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## Information Technology as a Modern Da'wah Media in Indonesia: Prospects and Challenges

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**Abstract:** *The current da'wah media continues to develop along with the development of information technology, this condition poses a challenge for preachers to be careful in choosing da'wah media. Information technology as a digital medium today can be used for various purposes, one of which is as a medium of da'wah, given the rapid development of technology in recent decades. This paper aims to analysis the opportunities and challenges of da'wah in the current era of information technology. This paper is a type of qualitative research with a netnographic approach, this approach aims to examine, observe and observe the use of information technology in preaching. In addition, to strengthen the data in this study, this paper also uses several important articles produced by the researchers. This paper argues that in Indonesia today the use of information technology with various digital media platforms is a priority in preaching, even with digital media making it easier for preachers to convey religious knowledge. Even da'wah through online media is able to reach and influence the whole world without having to meet in person, but the limited internet infrastructure available in remote areas is a separate obstacle.*

**Keywords:** *Technology, Information, Media, Da'wah, Present time*

**Abstrak:** *Media dakwah saat ini terus berkembang seiring perkembangan teknologi informasi, kondisi ini memberi tantangan bagi para pendakwah untuk cermat dalam memilih media dakwah. Teknologi informasi sebagai media digital saat ini dapat dimanfaatkan untuk berbagai tujuan salah satunya sebagai media dakwah, mengingat perkembangan teknologi begitu cepat dalam beberapa dekade ini. Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peluang dan tantangan dakwah pada era teknologi informasi saat ini. Selain itu, tulisan ini juga akan menganalisis efek dari digitalisasi dakwah. Tulisan ini merupakan jenis penelitian kualitatif dengan*

*pendekatan netnografi, pendekatan ini bertujuan untuk menelaah, mengamati dan mencermati penggunaan teknologi informasi dalam berdakwah. Selain itu, untuk memperkuat data dalam penelitian ini, tulisan ini juga menggunakan beberapa artikel penting yang dihasilkan oleh para peneliti. Tulisan ini berargumentasi bahwa di Indonesia saat ini penggunaan teknologi informasi dengan berbagai platform media digital menjadi prioritas dalam berdakwah, bahkan dengan media digital semakin mempermudah para pendakwah untuk menyampaikan pengetahuan agama. Selain itu, efek dari digitalisasi dakwah melalui media online mampu menjangkau dan mempengaruhi seluruh dunia tanpa harus bertemu langsung, namun masih terbatasnya infrastruktur internet yang tersedia di wilayah terpencil menjadi hambatan tersendiri*

*Kata Kunci: Teknologi, Informasi, Media, Dakwah, Masa Kini*

## INTRODUCTION

Advances in information technology have given birth to a communication revolution that encourages modernization. Freedom of information, which includes freedom of expression and freedom of the press, has been globalized throughout the world with all its positive and negative implications in the social, political, economic, and cultural fields. Indonesia, which is in the midst of the flow of global freedom of information, faces serious challenges and dilemmas. Globalization is an opportunity as well as a threat. Technology in today's modern era greatly affects people's lifestyles, this is marked by the digitization of all activities in life.

The influence of technology not only penetrates the world of work but also penetrates the world of education. Precisely since the Covid-19 outbreak has increasingly shown how useful the world of technology is in the midst of activity restrictions. This condition makes the Indonesian people accustomed to the world of technology, even online trends become a normal term for young and old. Proficiency in information technology requires every individual to be able to use and utilize cyberspace. The shift from conventional culture to information technology culture has also pervaded the world of da'wah (Zulkarnaini, 2015). In today's modern era, da'wah can not only be delivered in conventional ways, the rise of da'wah that uses information media provides its own challenges in delivering da'wah (Basit, 2013). Some da'wah media are often used by preachers such as YouTube (Yahya et al., 2020; Hilmi, 2021), Radio (Ghofur, 2019). Instagram (Aris & Hassan, 2016), Facebook (Suherdiana & Muhaemin, 2018) and others, these conditions require expertise for preachers to not only master da'wah material, but also be required to master information technology. This is a challenge for da'wah activists. In addition, the world of information technology can also harm da'wah activists when they are not careful in delivering da'wah.

Several related studies that discuss da'wah using information technology media such as the Masduki Research which explains that radio as a medium of da'wah is one of the media to spread Islamic understanding and teachings, even the media for salafi groups is a media for their identity struggle which is considered safer (Masduki et al., 2022). Research by Aep Kusnawan (Kusnawan et al., 2022),

Tika Mutia (Mutia, 2022), Mustafa Hilmi (Hilmi, 2021) illustrates that information technology can be used in delivering da'wah material in the modern era, this has become a necessity as a form of modernization in the modern era. propaganda media. creativity is highly demanded in attracting listeners and this kind of da'wah model has become commonplace.

Some of these studies focus on the transformation of da'wah media that tend to be used at this time, this paper will examine further about the challenges, opportunities and effects of the use of information technology as a form of da'wah media. The purpose of this paper is to provide a new concept for the use of information technology as a medium of da'wah, da'wah should develop according to technological developments so that da'wah media is not only understood as conventional media, but da'wah when using information technology will be enjoyed by the whole community.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this study is qualitative with a netnographic (Evelina, 2018), this approach is part of an ethnographic approach that focuses on community activities in the world of information technology, in this case in the form of online media (Damayanti, 2020). Online media is the main focus in this study in order to track and observe the influence of da'wah carried out online in the midst of Indonesian society. method netnographic is part of qualitative research that studies communities and activities that occur in cyberspace (Annisa, 2019). The main data sources in this research are web, youtube, instagram and facebook. These three platforms are information technology media used by many preachers in delivering their da'wah. The supporting data used in this research are in the form of journals, books and other important research results that are directly related to the issue of this research.

The data collection in this study has several stages, namely: First, the data collected is a process of analysis from various books and journals related to the theme of information technology as today's da'wah. Second, data reduction groups and organizes data related to da'wah communication media (Umrati & Wijaya, 2020; Mardawani, 2020). Third, presenting data in the form of a collection of information related to information technology media as an effort to draw a conclusion, this data is presented and understood selectively. Fourth, drawing conclusions on the data that has been reduced and presented related to information technology as a medium of today's da'wah, then making a conclusion that is supported by strong and relevant evidence (Hartono, 2018).

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

### Realizing the Dimensions of Da'wah Again

Islamic Da'wah today has realized the importance of the digital world in building community and self-identity. This awareness began to emerge with the presence of online media that can provide convenience in actualizing ideological identities (Hasan, 2009), currently religious messages are no longer carried out traditionally, various media using information technology are used. This is a new model of style in conveying religious messages and values more easily. Digitization in the delivery of religious messages is welcomed by various circles of the television

industry, this condition not only brings religious value but also brings economic value.

When talking about da'wah, the Muslim community can understand that da'wah is a religious lecture or advice. The importance of da'wah in Islam is to remind the Muslim community so that they do not escape from good deeds and always avoid themselves from bad deeds. Of course, this has become commonplace for the general public. Preachers are given the term "da'i" which means people who invite have an important obligation in providing religious advice (Alimuddin, 2007), da'i as actors have an important role in the continuity of da'wah (Bachtiar, 2013). At least in delivering da'wah, strategies are needed so that da'wah goes well. It is important to formulate the steps that must be taken to convey da'wah in the era of information technology.

*First*, Identify the problem. The first step in planning da'wah is mapping the problems to be discussed or current problems faced by the community. Problems are usually understood as a form of discrepancy between theory and facts, in this case it is necessary to observe how these problems must be solved with the media of da'wah (Ridla, 2008).

*Second*, formulate a problem solving model. The problem-solving model needs to be formulated with several alternatives so that the da'wah material becomes more interesting, so that the audience becomes interested in hearing the da'wah material delivered. Sometimes this becomes an obstacle for the preachers because they are not able to solve problems that come from the audience (Asy'ari, 2020).

*Third*, setting a da'wah strategy, in this case the da'i can use several approaches in delivering da'wah either by oral method, *bil kitabah* or da'wah *bil hal* which is done by involving activities that have a positive impact on the audience (Ridla, 2008).

*Fourth*, the media of da'wah, this becomes important in determining the implementation of da'wah. Especially in the current digital era, online media is very influential in the use of da'wah media. This has been proven by several preachers who not only bring economic aspects, but also bring positive aspects for listeners and followers (Budiantoro, 2018).

### Da'wah and Technology: Media Transformation Da'wah in the Modern Era

Technology has become an influential part of social life at all levels. Daniel Chandler identifies some basic assumptions about *technological determinism theory* (Thurlow et al., 2011). First, *Reductionist*, becomes a barrier that provides a distance between technology and culture, so that the existence of technology gradually eliminates some cultural values that have existed in the midst of society, even according to Neil Postman (1992) the existence of technology is a destroyer of cultural values that so far embedded (Straubhaar et al., 2018). Second, *Monistic*, becomes a simplification factor from a complex system to seem easier. The third is *Neutralizing*, basically the nature of technology is neutral (not taking sides), the good or bad influence of a technology depends on whose hands the technology is used.

David Sarnoff argues, it is often too easy for technology users to regard technology as a source of error or crime, even though the errors and crimes originate from the technology users themselves (McLuhan, 2010). Fourth is the *technological imperative*, technology has several basic properties, including the development of

technology that can never be dammed, its existence always follows the development of the times and culture.

We get various kinds of information, entertainment or other news from technology media, such as radio, films, newspapers, television, and even the internet. The messages conveyed by the technology media are now unlimited in number, from "trash, hoaxes" to information that we really need. From the abundance of information that is all possible for us to throw away or use earlier, various theories have emerged about its use. The meeting between information and the media also has a theory, at least there are experts who talk about it, including us here who are talking about it. We are certainly thinking about increasingly sophisticated and varied media technology, both in function, role, power, entertainment, or whatever our opinion about the media.

The use of Information Technology is an important priority in transforming the model of delivering da'wah, social media users and YouTube are important areas because the users of these platforms are increasing day by day. Based on the results of the study, it shows that social media users in Indonesia are quite significant, following the number of social media users in Indonesia;

Table 1. Number of Social Media Users in Indonesia (Mutia, 2022)

No	Usia	Platform	Persentase (%) Tahun 2021
1	16-64	Instagram	86,6
2	16-64	Facebook	85,5
3	16-64	Twitter	63,6
4	16-64	Line	44,3
5	16-64	Whatsapp	87,7
6	16-64	You Tube	94

Youtube has the highest rating which shows that Indonesian people access YouTube more often than others, even thousands of da'wah materials on YouTube can be accessed by all Indonesian people. Ustadz Abdul Somad who is one of the preachers has 3.09 million subscribers (*Ustadz Abdul Somad Official - YouTube*, nd).

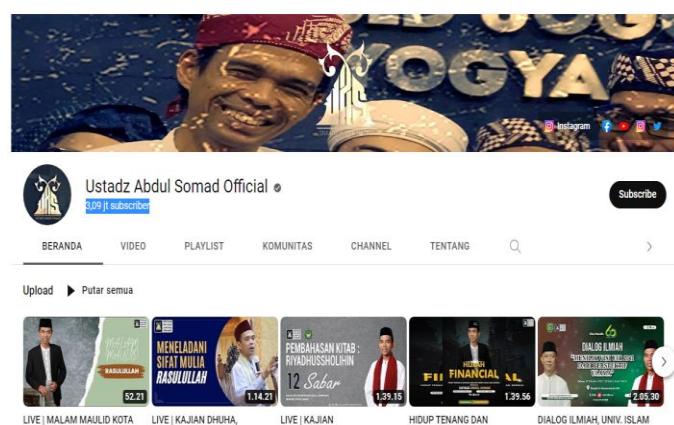


Figure 1. Ustadz Abdul Somad Official - YouTube

Based on observations on Ustadz Abdul Somad's youtube, every 1 time the review lecture is 4.5 thousand to 9.9 million times watched. Of course, this condition illustrates that da'wah is not only delivered traditionally, but even information technology is very helpful for spreading da'wah, especially internet access that is so easy to help spread da'wah in Indonesia. Ustadz Abdul Somad's Facebook account in 2018 recorded 5.6 million followers (Islami et al., 2020). In addition to Ustadz Abdul Somad, Ustadz Adi Hidayat with his youtube channel has 3.22 million subscribers, each uploaded propaganda material is watched between 1 to 8 million times.



Figure 1. Ustadz Adi Hidayat Official - YouTube

The two preachers are concrete examples of millennial preachers who build information technology-based da'wah patterns. each has its own pattern of approach in delivering da'wah. Ustadz Abdul Somad with his fiqh approach tends to provide scientific information related to Islamic law, as well as Ustadz Adi Hidayat with a Quranic science approach trying to dissect all problems with the Koran and Hadith approaches. These patterns get the attention of various groups because the platform can make it easier for listeners to enjoy the da'wah material delivered without having to meet face to face. In addition to youtube, there are several information technology media that can be used as a form of transformation of da'wah media, including;

#### Facebook

Facebook is also one of the media that can be used to launch da'wah, this media is quite useful for disseminating da'wah, it is widely used by preachers including Ustadz Abdul Somad and Adi Hidayat. Facebook with vulnerable users aged 16-64 years has become very productive in delivering da'wah. KHM Arif Marzuki's preaching through Facebook is very popular with the public because the material presented is easy to understand, this also introduces the figure of KHM Arif Marzuki in the wider community (Masri et al., 2022).

### Instagram

Media Instagram is also one of the platforms loved by teenagers, this can be an alternative media in delivering da'wah. One of those who use Instagram as a medium of da'wah is Ustadz Hanan Attaki with the "shifmedia.id" account.

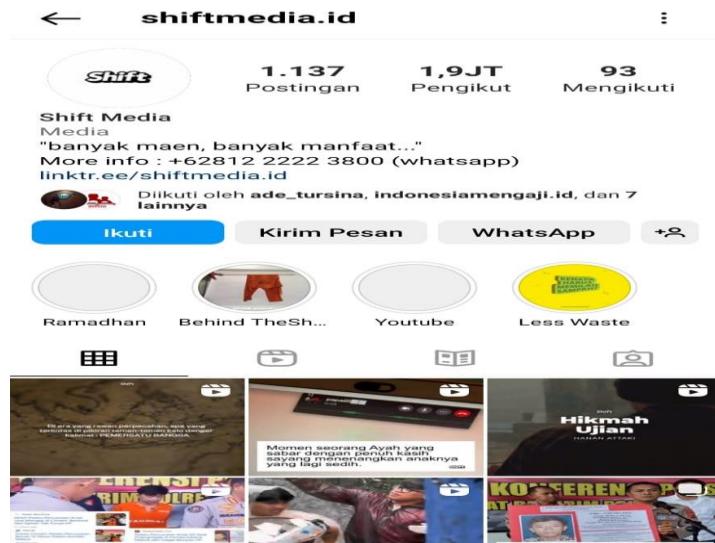


Figure 1. Ustadz Hanan Attaki's Instagram

Instagram followers shift and 1,137 posts, the delivery model by means of the millennial segment of followers tends to young people, this is in accordance with the character and model of delivering da'wah carried out by Hanan Attaki.

The role of information technology is very useful in da'wah media in this era of globalization, at least there are some practical benefits that can be felt by Muslims when using information technology as a medium of da'wah, among others; *First*, it makes it easy to convey da'wah, meaning that it is not difficult for preachers to convey their da'wah, just by uploading a da'wah video on a good online platform. This is one of the tasks of the da'i who has the responsibility to convey religious messages so that they are easily understood and accessed by the public. The important goal of achieving da'wah is how the da'i are able to provide enlightenment to the people to apply Islamic values; *Second*, time efficiency, this can be proven when da'wah delivered directly takes days to get to a place in order to deliver da'wah, of course this can be done using information technology so that time becomes more efficient; *Third*, affordability, the most important thing in da'wah is how da'wah can be understood and reached as much as possible. Using information technology media will further expand the reach of da'wah, this condition is certainly different when da'wah is delivered in a certain room or place that can only be reached by a few people. But by looking at the development of the use of online-based information media, the digitization of da'wah will be more affordable to all corners of the region.

Of course, the transformation of da'wah to the world of information technology presents its own challenges for the Muslim community in Indonesia, with the digitization of da'wah will encourage da'i to master technology. Not only that, even the affordability of da'wah is not able to penetrate remote areas that have difficulty getting access to information online. Of course this is a challenge for the da'i. Da'wah in the modern era is not only in the form of verbal delivery, but can also be in the form of animated cartoons, films, songs, art, and even soap operas and even puppets (Hasanah & Anam, 2022) which give moral messages to the audience in the morning. Of course, this is a transformation of the pattern of da'wah which was previously understood in the form of lectures, but now has experienced a shift in understanding the essence of da'wah.

Da'wah is understood as an appeal, invitation, or it can also be interpreted as a call (Alimuddin, 2007). This meaning is taken from QS. Ali-Imran [3: 104, 110]

“And let there be among you a group of people who call for righteousness, enjoin the right and forbid what is evil; they are the lucky ones.”

“You are the best people born for humans, enjoining the right and forbidding the evil, and believing in Allah. If the People of the Book had believed, it would have been better for them, among them there are believers, and most of them are ungodly.”

Based on the verse it can be understood that da'wah is basically conveying goodness and calling to leave evil, this is the main goal in delivering da'wah. However, it is interesting that the verse emphasizes that the delivery of da'wah should be in a wise way without coercing and discrediting others. These patterns need to be applied in delivering da'wah, so that it can have a positive effect on social media activists.

## CONCLUSION

In the current era of digitalization, the pattern of da'wah is changing and following the current technological style. However, this is not easy, although it is felt that the use of technology media is easier and more efficient, but there are many challenges that must be faced in responding to today's global challenges. This challenge requires the da'i to be able to master the technology that is growing day by day. In addition, da'wah planning management is needed so that the model of delivering da'wah through information technology is really useful. On the other hand, the current era of technology provides opportunities for da'wah activists, both individuals and groups to convey religious messages. Of course, the digitalization of da'wah still leaves pros and cons, because it is feared that it will be misused in conveying religious values. This requires government oversight and public intelligence in filtering religious messages on social media.

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