

USING SOCIAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA RESPONSIBLY AND HEALTHY: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

The use of social and digital media platforms has grown rapidly, particularly in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. Initially, the use of digital information platforms was intended to fill the gap in communication patterns needed to help people stay connected. As time progressed, awareness began to grow regarding the negative impacts of such technologies. These negative impacts have given rise to various problems within social and digital media platforms. This study is qualitative research in which the researcher plays an important and decisive role, striving to remain as objective as possible in order to achieve the research objectives. The researcher employed observation, direct participation, literature study, the collection of relevant data, and comparison with related studies. Promoting literacy in the use of social and digital media platforms is therefore a crucial effort for the government, society, and all related stakeholders. Raising awareness of such literacy is essential. The responsible and ethical use of digital social media—based on ethical principles, awareness of consequences, and accountability—forms the foundation for creating a healthier and more constructive public sphere. Proper use of social and digital media platforms can contribute to a public space that is ethical, healthy, and responsibility.

Keywords: Social and Digital Media, Responsibly and Healthy, Issues, Literacy, Challenges.

1. INTRODUCTION

The use of various social and digital media platforms has become increasingly prevalent, particularly in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the Covid-19 virus first emerged at the end of 2019 and subsequently spread across the globe. In Indonesia, the presence of Covid-19 was first identified around March 2020. The pandemic not only disrupted global health systems but also had a profound impact on nearly all existing information systems. Within these systems, humans and machines collaborate in processes and activities, utilizing information technology and available resources to generate products and services. (Santanu Roya, Agostino Cortesi, Soumya Sen, 2022).. The changes in systems caused by Covid-19 included education, social, economic, and political systems. Almost all global systems were transformed as a result of the emergence of the virus. The outbreak of Covid-19 created a new face of the world, different from the periods before it. Neither the world, including Indonesia, had ever experienced such a condition, and great efforts were made to address it. The virus altered patterns of interaction among individuals and communities, as well as the fundamental structures within a nation. (Fiona Suwana, et.al., 2020).

Life after the Covid-19 pandemic has witnessed a rapid expansion in the use of internet-based information technology. Initially, the adoption of digital communication tools appeared to be a matter of necessity, driven by the need to work and carry out daily activities from home (Work from Home/WFH). However, this enforced adaptation soon triggered the emergence of various innovations and new ways of living within society (Fatimah, 2025). The massive development of information technology has made individuals continuously active within online communities. However, there are notable differences between online and offline behaviour, particularly in relation to emotional expression. In digital spaces, individuals often communicate and interact in ways that differ from face-to-face encounters, leading to shifts in how emotions are conveyed, perceived, and managed (Camille Alloing, et.al., 2025).

The individual, as the smallest unit of society, engages with social media literally within the palm of their hand, unrestricted by geographical boundaries or time. In the online community, developments occurring in any part of the world can be instantly accessed and followed in real time. Events, regardless of where they take place, become immediately available and up to date, as they are constantly within each person's grasp through digital devices (Jasmine Khairina H. W. et.al., 2022). Within the development of online communities, issues related to the public sphere and the anti-public sphere have also become widely debated and complex. Public issues are generally shaped by stable political ideologies, good governance, and social harmony. In contrast, anti-public tendencies are often influenced by political propaganda and the misuse of online platforms (Zoetanya Sujon, et.al., 2025). The use of digital media in the public sphere often gives rise to what is known as an echo chamber, where individuals interact only with certain groups and are influenced primarily by similar ideas. As a result, they have limited engagement with

other people, perspectives, and alternative viewpoints. This phenomenon fosters individuals who are inward-looking, closed-minded, polarized, and less capable of understanding thoughts from the perspectives of others.

The emergence of internet-based digital information technology, particularly after Covid-19, has made social life significantly different from that of previous eras. The presence of the Covid-19 virus created new awareness of alternative ways for individuals to interact. These new modes of interaction allow individuals—the foundation of social life—to connect more deeply and broadly, without boundaries, and literally within the palm of their hands. The use of social media has become increasingly widespread within society. Social media functions not only as a platform for sharing information but also as a space for creativity, the exchange of ideas, the development of social networks, forums for discussion, and virtual interaction (Marsella Tri Anjani, Suryai, 2025). Social media serves as a tool in shaping the public sphere, revealing various aspects of social life as well as political behaviour (Rachelle Loudon, Richard Frank, 2025).

The rapid development of digital technology has revolutionized patterns of communication, information consumption, and individual interaction with the environment. The role of digital media has become one of the key factors in influencing public politics, shaping narratives, and fostering participation in Democracy (Aini Faezah Ramlan et al., 2025). The unhealthy use of social and digital media can significantly affect social life and may have devastating impacts on society (Nascimento, I. et al., 2022). (Ismail, D., Kane A & Kenny, I, 2024) (Rifan Eka Putra Nasution, Abram Derisko Xaverius Purba, Habibatul Jannah Siregar, 2025).

Human relationships, as the foundation of society, initially viewed the rise of new innovations in communication and interaction in a positive light. However, over time, the negative sides of internet-based technological development have also begun to be felt. The emergence of Covid-19, which spread across the globe, highlighted the importance of internet-based digital communication technologies as essential tools to fill the void created by the crisis. These technologies provided new ways for humans to continue their lives, offering alternative methods of interaction and connection in the face of unprecedented challenges (Ardiyanto Nugroho, Steven Rialdy Riswandy, Yuni Widiastiwi, 2021).

Due to the development and widespread use of internet-based digital communication technologies, interactions between individuals are no longer confined to direct (face-to-face/offline) encounters but can also occur indirectly (online). Interpersonal communication is increasingly facilitated through various social and digital media platforms, whose growth continues to accelerate. Such interactions are no longer constrained by geographical boundaries or time, and can take place anywhere. Consequently, the scope of individual-to-individual connections has significantly expanded, particularly within online spaces (Nisrina Khairani Imanina, 2023). The utilization of digital information technology and social media has emerged as a significant new force in shaping public opinion and disseminating political information. (Rangga Galura Gumelar, Iman Mukhroman, Ikhsan Ahmad, 2025).

The development of digital information in millennial life is marked by the massive use of internet-based information technology. The growing use of information across various media platforms influences digital communication that is increasingly present in the daily lives of Indonesian society. Internet-based technology and digital information technology have become the fundamental framework for the development of various social media platforms that directly interact with people's lives, both at the individual level and within Indonesian society as a whole. The use of social media platforms across different channels provides new forms and dynamics of communication within social media and the public sphere. Moreover, the use of social media is interconnected and reflects the lives, cultures, and backgrounds of the individuals who engage with it. (Tukina, Marta Sanjaya, Muhammad Mikhael R., 2020).

The massive development of digital information and communication technology has given rise to a new landscape and a new awareness. In subsequent periods, this awareness has increasingly emerged, particularly in relation to the negative impacts of digital social media. Social and digital media life reflects global culture while embodying an Indonesian national identity. This forms the foundation for major actors in shaping public opinion, perceptions, and attitudes (behaviour) across various media platforms. Communication, networking, information sharing, and the continuous updates of the latest news all find justification for the use of appropriate social and digital media platforms (Tanusha Jain, Vishal Pradhan, 2020). This research is therefore highly significant in addressing the question of how to use social media in a healthy and responsible manner?

2. METHOD

The development of research related to social and digital media platforms has grown rapidly. This rapid growth needs to be accompanied by relevant and updated methodologies. Such methodologies are essential in order to address issues comprehensively and in depth. Through this study, the researcher seeks to create a deeper understanding of the proper use of social and digital media platforms. The research will be conducted in a flexible manner, aligned with the

expanding phenomena of rapidly evolving social media. A flexible methodology is therefore relevant for obtaining the most recent, accessible, comprehensive, and relevant data (Connolly, 2024).

This research on the use of social and digital media was conducted between 2024 and 2025. The researcher carried out intensive observations across various social media platforms, with particular focus on hoaxes, fake news, misinformation, defamation, and echo chambers. The researcher also engaged in direct participation in order to gain firsthand knowledge and a genuine understanding of the phenomena under study (Sarah Tran, Cindy Lin, Bryan Dosono, Kelley Cotter, 2025). Direct academic involvement also helps to avoid exclusive control, ensuring that the research results yield objective data. Such engagement simultaneously maintains a positive atmosphere throughout the process. The researcher also reviewed various relevant literatures, sought supporting data, and compared findings with other studies. The collected data were then examined for their relevance, analysed inductively, and subsequently concluded.

To facilitate the research process, the study was carried out step by step and then analysed based on its objectives. If the objectives were not sufficiently addressed, the process was repeated, starting again from observation (O), searching for relevant literature (LR) and supporting data (DP), comparing with related research findings (Ptr), and proceeding to review and analysis (ReA). Throughout this process, the researcher ensured that every stage was guided by the research objectives. The sequence of $O \rightarrow LR \rightarrow DP \rightarrow Ptr \rightarrow ReA$ was conducted gradually and systematically (simultaneously).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social media platforms within online society are now in everyone's hands, especially since the post-Covid-19 era. The pandemic made people aware that life and ways of living have changed compared to the past. This difference is mainly due to the fact that the foundation of information in society is now the internet. The internet enables life to be interconnected from anywhere, at any time, and to be accessed instantly. Such rapid development has been further accelerated with the emergence of the era of Artificial Intelligence (AI). While these advancements bring positive impacts that simplify human life, they also carry negative consequences. The positive and negative impacts develop simultaneously, inseparably, though the negative ones can be minimized.

In this digital age of social and digital media platforms, there must be an awareness of the need for intelligence in their use. This awareness involves a fundamental mindset: awareness of consequences, the necessity of ethical grounding, and the responsibility of use. Ideally, such awareness should be widely understood; however, media literacy related to cultivating values of intelligence in media use is not always readily available.

Awareness of responsible social media use in the digital era and literacy in media engagement are not simple matters in today's global context, particularly in a plural society such as Indonesia, which in 2025 has a population of around 280 million. Such complexity, diversity, and multidimensionality give rise to challenges that are not easily addressed. Issues such as hoaxes, fake news, insults, humiliation, harassment, slender, unpleasant action and Echo Chamber dominate social media platforms. This situation illustrates that life in the social and digital media platforms age requires deep and broad ethic, insight/knowledge, understanding, and awareness.

Such depth and breadth in positioning social and digital media platforms within online society have become increasingly important. All stakeholders—especially the government, educators, and community leaders—must develop greater awareness of these conditions in order to respond appropriately.

FIGURE AND TABLE

The use of social and digital media platforms can bring both positive and negative impacts. The negative impacts of social media use can spread across various channels, from print media, online media, to the latest social media applications. The spread of these negative impacts gives rise to numerous problems, issues as well as challenges. On social and digital media, issues such as hoaxes, fake news, lies, misinformation, misuse of media platforms, distortion of rights, damaging information, data theft, Echo Chamber and the abuse of information by irresponsible parties frequently occur.

Since various media are accessible at the fingertips of every individual, these issues ultimately converge on questions of ethics, awareness of consequences, personal responsibility, and the demands placed on both individuals and society as those most affected by the impacts. The negative consequences may emerge at different levels—minor, moderate,

or severe—and can escalate into a damaging information, Echo Chamber, social and digital media crisis, an information crisis, and even an acute communication crisis.

Table 1. How Issues in Digital And Media Social Age appears?

	<i>low</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>Middle-top</i>	<i>Top</i>
a. Base on Ethic (BoE)	--+	++	+++	+++++
b. Aware of Consequences (AoC)	--+	++	+++	+++++
c. Accountability (Acct)	--+	++	+++	+++++
d. Responsibility (Resp)	--+	++	+++	+++++
	Caused Problem	may Problems	stable, harmony	well Stable, Harmony

Annotation: --- - : not enough, very less, ignore quite less
 +++++ + : base on, good ethic, sufficient enough
 Best

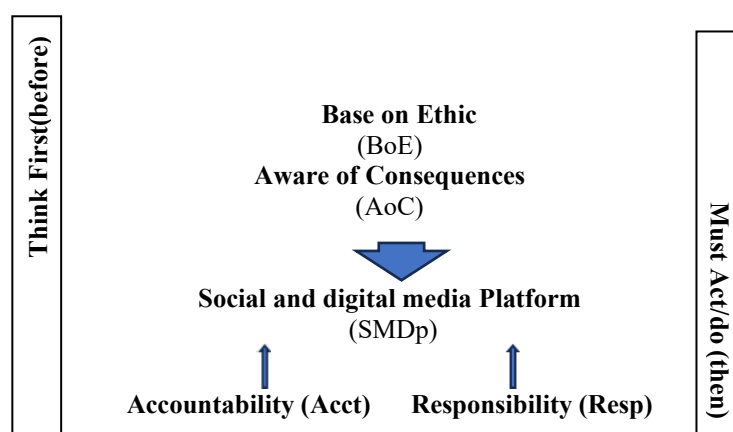


Figure 1. Model ideally Platform Media Social Age

4. CONCLUSION

The use of social and digital media platforms has become deeply embedded in the lives of individuals and society, particularly in the post-Covid-19 Age. Initially, social media use emerged as a vital means to fill the void in interpersonal relationships during the pandemic. Its presence then became increasingly significant—not only as a tool for maintaining connections but also for serving various human needs in relation to others. Eventually, almost every aspect of life came to recognize the importance of social media platforms in a tangible way. Social media is utilized not only to meet individual preferences but also in relation to the broader dynamics of society. At first, its use was perceived primarily as positive; however, as developments progressed, its negative impacts began to be acknowledged and recognized.

The issue of social and digital media use in communication has often become a topic of digital public discussion. Issues such as hoaxes, fake news, insults, humiliation, harassment, distorting information, damaging information, echo chambers, misuse of information, slander, and others frequently arise in the digital public sphere. These problematic issues largely stem from ethical concerns, the tendency to be active on social media without considering the consequences, lack of personal accountability and responsibility, as well as societal expectations and demands for more responsible use. Ideally, social and digital media usage should take these factors into account. Yet, such problems

are clearly present and easily found across various platforms. The challenges related to social media in the public sphere are closely tied to the level of media literacy regarding proper and healthy use in public communication.

In the digital public sphere, the use of social and digital media platforms may take on an ideal form—enabling communication that is constructive, healthy, stable, and harmonious. Conversely, unhealthy use of digital communication through social media can negatively affect broader social life and even produce serious disturbances. Such unhealthy practices can manifest in the form of noise, disputes, disharmony, conflicts, police reports, imprisonment, mutual harm, anxiety, and ultimately, a social life marked by hostility, enmity, and ongoing conflict.

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