
A Step from the Digital Technology Era: The Utilization of the Internet in Melung Village, Banyumas Regency

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Abstract. One of several regions in Indonesia that is considered to have carried out the process of adapting the digital technology era is Melung Village, a village located in Kedungbanteng District, Banyumas Regency. Melung Village has geographical constraints, which is on the edge of the forest, at the foot of Mount Selamat, and the level of competence of human resources is still low, but is actively and continuously trying to develop internet progress in its village. The purpose of this study is to obtain an overview of the use of the internet in Melung Village to face the era of digital technology. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with data collection techniques using observation, in-depth interviews, and document studies to get an overview of the use of the internet in Melung Village. The results of the study indicate that the existence of the internet in Melung Village has been used to create internet literate village profiles through the village's official website and various social media platforms by village officials; used for online learning from the village hall; as a medium for promoting village UMKM; and dissemination of various information about development or the results that have been achieved by the village government of Melung Village.

Keywords: internet, Melung Village, digital technology, utilization

Introduction

Based on Kominfo data, in 2022 there were 204.7 million internet users in the country as of January 2022. In January 2021, the number of internet users in Indonesia was recorded at 202.6 million. This shows an increase in internet use in Indonesia by 1.03% compared to the previous year. These developments indicate the rapid development of the internet among the people of Indonesia. Related to these conditions, Abdi and Rachman (2017) explained that the purpose of using the internet for most people has used the internet to communicate, facilitate work, access data and obtain information.

Internet users experience a massive spread by no longer recognizing the differences in generations and interests. Data discovered by IndoTelko (2018) which proves that internet users come from the younger generation with a percentage of 91%. Most of them mentioned that the internet is used for entrepreneurship, such as setting up an online business with the percentage shown at 83%. According to Yusup (2019), the existence of the internet sector in human life can help business actors, including youth in rural areas, to use the internet creatively.

When discussing the development of the internet, it cannot be separated from the discussion about the era of digital technology in the progress of human civilization. According to Danuri (2019), digital technology is starting to become a medium that can help humans fulfill simple processes in everyday life to fulfill the satisfaction of each individual. The development of the era of human life is always experiencing developments and advancements such as the era of agricultural technology, the era of industrial technology, the era of information technology, until now, namely the era of communication and information technology. In the era of digital technology, it shows that human life prioritizes activities carried out on a computer/digital basis, rather than using traditional human power (Danuri, 2019).

With the development of digital technology that has been described above, it is closely related to its influence on human life in various fields. Therefore, every region in Indonesia should make preparations to adapt to the new era, namely the era of digital technology. Based on the description by Danuri (2019), it was found that there are several conveniences offered by digital technology, such as one that is fully automatic and sophisticated so that it can save energy and time. That way, preparation is needed to adapt, especially in some areas that are still difficult to reach by the internet in order to be able to implement digital technology-based activities quickly.

The explanation above is in line with the results of previous research conducted by Akmaludin et al. (2022) regarding the empowerment of rural communities through the opening of LTE/4G-based internet access and socialization of wise use of the internet in Balekambang Village, Jonggol District, Bogor Regency, West Java. The results of this study indicate that there is a significant use of the internet for the residents of Balekambang Village in terms of affective, cognitive, psychomotor, technological, and beneficial. In addition, other studies have shown things that are not much different regarding the use of the internet. The research was conducted by Rinarta et al. (2020) regarding healthy internet training in the context of using free internet in Mengwi Village, Badung Regency.

One of several regions in Indonesia that has made efforts to enter the era of digital technology in village activities is Melung Village, a village located in Kedungbanteng District, Banyumas Regency. With the topography of the village which is located on the edge of the forest, so it has a hilly topography, because it is located at the foot of Mount Selamat, and has a cool climate with high rainfall averaging 3000-3500 mm per year. This is a challenge and obstacle for Melung Village to develop the internet for the community.

In addition to constraints from unfavorable geographical conditions, there are obstacles in the competence of HRD or Human Resources Development. Based on the profile document of Melung Village, it shows that the level of education in Melung Village is still relatively low. This condition also has an impact on the economic level of the community in Melung Village which is still low. Thus the urgency of the existence of the internet that can be utilized by the people of Melung Village is very important and needed, especially to increase the level of knowledge and the economic condition of the community directly.

Based on the urgency of research regarding the important role of the internet and its use for the community in Melung Village, Banyumas Regency, there is a main point of problems in the background above, namely: What is the form of utilizing the internet in Melung Village as a step to face the era of digital technology?

Research Methods

The research, which is located in Melung Village, Kedungbanteng District, Banyumas Regency, focuses on the development and use of the internet for people in the area. By applying a qualitative descriptive research method, this research can explain what are the results obtained from the use of the internet in Melung Village in order to face the era of digital technology. This is in line with the understanding given by Sermiawan (2010) that qualitative methods refer to research conducted by relying on one another. According to Creswell (2008), it is explained that the qualitative research method is an approach to explain a symptom centrally.

To assist researchers in analyzing the results obtained in this study, data collection techniques were used in the form of: observation, in-depth interviews, and document studies. Based on Barlian's (2018) explanation that data collection techniques in research are divided into primary sources and secondary sources, which in this study used both sources.

Observations and interviews with informants were carried out in Melung Village together with several resource persons. The number of resource persons in this study were six

people consisting of: government officials from Melung Village, Melung Village community, and teachers at SDN Melung 1 and SMPN 3 Kedung Banteng who knew the problems being studied.

Results and Discussion

Based on the results of an interview with the Head of the Welfare Section of Melung Village, Margiono and interpreted from the profile document of Melung Village, it is explained that the internet has started to enter Melung Village since 2011 and began with the installation of an internet modem in 2009. At that time internet use was still not massive or not many people access the internet from the Melung Village community itself. In 2012, Melung Village experienced good internet development as evidenced by the installation of speedy so that the internet access network in Melung Village is getting faster and smoother. This has an impact on the increase in internet users in Melung Village.

The steps taken by the Melung Village government to develop internet access in Melung Village are getting more advanced every year. This shows that Melung Village is also preparing itself to face the onslaught in the era of digital technology where all activities will be assisted through advanced computers or other technologies. Melung Village's efforts in facing the era of digital technology are shown by the launch of the village website, namely melung.desa.id which became one of the results of development during the Melung Village Head Agung Budi Satrio (2011-2013). Efforts to use the internet to face the era of digital technology were also continued during the next Village Head by Khoerudin, S. Sos with the village information technology development program (2013). Even during his reign, Melung Village did citizen journalism which aims to provide media literacy to the public in anticipating the negative impacts of using the internet.

In order to face the era of digital technology, the internet which has begun to develop in Melung Village is then used for several things in various sectors of life. First, the use of the internet by Melung Village administrators is to develop village profiles through social media Facebook, Twitter, and create an official website for Melung Village. This is very helpful in the delivery and dissemination of information that is considered important for the people of Melung Village to know. In addition, with the official website of Melung Village and through the distribution of links on Twitter by buzzers, they are able to change policies. This was conveyed by the Head of the Welfare Section of Melung Village, Margiono who stated that there was a change in the policy on the allocation of heavy equipment to prevent landslides with the use of the internet in Melung Village.

Another form produced by the use of the internet in Melung Village in order to face the era of digital technology is as a medium for promoting UMKM. This utilization is considered important, especially when looking at population data in 2019 which shows the number of people in the age range of 15-19 years, namely 181 people and aged 20-24 years, which is 188 people. This figure shows the number of productive age in Melung Village which can be used to develop MSME actors. In the development of these UMKM, after the entry of the internet in Melung Village, some of them began to take advantage of the existence of the internet. The use of the internet in this case is used for product promotion media for UMKM actors in Melung Village. According to them, much more effective and efficient because you don't have to open a shop which is only limited to 8 hours. Through the internet, they can sell UMKM products online for 24 hours. In addition, the use of the internet through social media such as Instagram and Whatsapp can expand the reach of the target market. This is shown by one of the residents of Melung Village who managed to sell his coffee products to Bekasi and Temanggung.

The use of the internet that has developed in Melung Village also feels very useful during the Covid-19 pandemic. Especially in the field of education which is one of the areas

of life that has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. This is indicated by the existence of a WFH (Work From Home) policy, including for teaching and learning activities in Melung Village, which forces the community in the village to carry out school activities from home. These obstacles can be slightly overcome by the use of the internet as an online learning medium starting from the elementary-junior high school level in Melung Village. Online learning in Melung Village is carried out in the form of providing school materials, coordinating with parents or guardians of students, to giving assignments and assessing exams and assignments from students in Melung Village.

The last point that closes the use of the internet in Melung Village in preparation for the digital technology era is the ease of implementing the local village government. With the internet in the village, discussions and deliberation, especially during Covid-19, can continue. With the internet, which plays a role in disseminating information to the people of Melung Village through the village's official website and Whatsapp group. This then has an impact on increasing the popularity and good image of Melung Village through the use of the internet in the development of the official website at melung.desa.id, Facebook, and Twitter. Another progress is shown when searching for the keyword Melung Village on Google then it will appear on the start page.

Conclusion

Based on the results of research on the use of the internet in Melung Village, Banyumas Regency for the digital technology era, conclusions can be drawn including: Melung Village's efforts in facing the digital technology era were carried out through several programs such as in the period of the Village Head Agung Budi Satrio (2011-2013) with the launch of the village website, namely www.melung.desa.id. Then, it was continued during the leadership period of the Khoerudin Village Head, with a village information technology development program carried out from 2013 to the present. With various obstacles and obstacles in terms of geography to the limitations of existing human resources, Melung Village is able to develop the internet in its area so that it is called one of the pioneers of Internet Village in Banyumas Regency. To optimize the internet presence in Melung Village, it is used to create village profiles through the official website, Facebook, and Twitter.

During the Covid-19 period, the existence of the internet in Melung Village was utilized optimally to help run online learning at the elementary and junior high school levels, as well as to disseminate important information such as development or the results achieved by Melung Village officials through the official website and Whatsapp group.

Finally, the existence of the internet in Melung Village has now massively increased the popularity and image of Melung Village in various national media. In addition, the internet in Melung Village is also used as a promotional media for village UMKM actors to disseminate the target market for their products. The internet in Melung Village is also used as a promotional media for village UMKM actors to disseminate the target market for their products.

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