



The Significance of *New Media* in the Pandemic Era of the Covid-19 in Indonesia

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Abstract . This research will discuss about the significance of new media in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic that has hit Indonesia since last year has had an impact on all aspects of people's lives. All sectors are required to adapt to this challenging situation, including the new media sector. New media is a very powerful instrument, with the characteristics of being easily accessible, practical and fast. Likewise, in the era of the covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia, how can new media play an active role in providing all information related to covid so as not to panic and worry the whole community. Therefore, it is important to see how significant new media is in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. By using new media theory and combined with descriptive qualitative methods, it is hoped that this research will be a color and a separate contribution to social and political science in Indonesia.

Keywords: new media, significance, pandemic era.

1 INTRODUCTION

New media, which encompasses the internet, social media, and other digital technologies, has become an integral part of our lives in the modern era. The advancement of information and communication technology has transformed the way we interact, work, learn, and access information. The COVID-19 pandemic era that began in 2019 has significantly accelerated the use of new media. This pandemic has forced many individuals and organizations to rely on online platforms as the primary means of communication, collaboration, and information access.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to physical restrictions, lockdowns, and widespread area closures, limiting people's ability to meet and interact in person. In this situation, new media has become a crucial tool for maintaining social connections, continuing work, and accessing essential resources such as news, health instructions, and entertainment. Social media, video-sharing apps, video conferencing, and collaboration platforms like Zoom, Skype, and Slack have become an integral part of many people's daily lives.

New media provides various communication and information access facilities like never before. The availability of news, medical updates, health guidelines, and rapid

social interactions through social media platforms allows individuals to stay connected and informed in situations of uncertainty, such as a pandemic. Additionally, new media also plays a role in supporting government initiatives and health organizations in educating the public about prevention measures and vaccination.

In this context, the significance of new media in the pandemic era becomes an important research topic. Research on how new media affects public perception of the pandemic, the spread of misinformation, mental well-being, and behavioral adaptation in pandemic situations are relevant aspects to explore. Furthermore, the impact of new media on education, employment, business, and entertainment also requires special attention.

Therefore, this journal aims to deeply examine the significance of new media in the pandemic era. Through interdisciplinary research involving communication, psychology, computer science, and other related fields, this journal will outline the role of new media in changing the way we interact, adapt, and participate in society during the pandemic. With a better understanding of the implications of new media, we can develop more effective strategies in addressing global health crises like pandemics.

2 New Media Theory

In his book "Understanding Media," Marshall McLuhan argued that communication technology plays a crucial role in shaping new social and cultural orders, transitioning from print media to electronic media.[1] This assertion has proven to be true with the emergence of new media (the internet), which now almost dominates all human activities. The internet is not only a source of information but also a source of income for both individuals and organizations.

Presently, media intervenes in our lives more rapidly than ever before, bridging distances between nations. The development of information technology has triggered significant changes in digitalization, where all media content, whether print or electronic, can be merged and distributed. New media theory, developed by Pierre Levy, discusses the evolution of media. In this theory, Pierre Levy presents two perspectives:

1. **Social Interaction Perspective:** This perspective distinguishes media based on their proximity to face-to-face interactions. Pierre Levy views the World Wide Web (WWW) as an open, flexible, and dynamic information environment that allows humans to develop new knowledge orientations and engage in a democratic world of mutual sharing and interactive empowerment.[2]
2. **Social Integration Perspective:** This perspective portrays media not only in terms of information, interaction, or distribution but as rituals or how humans use media to create communities. Media is not just an instrument for information or self-interest but unites us in various forms of societies, fostering a sense of ownership.

In reality, new media specifically deviates in three key ways: first, the internet is not only related to message production and distribution but can also be equated with processing, exchange, and storage. Second, new media serves as both public and private communication institutions and is regulated (or not) appropriately. Third, their

performance is not as structured as professional and bureaucratic mass media. There is a significant difference that emphasizes the fact that new media's relationship with mass media lies in its wide distribution, being essentially available for all types of communication, and at least relatively free from control.[3]

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed in this study is qualitative research, which is a procedure that generates descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from individuals and observable behaviors. In line with this, Strauss and Corbin define it as a procedure to produce findings obtained from data collected through various means, including interviews, documents, books, or even precomputed data for other purposes. Meanwhile, Kenneth defines it as research aimed at providing a detailed description of a phenomenon or depicting what is happening.

The data collection technique used in this study is a literature review. This technique was chosen because the research is based on media, aligning with the focus taken. A literature review is also conducted to find theoretical answers to the required information. With a literature review, information can be obtained not only through social media but also through books, journals, documentation, research reports, magazines, agendas, or mass media. In qualitative research, data analysis can be carried out during the data collection process. One of the methods that can be used in analysis is data triangulation. The data triangulation process involves cross-checking information provided by one informant with other informants or mass media. Thus, the opinions obtained are not just the subjective opinions of one person. In broad terms, the data analysis process can be divided into three stages. First, summarizing and selecting key data, focusing on the needed information and discarding unnecessary data to avoid expanding the analysis. Second, organizing the existing data to facilitate an understanding of what is happening in the field. Third, the conclusion-drawing process in which the researcher understands meaning, patterns, explanations, and sequences. The conclusions drawn can be retested by examining the reality in the field. The expected end product of this research is a portrait of a group that incorporates the researcher's perspective as a participant.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Media as a New Force in the Pandemic Era

In today's era, Virtually everyone possesses a gadget as their source of information, and each of these gadgets is connected to the internet for rapid information retrieval and use, ranging from social networks to news portals and various forms of entertainment. Internet usage knows no age or social status boundaries; everyone can now enjoy it. The rapid availability of information on the internet makes messages conveyed more effectively, and this power is bestowed by new media, namely the internet, which I will explain. Concerning this new mass media, let us first examine what mass media is.

Mass media is a tool used to convey messages from a source to an audience (receiver) using mechanical communication devices such as newspapers, films, radio, and TV.[4]

The use of mass media is closely related to the messages being conveyed, and these messages are referred to as mass communication. According to Gerbner, as cited in Rakhmat, mass communication is the production and distribution based on the technology and institutions of a continuous stream of messages that are most widely held by people in an industrial society.[5] From the definition above, it is evident that mass communication produces a product in the form of communication messages. This product is distributed continuously to a broad audience over a fixed time frame, such as daily, weekly, or monthly.

The process of producing messages cannot be carried out by individuals but must be done by institutions and requires specific technology. Therefore, mass communication is often conducted by industrial society. However, this understanding has now shifted with the advent of new media. In the past, a communication message had to go through an institution to be delivered, but now this is no longer the case. Individuals can convey information without going through an institution; they can simultaneously be informants, journalists, editors, and message conveyors. Because of this, anyone can create their own news that they consider important for themselves or others without going through an institution.

These individuals are usually referred to as Netizens. What are Netizens? Netizens are a combination of two words: Net (internet) and Citizen (a citizen). It is a term for someone who frequently interacts and expresses their aspirations through online media. One could say that Netizens have dual citizenship, in the real world (citizen) and in the virtual world (Netizen). Basically, Netizens engage in three main activities. Communication is the primary activity of those who crave virtual interaction. The media used can be in the form of blogs, websites, emails, chats, Skype, Facebook, and Twitter. Expressing opinions is one of the activities of Netizens. We are free to express our aspirations objectively regarding events in society.

A news story created by Netizens becomes important when the story actually happens and captures the public's attention because it touches their hearts. In this regard, I give an example of a news story that happened some time ago: a Netizen's post on social media featured a video of a young person whose way of speaking resembled the character "Dilan." The video quickly went viral and was followed by many Netizens.

The significant role that media played in introducing Alif to "fame" demonstrates how new media is immensely significant in our society today. A new media outlet has the potential to help or "bring down" others. When a Netizen creates a news story with specific elements that undergoes rapid dissemination without having to go through an institution in every report, the dissemination that occurs can be immediate without a lengthy process. The distribution is considered faster because every Netizen spreads the news quickly, reaching a wide online audience at that very moment. So much so that it reaches the concerned party.

In the case I highlighted, new media plays a crucial role in the era of the pandemic in Indonesia. For two years, Indonesia has been gripped by concerns about this virus or disease as it has claimed thousands of lives. New media is expected to neutralize all its COVID-related news because at that time, the only source or reference for the

Indonesian people was the news presented through the media. During that time, all of the Indonesian society relied solely on information through news and media.

4.2 The Significance Of New Media In The Pandemic Era

As we all know that during the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia, the only thing that the public can rely on at that time is the latest news, information and updates from various sources, especially the government and all of these things are disseminated through new media such as social media and online news. All Indonesian people not only relied on TV to get definite news at that time, but they also actively browsed and searched for themselves through the internet.

New media was very useful and highly expected by the community at that time, especially with the inability to meet face to face with each other. Everyone was confined in their homes, not allowed to leave the house at all, there was no social interaction anywhere and anytime, even to buy food was a difficult thing to do at that time. All are imprisoned in their respective places and only rely on groceries and other necessities as they make. So that the significance of new media was very meaningful at that time in all fields, such as:

- Primary Information Source: New media, especially online news platforms and social media, have become the primary source of information related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Individuals obtain the latest information on virus spread, prevention measures, and vaccination developments through these platforms.
- Communication and Social Connection: New media enables individuals to stay connected with family, friends, and colleagues amid physical distancing measures. Video calls, text messages, and social media help maintain interpersonal communication.
- Education and Health Policies: Governments and health institutions use new media to convey crucial information about health policies, prevention guidelines, and vaccination to the public. Videos, infographics, and social media campaigns are used to raise public awareness.
- Empowerment of Individuals: New media theory emphasizes active participation by individuals in creating content. During the pandemic, many people shared personal experiences, resources, and support through blogs, vlogs, and social media. This fosters strong online communities.
- Growth of Online Businesses: The pandemic has accelerated the growth of online businesses, including e-commerce, video streaming, and food delivery services. The convergence of digital media and online business has become increasingly important in the global economy.

Almost in all lines of social life, new media have their own significance in the pandemic era. As we know that changes in people's habits are also present there and even long before the pandemic. For example, people are more aware of health, people are afraid of death, take good care of children and even parents, always wash their hands wherever and whenever, use masks in every place and all of the above is proven to be still done to this day.[6]

Many things have changed our habits unconsciously in the pandemic era, for example, content creators are increasingly diverse, for example from food bloggers who were only known as Mr. Bondan, when in the pandemic era there were many other food bloggers. Content creators are also mushrooming in the pandemic era, there are more and more YouTubers, everyone has the brain to survive, one of which is by becoming a YouTuber or content creator.

Access to information dissemination is much faster, if on TV or radio there are airing hours, if on social media or online news there are no airtimes, so the information provided will always be updated and up-to-date. For example, such as twitter, Instagram, facebook and all online news media that are competing to provide updated information every second. All online news competes to provide valid and up-to-date news for the entire community.

The use of the internet in the pandemic era is also increasing, all mobile phone providers and internet/wifi providers are competing to provide discounts at that time, because all people need the internet to keep communicating with each other, still be able to work, still be able to go to school, still be able to do business, the point is that the internet at that time was needed by all lines of society to continue to support the running of their lives.[7]

And the most important thing is a massive transformation in the education line, where online learning systems become very important and needed that time. All students from kindergarten to university try to continue to provide the best learning, for example through zoom, teams, e-learning, siakad, digital books, and so on. All schools and universities are struggling to provide all distance learning needs so that all students continue to get good and maximum learning. This was one of the government's focuses at the time. So, the significance of new media in the pandemic era is very useful. Of all that has been explained above, where new media is very useful, functional and useful for all Indonesian people in the pandemic era, and new media is also the only one that can still be a forum that connects many parties and souls. So that the role of new media in the pandemic era is inevitable.

5 Conclusion

New media holds significant importance in the COVID-19 pandemic era, playing a vital role in providing information, facilitating communication, and influencing online consumption patterns. New media theory provides a useful framework for understanding these changes, emphasizing media convergence, active participation, interactivity, and digitalization. Further studies on the impact of new media in the pandemic era can provide additional insights into the role of communication technology in addressing global challenges such as pandemics.

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