The Urgency of E-Da'wa in The Digital Age

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Abstrak

Era digital telah mengubah hampir semua sektor kehidupan manusia dewasa ini. Hal ini tidak bisa dilepaskan dari berkembang pesatnya berbagai media digital berbasis internet. Aktifitas dakwah sebagai salah satu langkah dalam rangka mewarnai semua sektor kehidupan dengan nilai-nilai Islam tentu perlu memanfaatkan perkembangan ini secara efektif dan efisien agar tujuan dakwah lebih mudah tercapai. Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mengetengahkan urgensi *e-dakwah* di era digital sebagai respon ideal para da'i terhadap perkembangan teknologi komunikasi dan informasi yang berdampak langsung pada berbagai cara dan metode melaksanakan dakwah. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kepustakaan yang menganalisis sejumlah artikel-artikel di berbagai jurnal ilmiah yang membahas tentang dakwah dan teknologi informasi, komunikasi, dan internet. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat sejumlah media berbasis internet yang bisa dimanfaatkan dalam melaksanakan e-dakwah, seperti: website, blog, mailing list, media sosial, dan aplikasi virtual meeting. Sejumlah media dakwah di era digital ini perlu dikemas secara kreatif, inovatif, dan adaptif agar tetap relevan di tengah perkembangan teknologi yang pesat dalam beberapa dekade belakangan ini.

Kata Kunci: E-*dakwah, era digital, dan media dakwah.*

Abstract

The rise of the digital era has changed almost all sectors of human life today. This is related closely to the rapid development of various internet-based digital media. Da'wah activities as one of the necessary steps to color all

sectors of life with Islamic values certainly need to take advantage of this development effectively and efficiently so that the objectives of da'wah can be achieved more easily. This paper aims to highlight the urgency of e-da'wah in the digital era as the ideal response of the da'i to the development of communication and information technology which has a direct impact on various ways and methods of carrying out da'wah. This research is a literature study that analyzes several articles in various popular and scientific media that discuss da'wah, information and communication, and internet technology. The results of the study indicate that several internet-based media can be used in implementing e-da'wah, such as websites, blogs, mailing lists, social media, and virtual meeting applications. Many da'wah media in this digital era need to be packaged creatively, innovatively, and adaptively to remain relevant amid rapid technological developments in recent decades.

Keywords: Digital era, e-*da'wa, and media of da'wa.*

A. Introduction

Technological developments that are increasingly getting more and more sophisticated require all aspects of life to also develop to catch up with the pace of current technological advances. Information and communication technology that has entered all aspects of life, whether in the fields of education, economy, politics, health or even the field of da'wah communication will slowly lead mankind into a digital era where everyone is allowed to be involved in the communication process without limits.

As quoted by Piliang (1998, p. 9), Marshall McLuhan, in his book Understanding Media, The Extensions of Man, which was published almost six decades ago, in 1964 to be exact, predicted that the transition from the era of mechanical technology to the era of electrical technology in the western world will contribute to the shift in the function of technology as an extension of human beings towards the extension of the final stage; from the extension of human space to the extension of human nerves. For example, if in the mechanical era a typewriter could extend the human hand, in the technological era, computers could extend the human nervous system. In this digital era, to

borrow McLuhan's term, humans seem to live in a global village that is connected via the internet. The term global village is used to describe how electronic communication technology reduces the earth to a village through the instantaneous availability of information.

Internet is a communication network technology on a global scale without boundaries. Everyone in all corners of the world can access a variety of information from any part of the world. The use of internet technology in Indonesia is increasingly massive, its role is also increasingly important in various sectors of life, such as social, economic, political, educational, including as a platform for preaching. Based on the results of a survey conducted by the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (APJII), internet users in Indonesia for the 2019 to 2020 period rose to 73.7 percent of the population or the equivalent of 196.7 million users. This figure shows that it has almost penetrated 200 million of the Indonesian population of 266.9 million according to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) (APJII Bulletin, 2020).

Departing from the data above, it appears that the Indonesian people will enter a new era, namely the digital era in which a new culture will emerge which is very different from the culture in the previous era. Like the era of the past thirty years, namely 1990 when the internet just entered Indonesia. This will have positive and negative impacts, which must be prepared and welcomed by the government and all its elements. That way, educational methods, information methods, and of course da'wah methods will be different and must continue to be able to keep up with technological developments so as not to be left behind and run over by the progress of the times.

Da'wah must go hand in hand with the development of digital technology. In addition, da'wah must also be able to anticipate the problems that exist in today's society. For da'wah to be more effective and efficient, da'i or da'wah actors must master information and communication technology

devices. When the internet has entered human life, da'i must be able to use various media on the internet such as websites, community blogs, social media, and other internet-based electronic platforms for the benefit of Islamic da'wah. Da'wah to convey Islamic teachings and values must be able to adapt to various internet-based electronic media so that Islam will continue to develop in the digital era.

Da'wah activities that aim to convey Islamic values and teachings must follow the progress of the times. In the past, da'wah activities were only delivered through the pulpit media with face-to-face lecture methods, now, in the digital era, da'wah needs to adapt to technological developments, namely by utilizing internet media to convey the values of Islamic teachings as a way to preach. This is what is then called E-Dakwah (Electronic Da'wah) as one of the da'wah media in today's digital era.

Technological advances in the era of globalization and modernization are evident in the field of information and communication technology. Quick access to information is very important for the public. In the current era of online media, internet access to cyberspace is the consumption of netizens (internet users) so that the internet can be analogized as a sea of information that can be accessed by anyone who has access. Thus, da'wah is expected to continue to grow rapidly and be able to target *mad'u* (da'wah targets) without being limited by space and time.

Attractive packaging of Islamic information by using attractive media will certainly be more attractive to Muslims. In this digital era, almost all walks of life are familiar with the internet. In fact, almost all activities are disrupted, which were originally carried out in the real world, have turned to the virtual world. Activities such as looking for references about anything will mostly be done first on the internet. Not only looking for references to Islamic sources, learning references, shopping references, business references, banking transactions, and so on are also mostly done through the internet. This has

triggered the emergence of the term e-learning (online-based learning), e-commerce (online-based commercial activities including online shopping, online business, and so on), e-banking (online-based banking transactions), and so on. This indicates the need to think of new media that are more effective and efficient in da'wah to spread Islamic teachings. This is where e-Dakwah needs to be a concern and developed as a proselytizing medium in this digital era.

The current digital era is both a challenge and an opportunity for Islamic Da'wah and Communication. In this era, da'wah is not only done through television or radio but also needs to use the internet with various platforms and online media. So that to face the opportunities and challenges of da'wah, Muslims should be able to take advantage of all kinds of digital devices to carry out da'wah. This is nothing but so that Muslims can keep up with technological advances as well as facilitate preaching and disseminate Islamic teachings and values as widely as possible. Even with the use and mastery of these technological devices, it indicates that Islam can follow the progress of the times through various digital technology developments.

Seeing and observing how powerful the influence of content on the internet media is. So, the internet should be a necessity for most people in the world. Therefore, e-Dakwah is deemed necessary to support the effectiveness and efficiency of the process of da'wah activities in conveying Islamic teachings and values to all corners of the world. Thus, this paper aims to examine and analyze the urgency of e-da'wah in the digital era as a medium for delivering Islamic teachings and values.

B. Method

This research is library research (literature review) that analyzes writings in popular and scientific online media related to the issue of da'wah in the digital era.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Internet-based Da'wah Media

E-da'wah will run smoothly, effectively, and efficiently by utilizing various internet-based da'wah media. Some services on the internet that can be used for e-da'wah include websites, blogs, mailing lists, social media, virtual meeting platforms, and other applications that support Islamic da'wah.

A website is a collection of interrelated, publicly accessible web pages that share a single domain name. Websites can be created and maintained by individuals, groups, businesses, or organizations to serve various purposes (Martadila, 2021). In doing da'wah, the website can be used as a media source of correct information about Islam. By creating a website that attracts the attention of internet users along with messages about Islamic teachings that attract readers' interest, the website can be a fairly effective and efficient tool because it can reach a wider audience.

Blog or an abbreviated version of "weblog" is a term used to describe websites with an ongoing history of information. A blog is a platform where an author or a group of writers share their views and opinions on a particular subject (Lararenjana, 2021).

Blogs in general contain information that is independent, aka free and not bound because the content of a blog is completely dependent on the blog owner. Sometimes blogs are more effective than media sites or websites because the delivery of news and information on blogs is straightforward and straightforward. In addition, the existence of a fairly large blogger community also encourages the delivery of information and news more quickly. There are several well-known Muslim blogger communities in Indonesia, such as Muslim blogs and Forum Lingkar Pena. Both produce many famous bloggers and quality blogs.

The mailing list is an e-mail address that can be used or exploited by internet users in carrying out an activity or sharing or exchanging all kinds of information. The messages are sent automatically to the address of a mailing list which will then be forwarded to the e-mail address of each member. In Indonesia, this mailing list is often referred to as a mailing list (Ibeng, 2021). Thus, a mailing list is a discussion forum that can be closed or open through e-mail intermediaries. With a mailing list, a person can discuss freely and express their aspirations which will later be read by all members registered in the mailing list/community who may differ in ethnicity, race, religion, and country.

A social media that connects its members using links to create a network of friendships that can be based on school alma mater, place of work, hobbies, country, religion, common interests, talents, and so on. The development of social media is currently growing rapidly because the role of technology cannot be separated from every aspect of human life. Based on studies and research data compiled by "We Are Social" in 2019, social media users in Indonesia have reached 150 million people. This means that about 57% of the entire population of Indonesia already uses various social media (Widyananda, 2020). The 10 types of social media that are in the Top Ten most often used by Indonesians, as reported by Brilio.net (Rizaldi, 2019) are Youtube, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Line, Twitter, Facebook Messenger, BBM, Linkedin, and Pinterest. Through these various social media, interactions with other people who were previously never known at all can occur. Thus, the e-da'wah process can be carried out by utilizing these various social media. Due to the large number of internet users who utilize and use various social media platforms, da'wah will be able to spread massively and more quickly to a wider audience.

According to Julia Young, as disclosed by Abimbi (2021) in CyberMedia, a virtual meeting is an activity where all participants from various locations join at an agreed time using media such as teleconference or video conference.

In da'wah activities in the digital era, this virtual meeting application can be used to communicate with mad'u without the limits of space and time. Several applications can be used to conduct virtual meetings, such as zoom, google hangout meetings, skype, jitsi, and many more. The teleconference media allows a group of people to gather virtually and can display da'wah objects in audiovisuals so that da'wah activities are like being in front of the da'wah object and can discuss together discussing a problem and take advantage of it.

Software refers to an application that is used to do something. Application software is a software tool used to create a desired task or job (Syahril, 2021). Software is a computer program that functions to perform certain tasks. It can also be interpreted as data that is programmed and stored in the form of applications including computer programs, documentation, and various information that can be read and written by computers.

The complexity of software and the sophistication of hardware have become one of the advantages of the internet. So that collaboration, coordination, and communication can be supported with communication software applications and connected collaboration. The ease of communication between netizens (internet users) is one indicator of the development of the internet, especially those related to their transactions with one another.

The software can also be used as an e-da'wah media, for example making da'wah applications. For example, for the benefit of the people, software for recording zakat (LAZ) can be made, software for calculating inheritance and zakat maal, software for management/management of Islamic boarding schools/prayer rooms/libraries, and others. With this kind of

software, it is hoped that processes that previously used manual labor can become more automated and computerized so that the output can be faster, denser, and more accurate.

By using some of these internet-based service media, the concept of e-da'wah can be implemented. Da'wah activities with innovative and creative e-da'wah concepts can open up competitive opportunities in spreading Islamic values through electronic networks or internet networks to other parties. So that the truth of Islamic teachings and values can color various digital media, at least there is a balance between those who try to spread damage and slander and those who want to make improvements and da'wah.

2. The urgency of Da'wa in the Digital Era

The development of electronic media in this digital era is very rapid and has various types. With the support of technology, every person or organization can interact with each other at the same time and from different places. This certainly has a positive impact and opportunity for da'wah activities.

Da'wah in the digital era is not only done through conventional means such as lectures, speeches, and so on but can also be done via the internet (online da'wah or e-da'wah). The internet has a very big influence on da'wah activities, depending on how to use internet technology. As stated by Wahid in the quote Badjuri (2005, p. 44), since the advent of the Internet, the technology for da'wah seems to be more complete. E-da'wah is one of the uses of information technology as an active-creative response to existing developments. This creative response emerged from the awareness of the positive side of information technology. The internet network that almost engulfs all corners of the world is a vast land where there are podiums that voice the interests of Islam by introducing, inviting (da'wah), defending, and solving various problems. This is certainly an e-da'wah opportunity.

Some of the reasons for the urgency of e-da'wah in this digital era so that it is very potent and needs to be done, including:

a) Able to penetrate the boundaries of space and time in an instant with relatively affordable costs and energy.

b) Internet service users are increasing drastically every year, this means that it also affects the number of people who absorb da'wah missions.

c) Experts and scholars who are behind the da'wah media via the internet can concentrate more on addressing every discourse and event that demands legal status according to Islam.

d) Da'wah through the internet has become one of the people's choices. Through various sites, people are free to choose their preferred da'wah material, thus the coercion of will can be avoided.

In addition, the method of delivering Islamic teachings and values through e-da'wah can reach a wide segment. Thus, da'wah activities with the concept of e-da'wah in this digital era will be more effective and efficient. The effectiveness and efficiency of e-da'wah in this digital era can be seen from the following points (Wahid, 2004):

First, Muslims have spread to all corners of the world. Islam in the world today is the religion with the second most followers after Christianity. The same thing happened in America, France, and England. The growth of Muslims in other European countries and Australia is also very rapid. Meanwhile, the internet is an easy and inexpensive means to always keep in touch with the Muslim community spread all over the world.

Second, the bad image of Islam due to one-sided coverage by many western media needs to be fixed. The Internet offers an easy way to spread clear and true thoughts and divine messages throughout the world. Since, in this context, the internet is mostly used to spread anti-Islamic propaganda or

provide false information about Islam, the use of the internet is one effective way to combat it. In this case, Muslims can bring correct information about Islam on the internet through e-dakwah as well as carry out da'wah to non-Muslim communities.

Third, the use of the internet for da'wah by itself also shows that Muslims can adapt to the development of existing civilizations, as long as it does not conflict with the creed. In developed countries, this media has made it easier for Muslims to manage their da'wah and communicate with other members of the congregation. Mastery of this technology can also eliminate the dependence of Muslims on the west. And at least it can make Muslims at least able to stand on par with the west and become truly independent people.

In addition, because of its nature that is never turned off and can be accessed without limits, the internet gives users the freedom to access under any conditions and situations. So the internet is a very effective and efficient medium for preaching.

Furthermore, in the perspective of communication science, one of the important elements of communication itself is the media. As stated in Harold Lasswell's communication theory that complete and perfect communication must meet six elements, namely communicator, message, media, communicant, media, and effect. Lasswell (1960) said that "Who Says What, In Which Channel, To Whom With What Effect". When viewed from Lasswell's communication theory, the internet as an electronic communication medium represents one of the elements of communication, namely the media. The internet functions as an intermediary that bridges the communication process between communicators and communicants.

In today's digital era, many Muslims have made optimal use of internet facilities for the development of religious symbols. This is, for example, marked by the emergence of new sites with Islamic nuances with various platforms. Thus, it can be said that e-da'wah is very effective because it is

supported by the nature of the internet which is not limited by space and time. Islamic material and da'wah can be disseminated quickly and efficiently. From a cost perspective, it is very cheap. In addition, information that is disseminated via the internet can reach anyone and anywhere as long as the person concerned has access to the internet. Muslims can use technology for the benefit of da'wah and spread the values and truth of Islamic teachings.

E-da'wah is a form of integration between Islam and information technology as an alternative da'wah media that has a wide reach and can cross the boundaries of space and time. If e-dakwah is successfully implemented, then all levels of the world will know how the true teachings of Islam are. In addition, the application of the concept of e-da'wah is also one of the factors supporting the rise of Muslims in the field of technology which in turn will have an impact on other sectors of life.

D. Conclusion

Technological sophistication has opened up barriers and eliminated the boundaries of space and time, so choosing and using the right da'wah media is a must and the demands of the times. Because the da'wah media is a requirement for the success of the da'wah that is carried out.

Da'wah actors in this digital era are required to include information technology as their partners in preaching amar ma'ruf nahi munkar. The utilization of the internet as a medium for preaching is very effective because it is supported by the nature of the internet which is not limited by space and time. Islamic material and da'wah can be disseminated quickly and efficiently. From a cost perspective, it is very cheap. Information disseminated via the internet can reach anyone and anywhere as long as the person concerned has access to the internet. Thus, it is clear that e-da'wah is a very effective da'wah media in today's digital era.

The urgency of e-da'wah in this digital era needs to be seen by Muslims as a challenge and opportunity in packaging da'wah effectively and efficiently. Various internet-based digital media that can be used in e-da'wah are numerous and varied. So that interesting, innovative, and creative da'wah by utilizing digital electronic technology is very important to do in preaching. For da'wah to continue to spread, da'wah actors need to always be adaptive to the times.

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