

Conference Paper

Defining Digital Literacy in the Age of Computational Propaganda and Hate Spin Politics

Aqida Nuril Salma

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada

Abstract

In this era, people's lives are intertwined with the Internet and digital media although society might have to bear potential negative effects of these platforms. Free flow of information and the rise of hate speech, fake news and disinformation on the Internet have no doubt increased social polarization. Furthermore, a new phenomenon has arisen, which combines hate speech with indignation or offence-taking, and that is hate spin. Hate spin uses hate speech and fake news as a weapon to gain access to political power. Hate spin is considered to be one of the biggest threats to any democratic country, including Indonesia. A relatively young democracy and its reputation for religious moderatism and diversity, Indonesia has not been immune to the hoax epidemic plaguing societies around the world recently. Scholars assume that improving digital literacy is the best solution against hate spin in Indonesia. However, the current concept of digital literacy has been limited as merely a matter of technical skill. This paper offers an analysis on how to define the contemporary digital literacy concept that has moved beyond basic Internet access, and on how the technology works and is used by political elites with evidence of computational propaganda delivered through political bots, fake accounts and false news during recent political events in Indonesia.

Keywords: digital literacy, computational propaganda, hate spin, Internet, politics

Corresponding Author:
 Aqida Nuril Salma
 aqida.nuril.s@mail.ugm.ac.id

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1. Introduction

Across the globe, social media has increasingly become an important venue for interacting with others, spread ideas, influence opinions and most importantly, becoming people's trusted sources of information, even more than the websites and conventional mass media. By most estimates, in 2020 everyone around the world will effectively be online (Woolley & Howard, 2016). Although motivations for social media consumption may vary widely among individuals, the adoption of social media is such an indisputable trend that has increased every year over the last decade. Therefore, the evolution of digital media provides an important context for the analyses. Society today is radically changed with the digitalization of communication. As Castells shows us on his new

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and latest *Communication Power* (2009) about how communication in and between networks creates the possibilities of power: the possibilities for the states to execute the monopoly of violence, the possibilities for the organisations to promote economic and political interests, the possibilities for the citizens to challenge established structures. Castells also provides us with concepts that can help us understand how power in the network society is executed.

In this case, Castells is to be noted for the multiplicity of concrete examples that show how the theories manifest in practice across the world. For example, the optimism from the early days of the “Arab Spring” about digital platforms empowering the powerless, how “fake news” may have led to Trump’s victory, the alleged use of social media networks by the Russian government to undermine the presidential elections in the United States in 2016, and therefore there is an indisputable shift of the public and academic discourse from technological utopianism towards discussing and investigating the “dark side” of the digital technologies.

In the context of Indonesia, the political reform (or *‘reformasi’*) in 1998 was praised as being one historical event in Indonesian politics in which, for the first time, communication technologies played a significant role in the social movement around the time that the authoritarian regime was brought down (e.g. Tedjabayu, 1999; Marcus, 1998; Hill and Sen, 2000; Lim, 2003 and Nugroho, 2007;). Despite the limited availability of the technology at the time, a number of pro-democracy activists started using mobile phones and pagers in combination with hand transceivers and early emails hosted at nusa.net.id to organize massive rallies in the country’s major cities. While some information remained among urban activists in Java, many scandalous stories about corrupt government officials and elites were discussed more widely in the mailing list *apakabar*, which were then printed, copied and distributed offline to many grassroots groups to maintain their morale in the elongated protests and rallies (Nugroho and Syarief, 2012). Here, we see an empirical example of Castells’ theory, which explains how the Internet has been used to resist and even create alternative technology to empower the powerless civil society in Indonesia more than a decade ago.

Indeed, digital media has sparked new hopes mainly on digital empowerment and the revival of the public sphere. This optimistic view underlines how social media platforms increase civic exchanges among citizens, encourage citizen engagement (Nugroho and Syarief, 2012), have positive and potentially strong effects on political participation and knowledge (Hendricks & Denton, 2010; Norris, 2001; Papacharissi, 2002), and facilitate citizen journalism that promotes transparency (Lim, 2017). Moreover, much of the research on the political potential of digital media has either praised the

revolutionary possibilities offered for extending creativity and increasing participation (Jenkins 2006) and even altering the balance of power in the network society (Shirky 2011; Castells 2009).

On the other hand, scholars started realizing some potentially harmful effects that the abuse of these platforms might cause to our society. The positive, and wide-reaching, democratic potential of social media is much discussed, but another, more propagandistic, side of this new technology exists (Woolley & Howard, 2016a). In this case, cyber pessimists have been pitted against cyber optimists. Quite the opposite, cyber pessimists have criticized the structural and political limitations of digital platforms deeply embedded in the exploitative mechanisms at the heart of communicative capitalism (Dean 2005; Fuchs 2013; Curran, Fenton and Freedman 2012). Morozov (2011) completed the view as he argued that the democratizing power of new media will in fact bring not democracy and freedom, but the entrenchment of authoritarian regimes. More specifically, digital media today are actively used to infiltrate protest groups and track down protesters, seeding their own propaganda online (Morozov, 2011), to attack and smear others, or to deceive and manipulate (Ferara, 2015), political polarization (Changjun et al., 2017), the proliferation of untruths (recently called “fake news”), and the rise of online radical groups (Lim, 2017). As argued by Charlie Backett (2017):

“‘Fake news’ is a real problem in all its forms: the viral hoaxes created for profit or political disruption, the hyper-partisan distortion, and malicious misinformation. Deliberately-created false information is not new, but it is more extensive and harder to identify or counter than before. Digital technologies and the Internet make it easier to create and spread. It misleads citizens, misrepresents reality and causes damage to the information system itself.”

What technology pessimist conclude is relevant with Indonesia today. Jakarta Gubernatorial Election is one of the most interesting phenomena in the discussion of the dark side of digital media usage in Indonesia. The social media campaigns during Pilkada DKI were heavily packed with negative information and “fake news” (Lim, 2017). Meanwhile, research by State Islamic University Jakarta has shown that the rise of religious intolerance among young Muslims associated to their increased access to the internet and particular social media. This has lent credibility to the hypothesis on Indonesia’s “conservative turn” (Bruinessen 2011, 2013; Hamayotsu 2014) and “the end of innocence” (Feillard and Madinier 2011). The turn toward “conservatism” in this sense has been attributed to a number of indicators such as an increasing use of violence in the name of religion (Sofjan, 2016), and changing media environments have often been

considered as a major factor as well. These indicators have caused “tremors” in the Indonesian political landscape (Bruinessen 2013).

It is undoubtedly known that digital media has received a substantial amount of blame for the recent increase in political polarization and intolerance in Indonesia. Based on survey conducted by Masyarakat Telematika (Mastel) in 2016 revealed social media as the main channel of hoax dispersal in Indonesia (92,4%). On top of that, since late 2017, the National Police have caught two online syndicates known as Saracen and Muslim Cyber Army allegedly responsible for creating hoax and hate speech in relation to the anti-Ahok protests that caused the downfall of former Jakarta governor. While simultaneously taking advantage of most Indonesian Internet users’ lack of digital literacy and the wide sensitivity toward sectarian issues. Therefore, the recent proliferation of hate speech and fake news in Indonesia’s digital sphere is undoubtedly a matter of concern.

Following this, many agree that increased digital media literacy is crucial for tackling the computational propaganda and hate spin phenomenon in Indonesia, rather than waiting for the government to act. While media literacy is an umbrella term that applies to both traditional and digital media, digital literacy refers specifically to the latter (Polizzi, 2017). A functional approach looks only at the mere technical skills, such as accessing and navigating the Internet. However, in the age of computational propaganda and hate spin politics, what we need is not merely the digital media literacy but critical digital literacy that goes beyond understanding digital media content. Then it is important to take stock of these developments and ask ourselves as the questions of this paper: what exactly should we know about the combination of computational propaganda and hate spin politics so that we can control, if not prevent, its harmful effects? How to define digital literacy in the age of computational propaganda and hate spin politics? What is critical digital literacy?

Therefore, the present paper aims at conducting a theoretical review for understanding the urgency to modify the concept of digital literacy in the age of computational propaganda and hate spin politics that should go beyond technical skills. Computational propaganda and hate spin politics are closely associated in today Indonesian society. Therefore, Indonesia need for an immediate understanding on how the technology works and used by political elites with evidence of computational propaganda delivered through political bots, fake accounts and false news in recent Indonesia’s political events. It is noted that the development of Internet towards the social media and the emerging web 4.0 was found to be the major change leading to the evolution of the concept of digital literacy. The bibliographical review allowed analyzing the theoretical foundations of digital literacy in the context of Indonesia and abroad in depth.

2. Result and Discussion

2.1. Understanding computational propaganda and hate spin politics in Indonesia

The Internet has certainly opened new opportunities for civic participation in political processes as well as inspiring hopes to give a new energy for our contemporary democracy. However, the parallel rise of big data analytics, social media algorithms, and computational propaganda, which are part of digital infrastructures, are raising significant concerns for policymakers worldwide. At the same time, some scholars and cyber pessimists have emphasized some potentially harmful effects that the abuse of these modern platforms might cause to our society. As shown on the most recent series of the popular conspiracy drama “Homeland” features a shadow intelligence agency dedicated to producing and circulating fake news and computational propaganda via fake social media user accounts. The plot of “Homeland” quite relevant with current events worldwide where the manipulation of public opinion over social media platforms have emerged in daily public life. As exemplified in the quotation below (Lapowsky, 2016):

“Even as the Internet has made it easier to spread information and knowledge, it’s made it just as easy to undermine the truth. On the internet, all ideas appear equal, even when they’re lies. ... Social media exacerbates this problem, allowing people to fall easily into echo chambers that circulate their own versions of the truth. ... Both *Facebook* and *Twitter* are now aagrappling with how to stem the spread of disinformation on their platforms, without becoming the sole arbiters of truth on the internet.”

Quotation above can lead to what we call as computational propaganda. The affordances of social media platforms make them powerful infrastructures for spreading computational propaganda (Bradshaw & Howard, 2018). Meanwhile, the classical understanding of propaganda as the “management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols” (Lasswell, 1927, p. 627) still stands. What has changed is the way this manipulation takes place as the digital medium comes with its own intrinsic features (Bjola, 2017). Researchers used the term “computational propaganda” to addresses the recent issues of digital misinformation and manipulation efforts. Computational propaganda is among the latest, and most ubiquitous, technical strategies which can be utilized by those who wish to use digital technology for social and political control. As it

is best defined as the use of algorithms, automation, and human curation to purposefully distribute misleading information over social media networks (Woolley & Howard, 2016).

As one of the most powerful new tools for manipulation, computational propaganda can be delivered in various forms such as bots, false news, fake accounts, trolls, and more. These tools can be surprisingly effective, as looked on empirical evidence collected from Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, Poland, Taiwan, Russia, Ukraine, and the United States (Neudert 2017; Bolsover 2017; Gorwa 2017; Sanovich 2017; Zhdanova & Orlova 2017; Woolley & Guilbeault 2017; McKelvey & Dubois 2017; Monaco 2017; Bradshaw & Howard 2017). However, bots are one of the most popular tools as looked on its ability to be able to spread propaganda quickly and thoroughly. One person, or a small group of people, can use an army of political bots on Twitter to give the illusion of large-scale consensus (Woolley & Howard, 2017).

In democracies, social media are actively used for computational propaganda either through broad efforts at opinion manipulation or targeted experiments on particular segments of the public (Wolley & Howard, 2017). Including Indonesia where in late 2017, the National Police have caught online syndicates known Muslim Cyber Army. The Muslim Cyber Army played a crucial role in disseminating content attacking Ahok and non-Muslims that caused the downfall of former Jakarta governor. The group has at least four ideologically driven clusters that spread inflammatory material with the help of bots or by hacking into opponents' online accounts (Pearl, 2018). These bots are often used to flood social media platforms to manipulate public opinion with spam and fake news.

Meanwhile, the 2019 presidential election in Indonesia is approaching, scheduled for 17 April next year. Although it has not been entered the campaign period yet, the signs of the emergence of computational propaganda have become increasingly clear. Previously, there was a lot of talk about the emergence of a poll that won the Prabowo-Sandiaga pair on Twitter. Many associate the results of the poll with the phenomenon of bot accounts in Russia, which uses 50,258 robot accounts in the 2016 presidential election that won by Donald Trump. Here, we can clearly see the rise of computational propaganda in Indonesia.

Then, why does computational propaganda matter? Certainly, the promotion of echo-chambers of hate with filter bubble and the online escalation of political polarization are tangible effects of digital propaganda, which cannot be ignored (Bjola, 2017). Why? The idea of an echo chamber itself comes from a metaphorical way to describe a situation where only certain ideas, information and beliefs are shared (Jamieson and Cappella, 2008; Sunstein, 2009). In other words, people living in an echo chamber

will only believe things they already agree and comfort with. Through opportunities to select information and communities which support existing beliefs as well as through algorithmic personalization – that we can call as filter bubble - made some worry that the Internet may make it easier for citizens to find themselves in an echo chamber (Dubois and Blank, 2018). Proven from the latest BuzzFeed analysis of partisan Facebook pages found that often, the more a page shares false or misleading information, the more viral its posts become (Lapowsky, 2016). This has led to increasing political polarization which will reinforce political divides, and threaten democracies by limiting political information and discussions (Ksiazek, Malthouse and Webster, 2010; Sunstein, 2009). Indeed, digital media has received a substantial amount of blame for the recent increase in political polarization and intolerance in Indonesia.

However, we can't completely blame digital media for worse. By concentrating our gaze solely on new forms of mediation of radical politics, we are seduced by the thrills and excitement of revolutionary possibilities on offer, by technologies, and forget the politics itself (Fenton 2015, 347). Yet, some of digital media users are actually not easily manipulated and steered, that they act based on their own disposition and consciousness (Sugiarto, 2014; Lim, 2017).

Built on Tarrow's (1998) theory of contentious collective action and a careful analysis of empirical cases across the globe, George demonstrates that hate spin is a strategic tactic deployed intentionally by politicians, organizers, activists, religious leaders, and other agents to exploits freedom in democracy by reinforcing group identities and attempt to manipulate the genuine emotional reactions of citizens as resources in collective actions whose goals are not pro-democracy.

George challenges the myth that outbreaks of intolerance usually to be visceral and natural product of human diversity, but rather purposefully constructed by political actors to achieve their own political goals. In other words, elites are exploiting identity politics to mobilize supporters in what can at first appear to be spontaneous explosion of outrage but is in fact part of their political strategy. The wider strategy of hate spin can ride not only on religion but also race, nationality, sexual identity, and other markers of identity.

There are one of the best-known examples to explain hate spin politics in contemporary Indonesia's political landscape. The incumbent Basuki Tjahaja Purnama known as Ahok or BTP is a double minority (Christian- Chinese) politician who was seen as the closest ally of President Joko Widodo was decisively defeated in a gubernatorial election after enjoying 70 percent approval rating. More surprisingly, after the announcement of the election result, he was sentenced to a two-year prison term for violating the

1965 Blasphemy Law as the edited video of his speech spread in a provocative manner, sparking anger among conservative Muslims. Driven by radicals and conservative Muslim group who were able to tap into religious sensitive and mobilized hundreds of thousands in “Action to Defend Islam” to demand the arrest of Ahok for allegedly insulting the holy book Quran. The was possibly the largest mass demonstration in the history of Indonesia (Lim, 2017), probably the largest after reform movement. The case certainly provided a precedent for how to exploit religion to achieve political power, or in other words, hate spin politics.

On the other hand, George who has explored the complexity of the manipulation and its impact on collective action, perceived computational propaganda only as one of the indicators that can make hate spin supported and done by many people together. He also emphasized the invasion of the trolls that may reflect hate spin in online content. Commonly referred to as dog whistling, trolls involve the most extreme language that is usually confined to radical groups on the fringes of the network, as well as nameless individuals trolling the Internet (George, 2017). I can say that computational propaganda was not effective enough without hate spin politics which able to tease out citizens’ genuine emotions. In other words, computational propaganda still relies on content creation. Thus, digital literacy should be accompanied by political literacy, which will be analyzed in the following section.

2.2. Toward the new concept of digital literacy

After showing evidence of the rise of computational propaganda and hate spin politics in Indonesia, thus, we need to look more deeply to the new concept of digital literacy as one of the solutions to response to these emerging challenges that digital society face today and in the future. Living in what Marshall McLuhan (1964/1997) as the global village, it is not enough to merely understand the media. Society today needs to be empowered to critically negotiate meanings, engage with the problems of misrepresentations and under representations, and able to produce their own alternative media.

However, before we discuss about the digital literacy itself, it is wise to looking for possible solutions beyond the literacy. We all have a duty to do something—albeit in different ways. For instance, the high-tech corporations that often expected to develop and implement technological fixes in the hope to tackle computational propaganda by grading reliability, checking bots, fact-checking and many more. Although it is also less effective to tackle the spread of fake news, looking at Brazil’s recent presidential election for example (references ???). Furthermore, fake news does not spread only in the hands

of individual users—citizens or politicians—and on platforms such as *Facebook* and *Twitter*, but mostly in the hand of the journalists. It is therefore essential for established news providers and journalists fact-check their sources. As Charlie Beckett (2017) has argued,

“There is now a growing need for professional journalists to be more sceptical, and more explicit, in their use of evidence, and more transparent themselves. Especially in the era of President Trump, mainstream journalism has a much greater responsibility to perform its traditional role of ‘speaking truth to power.’”

Apparently, regulation should also play a pivotal role. For instance, UK government launched fake news inquiry in order to response to the proliferation of false news that exemplifies the need to enhance public policies. In the website, experts and academics advising policymakers should find a better way to engage in dialogue with the public and improving citizen participation. Similar efforts were also made by the Indonesian government in response to the rise of computational propaganda. Indonesian government through Ministry of Communication and Information Technology is forming a special team contain 70 people in charge of uncovering hoax news every week. This was done as one of the government’s efforts to improve literacy and avoid polarization in the political year.

Indeed, citizens have a duty to be well-informed about recent civic and political matters so they can make informed decisions when they delegate power to politicians. However, political literacy is not enough since today’s political communication and engagement are highly mediated by digital technologies, the notion of political and digital literacy demands additional skills, knowledge and actions. There should be a continuing debate of how to approach and promote digital literacy, as a dimension of the umbrella notion of media literacy. Meanwhile, the importance of digital literacy has been re-emphasized by Morozov (2017) on his latest article responding to Russia interference of using computational propaganda to undermine US election:

“Fake news ultimately exists because of the business model of what he calls ‘digital capitalism’: it exists because it’s profitable. If we want to challenge fake news, we have to challenge the enormous power of digital advertising and the global companies that thrive on it.”

I concur with Morozov’s analysis that it is impossible to challenge the power of digital capitalism. Therefore, the most realistic solution we can offers to response to these emerging challenges is digital literacy. Below, I will offer an analysis towards the new

concept of digital literacy based on following question: is it just a fancy way of talking about how people learn to use digital technologies, or is it something broader than that?

The idea of digital literacy is not new, as its first appeared since arguments for computer literacy date back at least to the 1980s. Yet as Goodson and Mangan (1996) have pointed out, the term computer literacy is often poorly defined and delineated, both in terms of its overall aims and in terms of what it actually entails. As they suggest, rationales for computer literacy are often based on dubious assertions about the vocational relevance of computer skills, or about the inherent value of learning with computers, which have been widely challenged. In contemporary usage, digital (or computer) literacy often appears to amount to a minimal set of skills that will enable the user to operate effectively with software tools, or in performing basic information retrieval tasks (Buckingham, 2015). Those is merely a technical definition that specifies only to the basic skills to undertake particular information technology content and operations, but it does not go very far beyond this.

In the age of computational propaganda, hate spin and post truth politics, digital literacy should go beyond merely technical skills and the use of information and communication technologies. In view of the disruptive effects that computational propaganda has on societal discourse, it is important to know how to (counter)-react to systematic manipulative campaigns and efforts that seek to promote disinformation and improving the new concept of media literacy which include the understanding on how computational propaganda and hate spin politics works. I concur with (Fabos, 2004) analysis on how to describe the new concept of digital literacy.

“As this implies, digital literacy is much more than a functional matter of learning how to use a computer and a keyboard, or how to do online searches. Of course, it needs to begin with some of the basics. In relation to the internet, for example, children need to learn how to locate and select material – how to use browsers, hyperlinks and search engines, and so on. But to stop there is to confine digital literacy to a form of instrumental or functional literacy. The skills that children need in relation to digital media are not confined to those of information retrieval. As with print, they also need to be able to evaluate and use information critically if they are to transform it into knowledge. This means asking questions about the sources of that information, the interests of its producers, and the ways in which it represents the world; and understanding how these technological developments are related to broader social, political and economic forces.” (Indented)

There is no doubt that the need for media literacy is not new, but rather the terms on which should be defined, addressed, researched and promoted to be different following the changes that occur in the society. Nowadays, scholars define the new term called critical digital literacy. As acknowledged in their report, however, critical digital literacy should also involve a better awareness of how and why information is created, disseminated and consumed in the digital environment. Critical digital literacy, on the other hand, aims to empower users to consume content critically, as a prerequisite for online engagement, by identifying issues of bias, prejudice, misrepresentation and, indeed, trustworthiness (Polizzi, 2017).

Indeed, the new technologies of communication that are becoming more powerful tools to liberate or dominate, manipulate or enlighten, and it is imperative that educators teach their students how to critically analyze and use these media (Kellner, 2004a). To fully counter such a threat, a definition of critical digital literacy should be about understanding, for instance, that although digital media have the democratizing potential to facilitate marginalized groups' political participation and mobilization, as well as pluralism, content dissemination and diversification of political debate, they're also constrained by issues of elitism – as they are used predominantly by the most advantaged groups – while online content can be highly fragmented, polarized and, as the post-truth narrative epitomizes, subject to questionable reliability (Polizzi, 2017). Therefore, Sonia Livingstone and Kjartan Ólafsson (2017) suggest that there is a need for greater digital literacy education for all adults, not just children.

Here, there are some important points that should be take into account on how critical digital literacy should be approached, in relation with the emerging of computational propaganda and hate spin politics, as discussed below and based on Polizzi (2017) analysis:

- Critical digital literacy is not only about evaluating online content or digital skills but also to understand the internet's production, management and consumption processes, as well as its democratizing potential and its structural constraints. In the age of computational propaganda, this mean that society should incorporate a broader understanding of the internet with the understanding of the history and process in the computational propaganda production include the knowledge on digital tools such as trolls, bots, algorithms and even understand the dark side of digital media and echo chambers, filter bubble and more.
- Critical digital literacy should be understood as essential in protecting people of all ages from hoaxes and false news, as well as in fostering social inclusion and the civic and political empowerment. Many people argued that digital literacy

should be taught only to children. Indeed, digital literacy is crucial for children, particularly when it comes to the discussion of an inappropriate content and issues of privacy and safety. However, some research show how both younger and older people have somewhat lower levels of critical digital literacy. Thus, it is worth noting to policymakers ensuring everyone in all ages can benefit from critical digital literacy.

- Critical digital literacy may enable us to reflect critically on social issues, and to engage in both institutional and non-institutional politics. Since political communication and engagement are highly mediated by digital technologies, critical digital literacy demands additional skills, political knowledge and actions. In other words, today's society should have a deep understanding on how politics work, such as hate spin politics. Thus, we will not easily to be manipulated by political actors and we can be wiser in responding to these phenomenon, and in the context of Indonesia, we should be tolerant to each other political preference. Political literacy play a crucial role in reshaping the new concept of digital literacy.

All in all, a national media literacy plan – with the new concept of literacy – should be established in Indonesia. Consequently, teaching critical digital literacy should imply educating users (children and adults) to appreciate what opportunities and risks digital media entail, to have a better understanding of digital infrastructures by also focusing on their democratizing potentials and political constraints. It should be follows by trained teachers to be able to deliver such a plan.

3. Conclusion

Knowing the dark side of digital media and the impossibility to challenge the digital capitalism, left the Internet users with the option of to not falling prey to it and to become resilient. In order to be resilient, many scholars proposed one possible solution that is to improve digital literacy. However, the digital literacy mentioned by scholars should goes beyond understanding digital media content but also its infrastructures, and to include knowledge of the wider social and political structures, which they define the new term called critical digital literacy.

It is highly relevant with the emergence of computational propaganda and hate spin politics with all its negative effects on democracy, particularly in Indonesia. There is no doubt that digital literacy is the most realistic solution compared to others. In this case, critical digital media literacy is the only concept that can respond to the development of an era that cannot be avoided in Indonesia. First, digital media literacy requires Internet

users to be able to understand how online content can be disseminated, the ability to compare and evaluate multiple sources, as well as to an understanding of a series of computational propaganda forms that delivered through bots, trolls, and more.

Second, and most importantly, is critical literacy, that conventionally carries a political connotation, mostly about critical reflection, political involvement and social actions, which in the concept of digital literacy is still not clear and lack of understanding. This critical literacy is important to face the rise of hate spin politics in Indonesia, as it is able to manipulate public emotions with the low political and critical literacy. In conclusion, the new and politicized approach to critical literacy combined with digital literacy will be beneficial not only in tackling how threatening such a phenomenon is for Indonesia's emerging democracy, but also in facilitating democracy itself by contributing to the future of informed, critically autonomous and digitally empowered Indonesian citizens.

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