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Strengthening Community Legal Awareness of Digital Literacy and the Indonesian Electronic Information and Transactions Law

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Abstract

Introduction: *The increasing use of digital technology has created challenges related to the dissemination of hoaxes, hate speech, cybercrime, and personal data misuse. These developments highlight the need to strengthen community legal awareness concerning responsible digital activities, particularly in Batu Meja Village, Ambon.*

Purposes of The Devotion: *This community service program aims to improve public understanding of digital ethics, legal responsibilities, and the relevant provisions of Indonesia's Electronic Information and Transactions Law.*

Method of The Devotion: *The program employed a community-based legal education approach through interactive counseling, discussions, case analysis, and practical demonstrations. The activities focused on identifying misleading information, understanding legal risks in digital communication, and applying basic personal data protection practices.*

Results Main Findings of the Devotion: *The program provided legal education on digital communication, hoaxes, hate speech, and personal data security. Participants were involved in discussions and practical explanations concerning responsible digital behavior. However, the manuscript does not yet present detailed quantitative evaluation data or systematic measurements of changes in participants' legal awareness and digital skills. Conclusion: Community-based legal education offers an initial approach to strengthening public awareness of digital rights and responsibilities. Continuous assistance, measurable evaluation, and collaboration with local institutions are necessary to support sustainable digital literacy and responsible technology use in Batu Meja Village.*

Keywords: Legal Awareness; Digital Literacy; Community Legal Education.

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INTRODUCTION

Community service constitutes a fundamental pillar of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, representing a mandatory obligation for the academic community to provide a tangible contribution to national progress. The urgency of this endeavor lies in its function as a sociological bridge that facilitates the transformation and transfer of knowledge and technology developed within the academic sphere to be practically implemented in society.[1] Through this synergy, higher education institutions transcend being mere "ivory towers" and instead become engines of growth in enhancing collective awareness and public intellectual capacity.[2] In response to the pressing need for legal education, the community service team from Pattimura University organized a legal counseling session for the residents of Batu Meja Village, Sirimau District, Ambon City, focusing primarily on

[1] Soerjono Soekanto, *Pengantar Penelitian Hukum* (Jakarta: UI Press, 2006), p. 15.
[2] Shidarta, *Hukum Penalaran dan Penalaran Hukum* (Jakarta: Genta Publishing, 2013), p. 105.

strengthening public legal awareness amidst the complex dynamics of the current digital era.[3]

The evolution of digital technology, which originated with the introduction of the internet in the late 20th century, has triggered a global paradigm shift from analog systems toward a fast-paced digital ecosystem.[4] In Indonesia, this technological acceleration reached its peak during the COVID-19 pandemic, where the emergency situation compelled the massive and abrupt adoption of technology across various crucial sectors, ranging from communication systems and business models to educational methodologies. However, this progress, while bringing efficiency and ease of information access, acts as a double-edged sword that presents contradictory impacts. On one hand, technology offers limitless opportunities for advancement; on the other, it creates systemic challenges such as the digital divide, sophisticated cybersecurity threats, and ecological impacts from energy consumption and electronic waste.[5] In this context, digital awareness becomes the primary foundation for every individual to build information literacy, maintain privacy security, and practice digital ethics to mitigate risks while maximizing technological potential wisely.[6]

The dependence of modern society, particularly the younger generation, on social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp has revolutionized the way humans build social interactions and construct self-identity. Although this technology facilitates instant communication that transcends geographical boundaries at any time and place, such convenience is often accompanied by a decline in the quality of face-to-face interpersonal relationships and the degradation of traditional social values. Furthermore, uncontrolled technology use, without the accompaniment of an adequate understanding of personal data protection, is highly vulnerable to privacy violations, identity theft, and financial fraud. Data breaches, whether caused by user negligence or unauthorized hacking, not only result in material losses for individuals but can also be exploited by irresponsible parties for unethical marketing purposes or other criminal acts that broadly harm organizations.

The lack of literacy and legal awareness in utilizing digital technology is also a primary trigger for the prevalence of negative content, especially the dissemination of destructive fake news or hoaxes. Hoaxes are not merely incorrect information but instruments that can incite public unrest, trigger social polarization, cause public distrust, and provoke horizontal conflicts that threaten social unity, particularly concerning sensitive issues. In addition to the threat of hoaxes, cybercrime remains a tangible challenge, encompassing the hacking of sensitive data, cyberbullying that attacks the mental stability of victims online, and cyber espionage aimed at stealing trade secrets or strategic documents. Various previous research reports consistently show that technological advancement not accompanied by awareness of its negative impacts correlates directly with the increasing rate of digital criminality targeting vulnerable groups such as teenagers and children. Based on these objective realities, the community service team from Pattimura University, along with Student Community Service students, conducted a legal counseling session entitled "Building Legal Awareness in the Digital Era" on November 13, 2025, in Batu Meja Village,

[3] Henry Campbell Black, *Black's Law Dictionary* (St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1990), p. 672.
[4] Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), p. 150.
[5] Josua Sitompul, *Cyberspace, Cybercrimes, Cyberlaw* (Jakarta: Tatanusa, 2012), p. 50.
[6] UNESCO, *Digital Literacy Guidelines for Higher Education* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2018), p. 35.

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as a preventive and educative step toward creating a more literate and law-abiding society in cyberspace.[7]

METHOD OF THE DEVOTION

The primary problem addressed in this community service initiative is the urgent need to build public legal awareness regarding the use of digital technology, particularly in mitigating its negative impacts such as the rampant dissemination of hoaxes and the rise of cybercrimes. This program involves the local community and students from the Pattimura University Community Service Program in Batu Meja Village, Ambon City, focusing on real-world challenges that residents face in their daily digital interactions. To resolve these issues, the implementation methodology employs a comprehensive approach that integrates legal education through interactive counseling on digital regulations and training through practical demonstrations on securing personal data and verifying information. Furthermore, the team serves as a mediator to facilitate discussions on digital conflicts and provides ongoing advocacy to ensure residents have access to legal assistance. Ultimately, this activity is expected to significantly enhance the community's legal literacy and empower them to navigate the digital landscape with greater caution and responsibility.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The community engagement program in Batu Meja Village, Sirimau District, Ambon City, commenced with a highly methodical and comprehensive preparation phase. Prior to field implementation, the team conducted intensive internal coordination to delineate the scope of the material, ensuring it aligned with the sociological needs of the local community and current legal dynamics.[8] This process involved a profound literature review of various legal references and previous research reports regarding public digital behavior.[9] This meticulous preparation served as a crucial foundation to ensure that the developed materials were not merely theoretical but also highly applicable in addressing the real-world challenges faced by the residents of Batu Meja and the Student Community Service students of Pattimura University.[10] This approach ensured that the dissemination of legal information followed a logical structure, beginning with the introduction of expert team members and continuing with the presentation of accurate data concerning the digital environment and its legal underpinnings.[11]

During the core presentation session of this outreach initiative, the speakers meticulously detailed the primary juridical instruments within Indonesia's cyberspace, specifically the Law on Information and Electronic Transactions.[12] Primary focus was placed on the ethics of communication and the legal boundaries that are frequently violated due to a lack of digital literacy.[13] The explanation covered crucial articles with significant criminal implications, such as Article 28 Paragraph (1) regarding the prohibition of disseminating fake news (hoaxes) that can mislead the public, and Article 27 Paragraph (3)[14] related to defamation and libel. Through an interactive method, the program successfully transformed the participants' understanding of the legal risks underlying every digital activity,

[7] Shidarta, *Hukum Penalaran dan Penalaran Hukum* (Jakarta: Genta Publishing, 2013), p. 110.
[8] Soerjono Soekanto, *Pengantar Penelitian Hukum* (Jakarta: UI Press, 2006), p. 12.
[9] Ronny Rahman Nitibaskara, *Tegakkan Hukum Gunakan Hukum* (Jakarta: Kompas, 2006), p. 89.
[10] Rulli Nasrullah, Media Sosial: Perspektif Komunikasi, Budaya, dan Sosioteknologi (Bandung: Simbiosa Rekatama Media, 2015).
[11] Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), p. 147.
[12] Josua Sitompul, *Cyberspace, Cybercrimes, Cyberlaw: Tinjauan Aspek Hukum Pidana* (Jakarta: PT. Tatanusa, 2012), hlm. 45.
[13] UNESCO, *Digital Literacy Guidelines for Higher Education* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2018), hlm. 33.
[14] Budi Suhariyanto, *Tindak Pidana Teknologi Informasi (Cybercrime): Urgensi Pengaturan dan Celah Hukumnya* (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2014).

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emphasizing that actions often considered trivial on social media can lead to criminal proceedings if they violate the provisions established by the state.[15]



Figure 1. Delivery of Materials and Discussion

The discussion within this social empowerment project deepened as the team dissected the threat of hate speech as regulated under Article 28 Paragraph (2) of the Law on Information and Electronic Transactions.[16] Participants were provided with a firm understanding that disseminating information with the intent to incite hatred based on ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group affiliation constitutes a serious violation punishable by a maximum of six years in prison and/or a significant fine of up to IDR 1,000,000,000.00. The integration of relevant everyday case studies allowed participants to perceive the direct correlation between virtual actions and tangible sanctions in the physical world.[17] This was particularly vital given that recent research findings indicate the majority of legal cases in the digital sphere arise not from premeditated criminal intent (mens rea) but rather from legal ignorance regarding the limits of freedom of expression in cyberspace.[18]

[15] Dikdik M. Arief Mansur dan Elisatris Gultom, *Cyber Law: Aspek Hukum Teknologi Informasi* (Refika Aditama, 2005), p. 76.
[16] Edmon Makarim, *Pengantar Hukum Telematika: Suatu Kompilasi Kajian* (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2005), p. 210.
[17] Shidarta, *Hukum Penalaran dan Penalaran Hukum* (Jakarta: Genta Publishing, 2013), p. 102.
[18] Teguh Prasetyo, *Hukum Pidana* (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2010), p. 55.

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Beyond criminal law aspects, the engagement activity also emphasized preventive strategies and personal data protection as forms of mitigation against cybercrime.[19] The community was equipped with simple yet essential technical skills, such as methods for verifying information before sharing it to break the chain of hoax distribution.[20] The discussion also touched upon personal data security to avoid identity theft and financial fraud, which are increasingly prevalent.[21] By understanding their rights and obligations within the digital space, the community is expected to be more prudent and cautious in their interactions, whether through platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, or TikTok.[22] This strategy aims to reduce the vulnerability of the community, especially the younger generation, to prevent them from becoming either victims or perpetrators of cybercrime due to irresponsible technology use.

Overall, the results of this community-based initiative demonstrated highly positive responses and great enthusiasm, particularly among the academic community in schools and the Student Community Service students who serve as agents of change in society. The transformation in legal awareness observed during the Q&A sessions confirms that structured digital literacy campaigns, such as the theme "Building Legal Awareness in the Digital Era," are effective in enhancing collective understanding of digital legal ethics. These results support premises from previous research stating that continuous legal education is the most strategic long-term solution to reducing the rate of Law on Information and Electronic Transactions violations in Indonesia. With this awareness established, it is hoped that the residents of Batu Meja Village can maximize the positive opportunities of digital technology while maintaining social harmony and complying with prevailing legal norms, thereby creating a healthy, safe, and productive digital ecosystem for all.

CONCLUSION

The community service program in Batu Meja Village, Ambon, was implemented through legal counseling, interactive discussions, case analysis, and practical explanations concerning digital literacy and the Indonesian Electronic Information and Transactions Law. The activities addressed public awareness of hoaxes, hate speech, responsible digital communication, and personal data protection. They provided an educational opportunity for community members and students to understand the legal responsibilities associated with digital technology use. The main contribution of this program lies in integrating legal education with practical digital literacy as an initial effort to strengthen community awareness of digital rights and responsibilities. However, the available activity report does not yet provide sufficient quantitative evidence to establish the extent of changes in participants' knowledge or behavior. Therefore, further programs should incorporate measurable evaluation instruments, continuous assistance, and collaboration with village institutions. Such efforts are necessary to support the sustainable development of a legally aware and responsible digital community.

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