The Role of Multimedia in Islamic Teaching Propagation: (Da’wah): An Indonesian Experience

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Abstract

This study is aimed at elaborating the role of multimedia in spreading out Islamic teaching among Muslim society, particularly as it is practiced and experienced in Indonesia. It is found that high technology, particularly information technology extraordinarily influence almost all aspects of human life. The development of technology has indeed contributed to the emergence of various inventions and simplified human daily lives, including the methods of preaching Islamic teaching to the Moslems. This research finds out that there are many programs and strategies of doing da’wah (Islamic teaching propagation) and developing its methods, among others, by utilizing multimedia both electronic and printed, both digital and non-digital ones. This sort of program integrates different kinds of media, such as, radio, television, text, internet, picture, MP3, animation, narration, video, and music and others. Another important role of this multimedia is to strengthen interactive and communicative ability and attitude between the da’i (propagator/communicator) and his/her ma’du (communicant/audience). By utilizing multimedia the so-called ummah (moslem

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1 Da’wah (also transliterated daawa(h); Arabic: دعوة “invitation”) means the proselytizing or preaching of Islam. Da’wah literally means “issuing a summons” or “making an invitation”, being a gerund of a verb meaning variously “to summon” or “to invite” (whose triconsonantal root is d-ʕ-w دعـ).  
2 Da’i (Arabic: “missionary”) refers to a person who engages in Dawah, the act of inviting people to Islam. Da’i is different from Da’i al-Mutlaq, which means dai

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This text is the final part of a longer paper considering the usual traditional media in a more general way.
society) would not only get information passively but also could select information they need and like based on sort of media they like. In other word, this program generates the intense relationship between the da’i (the da’wah doer/preacher) and the media. This program is very important to develop the strategies of spreading Islamic teaching among Muslim society in order to cope with the impact of high technology.

Keywords : Multimedia and Islamic Teaching Propagation

**Introduction**

The rapid development of technology, particularly information and communication technology makes almost everything easier and simpler. By using technology many kinds of job and duty can easily and efficiently be done and many goals and targets can be achieved. This phenomenon influences all sectors and activities of life including the sector of Islamic teaching propaganda or da’wah. This paper will elaborate the utilization of multimedia, including the Internet (social and digital media) in developing Islamic propaganda. It could generally be seen and found that many kinds of technology products have been used and utilized in developing and improving Islamic propaganda both printed, electronic or even digital media.

**The Da’wah in Digital Media Era**

The growth and development of digital media found its momentum in Indonesian following the growth of middle class of Indonesian Moslems in the eighties (80s). The middle class Indonesian Moslems are viewed as an important community which has extraordinary potential both in terms of economics and political access, knowledge and lifestyle. The community is like a snow ball which tends to grow bigger and bigger following their knowledge improvement and economic growth. In relation to this situation da’wah media should also be improved so that it will be matching with their need and situation. It needs, of course, representative and comprehensive da’wah strategy to positively respond to the ecosystem of digital media which is different from conventional media.

It is undeniable that the need of using digital media in da’wah activities and programs like the Internet (social media) and the like is a must. Referring to the data released by WeAreSocial (2015), Internet users in Indonesia number to 72.7 million; 72 million of this are active social media users access from 60 million akun media from mobile. This clearly indicates that social media as such is an effective media to send or deliver message including religious messages. Moreover, it is also a representative and strategic way to reach middle class Moslem society. It is, therefore, the strategy of how to use digital media properly and professionally in promoting and spreading out religious teaching and messages is really needed.

The **Da’wah through Internet**

The emergence of Internet access, facility and other ICT technologies are inevitable social phenomena. Through Internet access many kinds of information can be easily accessed by the international community both for personal or private and educational, political and business purposes as well. The Internet together with its social media facilities and networks are viewed as a new human civilization and a revolution of communication and information. When the Internet was first introduced by Western scientists, most prominent Moslem persons and even scholars had such a suspicious opinion and worried so much on the negative effects of this technological invention. But Dr. Muhammad Sa’id Ramadhan Al-Buthi, a grand Syech of Syria, is different. He said that the Internet networks which are covering and connecting international networks are a huge field and stage which can be used as podium and arena (media) to sound Islamic messages, to introduce Islam to the world and to solve human problems collectively. The da’wah through the Internet is viewed as one of the most effective and potential methods. This opinion is based on many logical reasons, among others:

1. It may reach and penetrate the time and space border in a very rapid way, simple and again can be done in a relatively economic manner.
2. The user of this media (Internet) keeps on growing rapidly. It means it is so influential to the da’wah mission receivers.
3. Islamic scholars, Imam, Syech, and the like who are doing da’wah via the Internet will be able to focus and are more prepared to react and response if any sensitive and crucial problems that need Islamic law or jurisprudence may happen.
4. The da’wah via the Internet is becoming one of the most enthused by Moslem society member since it provides various models of da’wah
which enable them to choose or select what they need to know, to learn, to follow, etc
5. By using and adopting various sorts of da’wah model utilizing internet media—consisting various model of social media—the da’wah message will be able to reach almost all segments of communities and the da’wah itself has to be understood in a wide definition and context as well. The da’wah then becomes less formal and borderless
6. By utilizing website as da’wah media as commonly used by many Islamic organizations in Indonesia, the da’wah will be more flexible and innovative and effective as well as it can be accessed anywhere, any time and by everybody
7. The da’wah can also be done by using a mailing list by which the members on the said list may gather themselves for a discussion on religious issues or just sharing religious teaching; they may also give comments and answers.
8. Religious knowledge, teaching and messages can also nowadays be approached, spread and obtained through online media, such as by surfing the Internet like Google, YouTube, Facebook, Line, What’s App, and many other servers, etc.

Conclusion

It is undeniable that religious life could not be separated from information technology, especially from social and digital media. As a logical consequence, a religious leader like priests, Imams and the like are becoming more and more dependent on social and digital media (information technology). They are, therefore, obliged to have sufficient knowledge and skill in mastering those information technologies so that they may approach their community (ummat) and solve their social and religious problems in a very representative, comprehensive and effective way. Last but not the least, religion should definitely be promoted and actualized as an integrated part of solution, not part of problem.

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A Digital Culture Ministry:  
A Case of the Korean Church

1. Introduction

South Korea is a powerhouse of global information and communications technology (ICT). South Korea’s wireless Internet subscription rate is not only the world’s fourth largest, but also has the fourth largest generation mobile communication (LTE) subscription rate. According to the United Nation’s evaluation on e-government South Korea is a leader in the global market share of semiconductor, mobile communication terminals and digital TV. As such, ICT has played an important role as the driving force which has contributed to the economic development of the country.

In addition, ICT has had a huge impact on the worldwide spread of Hallyu (Korean Wave) which was initiated from exporting TV dramas and has led to K-pop, K-beauty, K-food, and so on. As a typical example, singer Psy’s music video “Gangnam Style” continues to break a world record, counting on more than 230 billion views on YouTube since 2015. The global diffusion and popularization of smart media such as smartphones and social network services (SNSs) has resulted in the far-reaching power of Hallyu on a very fast speed.

The globalized and routinized digital culture by the Internet and mobile media severely affects the form and content of Church communications. “The communications revolution affects perceptions even of the Church, and has a significant impact on the Church’s own structures and modes of functioning.”1

Beyond the existing digital activities like simply visiting a website, blog, or sending an email, or using messenger, smartphones and SNSs are utilized in the various fields such as communication with the congregation, mission, ministry, education, and so on. Buddhism, Protestantism and Catholicism the three major religions of South Korea have the significant advantage of their mission and pastoral through the active use of the Internet and mobile media in their respective areas. The Korean Catholic Church has built ‘Integrated Yangeop System’ as a computerized system operated by the unity of the administration of whole dioceses and pastoral information since 2013. A representative Internet portal site of the Korean Catholic Church, ‘the Good News’ of the Seoul archdiocese (www.catholic.or.kr) helps Catholics to be readily accessible to Church information gathering, information exchange, and diverse faith application services such as daily Mass, Bible, address, spiritual song, and so on.

On the other hand, the digital culture also has very harmful effects despite its positive effects. It creates very serious social problems and diverse digital addictions such as pornography, gambling, shopping, SNS as well as cyber-terrorism, cyber-violence and invasion of privacy. Furthermore, it deprives a lot of time and effort from search rather than thought so that people are gradually changed to ‘the Shallows’2 as it were, like people who do not think anymore. As a result, the faithful neglects Kerygma, Diakonia, and Koinonia that forms the foundation of Christianity and also goes away from repentance and prayer based on introspection and reflection. Therefore, the Church should perform the evangelization of digital culture by appreciating the dysfunction of digital culture on the contents and practices of faith and suggesting an alternative.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the current situation and prospect of digital culture ministry of the Korean Catholic Church. The culture ministry has emerged as one of the new pastoral ministries to embody and practice the new evangelization of the new era, including a digital culture ministry. This paper first introduces the positive and negative realities of the Internet and mobile media usage in South Korea. Second, it explores the concept of digital culture ministry and describes ways how the Korean Catholic Church accepts and responds to digital culture. Finally, it suggests the prospect for desirable digital culture ministry.

2. The Current Status of the Digital Culture in South Korea

1) Internet and mobile media usage

South Korea has celebrated the authentic information age with the advent of Internet services in the 1990s. The first Internet service was commercialized
