

INFORMASI

KAJIAN ILMU KOMUNIKASI

EDITORIAL

SYNCRONIZING COMMUNICATION, MEDIA, AND CULTURE

Lily El Ferawati Rofil

lily.ef@uny.ac.id

Editor of Jurnal Informasi

Information exchanges keep communication and media alive. In the context of communication and media studies, information can be considered as content which serves as an economic, social, and cultural currency. Media corporations provide content in exchange of audience viewerships and readerships which lead to financial gain from advertising revenue. Among audience, media content can act as one of anticipated subjects of conversations in their social circles. More importantly, communication and media content has become a new weapon to invade a society with unanticipated culture through what we all are aware as cultural colonialization.

Content is still powerful despite the presence of active audience. The popularity of American pop culture which successfully spreads across the globe via Hollywood movies and series and ubiquitously immerses into our everyday lives proves that diverse societies are not averse to foreign content exposure. Regardless of world political tension and economic recession, Hollywood movies are always anticipated by movie-goers in at least half of the world. Entering the new millennium till recently, the world is crazy about Korean popular culture which comes in the package of K-Pop. The emergence of K-pop is seen as a contra-flow of globalization which has for long been dominated by Western powers. K-pop has successfully dispersed into and influenced local productions in many countries across America, Latin America, Europe and most importantly, Asia. The successful invasion of Western and Korean culture through media products throughout the world indicates that media content has significant effects in shaping today's cultural consumption.

Nowadays, audience are no longer content users only. They are now both cultural consumers and producers. The preeminence of social media allows people to exchange information as well as to produce content on their own for the purpose of self-expression and social criticism. This exercise represents what is called as participatory culture which replaces consumer culture. In recent years, we often see an ordinary individual becomes a celebrity in his/her own Instagram, Twitter, or Youtube channel. They self-produce entertaining videos, short stories, and advertisements in the form of endorsements and paid reviews. Self-creation of media

content appears to be a new business model adopted by millennial generations to contribute to the growth of creative economy. And this is a good thing to be celebrated.

While we rejoice our young generation's creative uses of information and communication technology (ICT), we also need to worry about the negative impacts of abusive uses of social media and other sources of information. Abusive uses of media technology in any form can jeopardize the health of social system. Abusive media uses include production and dissemination of hate speech and fake news. Today, the spread of fake news and hate speech on the Internet has grown into an alarming and inevitable issue. Fake news and hate speech are used by radical groups to attack and frame government in negative ways. Dissemination of hoax and speech intended to offend particular people or groups of people certainly creates unhealthy communication atmosphere and threatens public peace. To tackle this issue, many countries including Indonesia have to pass a bill to prevent the practice of producing and disseminating fake news and hate speech from becoming an uncured social illness.

Another problem with negative uses of ICT is media illiteracy. While media literacy refers to the ability to apply critical thinking skill to using communication media, be it in the form of print or electronic media (Baran and Baran, 2014), media illiteracy can be defined as unjustifiable uses of any kind of media and content of media for a certain purpose. In this digital age, media literacy includes engagement with the Internet data and communities. Basically, media literacy suggests people to employ their skills for accessing, analyzing, evaluating, and creating media content and power. Many people claim that they can access media and create creative content for communication and self-expression, but few are ignorant of negative impacts they are exposed to or unhealthy environment they create from their communication activities using the media. Worse if they just follow current trends and want to feel the hype of the presence of a new social media platform without self-accountability.

Following a trend in using new social media is not a bad thing but it can be hazardous when the media users disregard cultural values and norms in their exercise. Recently, Indonesia was shaken with what began as simply a practice of self-expression through social media which eventually ended up as a public issue that raised national concern. It was a story about a 13-year-old schoolboy named Bowo who was a famous content creator of *Tik Tok*, a video maker application for smartphones. Bowo created many lip-sync videos, attracting kids of his age with his good-looking face and flirty expressions. His popularity in *Tik Tok* inspired an agency to set up a paid "meet and greet" for him and his fans and surprisingly many turned up in the event. It was just a normal gathering except that Bowo is not a broadcasting celebrity, but his fans were very crazy of him that some of them wrote on social media about him in a worshipping tone. This incident invited huge attention from the whole nation especially people of older generations which found that unfiltered content production in *Tik Tok* potentially influenced kids to exercise excessive self-expression which challenges authenticity of local norms. Eventually, the government interfere came at the end by blocking the application and demanding the developer to apply content filtering before the blockage was terminated.

We should realize now that social changes derived from the development and innovation of ICT are not myths. Such changes range from conversion of media divergence into media convergence, shifting between consumer culture and participatory culture, identity constructions in media-driven society, to the rise of awareness for media education and literacy. Scholars in the field of communication sciences must shift their focus from studying communication strategies and media effects to investigating communication and communities in media culture to see communication phenomena from a wider perspective.

As such, INFORMASI journal now takes a turning point to receive more articles with a wide range of topics beyond communication and media studies. Beginning from this issue, the journal starts to accept any scholarly writings from multi-disciplines which discuss

Communication Research and Theories, Public Relations and Advertising, Media and Cultural Studies, Audience Research, Media and Identity, Media Anthropology, Media and Audience Ethnography, Youth Media, and other related topics. The journal also expands to a wider and larger readership by welcoming international authors to contribute in the journal. This year's first issue contains ten articles with two articles authored by Malaysian and Nigerian scholars respectively.