



JOURNALISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA AT DARUL MUKHLASIN HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

The development of the digital world has brought significant changes in various aspects of education, including school journalism. Journalism in schools is no longer limited to print activities or wall magazines but has transformed into a more interactive and dynamic digital platform. High School Darul Mukhlisin is one institution that realises the need to adapt to this change. High School Darul Mukhlisin realises the importance of adapting to technology to improve students' literacy, creativity, and communication skills through digital journalism. This article discusses the strategy of developing digital journalism at High School Darul Mukhlisin, the challenges faced such as limited technological infrastructure, lack of digital skills, and low student interest in journalism, and the solutions implemented to overcome these problems. With a descriptive qualitative approach, the results show great opportunities in improving students' skills through training, creative content development, and collaboration with professional media.

Keywords: Digital Journalism, Education, Darul Mukhlisin High School, Digital Transformation, Student Literacy.

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of continuous digital development, the world of education is experiencing many important changes in the way learning and teaching are conducted. One area that has undergone significant transformation is school journalism ([Ariani et al., 2023](#)). Journalism in schools is no longer limited to print activities or wall magazines, but has transformed into a more interactive and dynamic digital platform. SMA Darul Mukhlisin is one institution that realises the need to adapt to this change. With a strong background in traditional journalistic development, the school is now turning towards digital strategies to enhance students' literacy, creativity and communication skills, so that they can face the challenges of the digital age.

As a discipline and practice, journalism plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion, conveying information, and honing critical thinking skills. The development of journalism in schools is crucial in training students to express their ideas and thoughts systematically, objectively, and creatively ([Harsono, 2010](#)). With the digital transformation, school journalism is required to adapt to the changing demands of the times. Technological innovation provides many opportunities for students and teachers to explore new ways of managing and producing journalistic content, whether in the form of writing, video or audio. It also allows schools to improve the quality of education through the integration of technology in the teaching and learning process ([Harsono, 2010](#)).

Darul Mukhlisin High School has long been known to be committed to the development of journalistic skills for its students. However, along with the rapid advancement of technology, the school is faced with the challenge of transitioning from the traditional manual journalistic approach to digital methods. This transformation process is not easy, as it requires readiness from various parties, including teachers, students, as well as the existing technological infrastructure in the school. Various challenges, such as limited resources, lack of understanding of technology, and resistance to change, are obstacles that must be overcome in the effort to develop digital journalism ([M. N. Fauzi, 2023](#)).

Behind these challenges, there are many opportunities that can be utilised. The shift to digital journalism provides various advantages, such as ease in disseminating information, wider interaction with audiences, and efficiency in content production. Digital platforms also give students the space to be more creative and innovative in delivering information, whether through text, images, videos or podcasts. The use of platforms such as blogs, social media, or school websites can be an effective tool to distribute students' journalistic work and expand its impact in the school community as well as the general public.

To develop journalism in the digital era, good planning and systematic implementation are required. One of the main strategies that can be adopted by SMA Darul Mukhlisin is to improve digital skills for students and teachers. This can be achieved through training and workshops that focus on the use of digital tools, content editing applications, and digital distribution platforms. According to ([Lestari, n.d.](#)), journalism teachers must be equipped with adequate skills to lead and guide students in managing digital journalistic content professionally. In addition, schools also need to develop a journalism curriculum that is in accordance with technological developments and student needs.

In addition to skills and infrastructure, a change in mindset is also a key factor in this transformation process. Students and teachers need to have a mindset that is open to change and technological advancement ([Budiman, 2017](#)). A collaborative approach, where teachers and students together learn and develop digital skills, is essential.

Thus, the transition to digital journalism becomes a shared responsibility involving all elements of the school, not just the task of teachers or management ([Muliastri, 2020](#)).

The development of journalism in the digital era has an impact that is not only limited to technical aspects and skills, but also affects the character building of students. Through journalistic activities, students can learn to be critical, objective, and responsible individuals in conveying information ([Hikmat, 2018](#)). They can also develop social and leadership skills through teamwork in the production of journalistic content. In an age where information can spread very quickly, the skills to sort out and produce accurate and useful information are very important. Therefore, digital journalism focuses not only on the use of technology, but also on the development of journalistic ethics and social responsibility.

The efforts made by SMA Darul Mukhlisin are committed to providing journalism learning experiences that are relevant and useful for students in this digital era. By formulating the right strategy, schools are expected to create an environment that supports digital journalism learning and prepares students to face increasingly complex real-world challenges, awareness to improve reading literacy and express thoughts is needed in improving and developing human resources, through the implementation of digital journalism, SMA Darul Mukhlisin not only seeks to improve students' technical skills and requires teaching staff who have competence in the field of journalism but can also shape students into individuals who can make a positive contribution to society through quality journalistic work.

The transformation of journalism at SMA Darul Mukhlisin not only aims to keep up with technological developments, but also to enrich the educational process by giving students the opportunity to be involved in the production of content that is relevant to their lives. In this way, digital journalism can be an effective means of improving students' digital literacy while strengthening the school's identity as an adaptive and innovative educational institution in the digital era.

METHODS

This study applied a qualitative approach to investigate in depth the journalism development strategy at SMA Darul Mukhlisin in the digital era. The focus of this research is to understand the process of digital technology adoption by the school in order to develop journalism. The method used is descriptive qualitative, which aims to provide an overview of the strategies implemented by the school, as well as the challenges and opportunities faced during the implementation of digital journalism.

The research was conducted at SMA Darul Mukhlisin, which is starting the process of integrating digital journalism into extracurricular and learning activities. The research subjects consisted of journalism teachers, students who were active in digital journalism, principals and teachers. Subjects were selected by purposive sampling based on their roles and involvement in the digital journalism programme.

The research instruments used included semi-structured interview guidelines, observation guides, and documentation. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with teachers, students, and principals; direct observation of journalistic activities; and collection of documentation related to the curriculum, student work, and journalistic activity reports at school ([Pahleviannur et al., 2022](#)).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the digital era, technological infrastructure is a key element in the development of journalism programmes in schools. Based on interviews with the principal and teachers involved in journalism activities, it was found that SMA Darul Mukhlisin still faces limitations in providing adequate technological infrastructure. Some computer rooms in the school are not equipped with up-to-date hardware to run video editing software, graphic design, or other journalistic applications.

In addition, internet access in schools is still a major problem. Although there are internet connections in schools, the quality is often inadequate to support journalistic activities that require fast and stable access to various online platforms. Students complain about slow internet speeds when they want to upload articles or edit videos using online-based tools ([Khamim, 2021](#)). According to data obtained from student surveys, more than 70% of students stated that they often experience problems when they have to work with digital journalism platforms due to internet connection problems.

In terms of software, observations show that the school does not yet have official licences for editing software such as Adobe Premiere or CorelDraw, which are highly needed in the modern journalistic process (RAMPAL, n.d.) Most students and teachers use free or open-source software such as Canva and Shotcut, but they feel that these tools have limited features compared to paid software. This limitation causes students' journalistic work to not achieve optimal quality, especially in terms of multimedia content production such as videos and infographics.

Strategies that can be implemented to overcome this problem include increasing the school budget to procure more adequate technology devices, as well as collaborating with internet service providers to improve the quality of internet access in schools. In addition, the introduction of open-source software with more powerful features and training in its use can help students and teachers maximise journalistic potential amidst infrastructure limitations ([Mustari, 2023](#)).

The development of journalism in the digital era requires not only adequate technological infrastructure, but also students' skills in using the technology. From the results of interviews and surveys, it was found that most Darul Mukhlisin High School students are still unfamiliar with the technology that supports modern journalistic practices. For example, more than 60% of students involved in the journalism programme had never used video editing tools or digital infographics before joining the programme.

There is a significant gap between students who are familiar with technology and those who are not. Students who have better access to computers and internet at

home tend to be more adept at using technology for journalistic purposes. They are quicker to adapt to platforms such as WordPress, Canva, or social media platforms used to distribute content ([Wahyudi & Jatun, 2024](#)). In contrast, students who do not have sufficient access at home have difficulty in catching up, even after receiving training at school. To overcome this challenge, schools can organise intensive training for students on the use of digital journalism technology. This training could include the use of video editing tools, graphic design, as well as how to utilise social media to disseminate journalistic works. In addition, individual guidance from teachers or mentors is also indispensable to help students who are lagging behind in terms of digital skills.

In addition to technical skills, most students also lack an understanding of journalistic ethics in the digital era. The survey results show that many students are not aware of the importance of verifying information before publishing, and some of them tend to spread information without going through an adequate fact-checking process. This could potentially lead to the spread of inaccurate information or hoaxes.

As part of the journalism development strategy, schools need to emphasise the importance of journalistic ethics in the curriculum, especially in the digital era where information is easily spread. Training on fact verification, how to write balanced news, and the importance of maintaining information accuracy need to be prioritised in this programme.

One of the important findings in this study is the limitation in terms of human resources that support the development of journalism at Darul Mukhlisin High School. Teachers involved in the journalism programme do not have a strong background in digital journalism, so they face challenges in providing adequate guidance to students. Most teachers have a background in general education and have never received specialised training in journalism, let alone digital journalism which is growing rapidly with technological advances ([Arifah, 2019](#)).

Based on interviews with teachers, most of them feel that they are not competent enough to teach digital journalism. Although they have a high interest and commitment to help students, they feel limited by their lack of technical knowledge of the digital tools required for journalistic content production. Teachers also face difficulties in motivating students to utilise technology creatively as they themselves lack the skills to do so.

To overcome these limitations, schools need to organise specialised training for teachers in digital journalism. This training can be organised in collaboration with professional journalism or media institutions that can provide direct training to school teachers. By improving teachers' competencies, they will be better able to guide and motivate students in developing their journalistic skills in the digital era ([A. Fauzi et al., 2022](#)).

Teachers involved in journalism programmes in schools also face challenges in managing time. Teaching journalism is often just an additional task outside of their

main responsibilities as teachers of other subjects. This results in a lack of sufficient time allocation to develop the journalism programme to its full potential. This time limitation also affects the intensity of mentoring that can be provided to students.

One solution to this problem is to increase the number of teachers or staff specifically assigned to manage the journalism programme at school. In addition, schools can consider making the journalism programme a part of the extracurricular curriculum that is more structured and gets sufficient time allocation.

One of the factors affecting the development of journalism at SMA Darul Mukhlisin is the low interest of students in the field of journalism, especially in digital format. From the survey results, only about 30% of students showed initial interest in journalism activities. The rest are more interested in other extracurricular activities such as sports, arts, or scientific activities. Many students are more focused on social media as an entertainment and communication platform, rather than as a tool to develop journalistic skills. Social media such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have shifted students' attention from traditional journalistic concepts such as news writing, reporting, and informative content creation, to focus more on entertainment and viral content.

However, interviews with some students showed that when given training and assignments related to digital journalism, such as creating blogs or documentary videos, they began to discover a new interest in journalism. Therefore, it is important for schools to introduce journalism with a more creative approach that is relevant to students' interests in the digital era. The use of social media as a means of distributing journalistic content, for example, can be an effective way to increase student interest. To increase student interest, journalism development strategies in schools need to focus on more creative approaches that are in line with technological developments. For example, students can be invited to create journalistic vlogs, podcasts, or conduct virtual interviews with sources using online platforms. The use of more interactive digital media can stimulate students' interest to be more actively involved in journalistic activities.

In addition, schools can organise digital journalism competitions, both at the school level and between schools, to motivate students to develop their journalistic skills. Giving awards or appreciation for students' journalistic works will also be a positive encouragement for them to continue participating and deepening their skills in this field. The results of this study also show that collaboration with professional media can be an important factor in the development of journalism at SMA Darul Mukhlisin. To date, the school has not established significant cooperation with local or national media to support the development of students' journalistic skills. In fact, cooperation with professional media can provide students with direct insights into journalism.

Collaboration with professional media can provide great benefits in the form of hands-on training from experienced journalists or editors, which can help students understand journalistic practices in the real world. In addition, students can also be given the opportunity to do internships or visit media offices, which will give them

practical experience in the journalism industry. Through this collaboration, students can also publish their journalistic works on professional media platforms, which will not only increase their motivation, but also give wider exposure to their journalistic works (Yusup & Qodir, 2021). In this way, students can feel that their work is valued and has a real impact in society. To build collaboration with professional media, schools need to organise discussions or seminars involving journalists or editors from various media. These seminars can be used as a first step to establish networks and cooperation between schools and the media. In addition, schools can also utilise technology to organise webinars or online training sessions involving media practitioners, so that students can learn directly from professionals despite the distance.

CONCLUSION

The development of journalism at SMA Darul Mukhlisin presents challenges and opportunities in the ever-evolving digital era. The transformation from traditional journalism to digital opens space for students to be creative and improve digital literacy, while preparing themselves for the dynamics of modern journalism. However, challenges such as limited technological infrastructure, inadequate digital skills, and students' lack of initial interest in journalism are major obstacles in this process. Nevertheless, with the right strategy, SMA Darul Mukhlisin has great potential to overcome these obstacles. Improving digital skills through training for teachers and students, improving infrastructure, and collaborating with media professionals can be an effective solution. With creative approaches such as vlogs, podcasts, and digital journalism competitions, student interest can be increased, while practical experience from working with professional media helps students develop quality journalistic work. This transformation not only enriches the educational process, but also strengthens the identity of SMA Darul Mukhlisin as an adaptive and innovative school in the digital era.

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