

On Digital Advocacy and Literacy

Computational propaganda has received global attention since several political transition relied on data mining and micro-profiling, making disinformation and post-truth come at the forefront of digital age malaise. This is not exclusive to the Western hemisphere when Indonesia, Philippines, and other Asian countries also suffer similar phenomenon.

More recently, observers and civil society organizations witnessed that the trend are intertwined with digital authoritarianism, in which anti-democratic and digital repression measures not only have silenced human rights activism, but also bent the truth. Indeed, **cooperation between government and tech-company should be on spotlight** since Facebook and Cambridge Analytica scandal has revealed the dark side of digitalization.

For sure, social media giants have their content moderation rules, but what actually happened behind data trading in the name of 'state security and stability' are far from transparent for public. Some oligarchic elites in Indonesia, for example, linked their newly established data-mining company to their palm oil and mining firms.

Three problems can be pointed out from these conditions. First, structural problem, where G2B political relation and economic interest remain neglected from public attention. Public should know how the relation works, who's interest, and what is the limit of the content regulations and of the data management rules.

Second, communicative problem. Digitalization and social media brought completely dynamic interpretative frame, making the meaning behind a content or an information changed over time, ideologically-dependent, and susceptible for implicit hatred that linguistically looks fine from content moderation rules point of view.

Third, literacy problem. Varying media literacy condition in the regions might have different results when it met AI-, bot-, or human-based fabricated contents, which often convey ambiguous quality beyond hoax-and-fact dichotomy. Post-truth lurked in this gray area, demanding non-dichotomic media literacy approach.

Solving these problems require not only collaborative energy and time, but also political commitment, since it is not merely about providing factful content environment or granting freedom of speech, but also limiting certain stakeholder's power and interest.

To do so, **regional advocacy to the tech-company representatives is necessary for civil society organizations, ensuring business-to-government relation violate neither international human rights standard nor ethical principle.**

Yet, high-level advocacy is possibly more fruitful when hand-in-hand with strong media literacy initiations on the grassroots. Educational curriculum and public discourse should start to mainstream that technology is not neutral, social media feeds are linked to the larger political economy interests, screen-mediated behavioral engineering is plausible, post-truth spectrum is beyond fact-hoax dichotomy, and state-sponsored data stalking is not equal as preventive-deeds as the state officials usually would claim.

Without high-level advocacy and grassroots literacy, the dawn of digitalization poses bigger chance into dystopian outcomes, the future that George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Jon Watts' *Spiderman: Far from Home* (2019) forecasted authoritarian surveillance and reality distortions came into normal.