large audiences and numbers of advertising viewers.

Typical services offered by portal sites include a directory of Web sites, a facility to search for other sites, news, weather information, e-mail, stock quotes, phone and map information, and sometimes a community forum. Excite is among the first portals to offer users the ability to create a site that is personalized for individual interest."

It is proposed therefore that a portal on halal matters be set up. The contents of such a portal may, among other things, include the following:-

- **News**

There are ongoing developments in the halal industry and related matters across the world. Keeping track of what goes on and reporting these developments on a regular basis will attract visitors to the site on a repeated basis. Seeking co-operation from various players in the halal industry may make it easier to keep track of developments. News reported should be brief with links to original sources and with RSS facilities to enable browsing and selectively choosing the news to be read.

- **Basic Halal Information**

This section should cater for both Muslims and Non-Muslims, layman and industry players, who wish to know more about what halal means, why it is necessary and how it affects our lives. This section educates all concerned on halal matters. Religious, social and other aspects of what halal is should be covered. The organization of the information should enable easy access to the information with links and references to other sources.

- **Directories**

Facilitating communication links in any industry world spur industry growth at a faster rate. Online directories of organizations and persons dealing with or knowledgeable on halal matters would enable effective inter organizational and inter personal communication across the world. Efforts toward building such world online directories would attract many to visit the website on a regular basis even if subscriptions or charges are levied to access such information.

- **Communities of Practice.**

Sharing of knowledge enhances the learning process, enables discussion of topics among peers, helps to reach a higher level of understanding, stimulates the growth of ideas and benefits all concerned in the sharing process in different ways and degrees. Sharing knowledge on the internet with other people who have similar interest across the world is not just possible but has been practiced in many areas of knowledge and practice. Such sharing of knowledge has been termed as "Communities of Practice".

If the website on halal matters can sponsor such communities on common areas of interest to be established, such a development if properly regulated could revolutionize the halal industry. This will not only facilitate greater learning but also contribute to a faster pace in knowledge growth thereby benefiting society as a whole. Scholars, researchers and halal industry players would be the greatest beneficiaries.

- **Free Publications on the Internet on Halal Matters**

The Internet today is a rich source of information and needs to be mined to extract sources of value. It has many e-books, e-journal and databases on a variety of subjects. Access to many of them is free. These free sources of information should be identified to enable easy access to them via appropriate links.

- **Research on Halal Matters**

There is a need for a single source in the world, which collects information from across the globe on halal research. Such a source of information

will not only avoid duplicate research from being performed but will enhance the research process further. Requests made to potential organizations that conduct research to participate in such a venture may prove to be successful. Information received could be grouped broadly under the following headings.

- Completed Research
- Ongoing Research
- Suggested Areas for Research

Establishing an integrated database of research on halal matters would be an invaluable reference source.

- **A Wiki on Ideas and Innovation**

A wiki is software which allows anyone on the Internet to contribute his knowledge, views or comments on a specific area of interest. Having a wiki to solicit ideas and innovative approaches on the halal industry will harness a fantastic array of thoughts that can help to accelerate the development of the halal industry faster.

Other features of interest may be added to those suggested above to make the halal portal a popular site visited by people from all over the world. This can be enhanced further if the site can be made available in a wide variety of major languages of the world. What is needed is an effort by an organization or group of organizations to undertake the establishment of such a portal.

The Halal Industry Research Centre at the International Islamic University Malaysia is embarking on the development of a portal for Halal matters in April 2009, God willing.