

*The Adolescents' Habitual Use of New Media: The Mapping of New Media Habit  
Indonesian Adolescents*

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**Abstract**

The future of the world, culture, and style will be owned by digital native. For that reason, the comprehension of the life, behavior, and habit of adolescent as the digital natives becomes a significant issue to be observed. So far, there is no any comprehensive and massive data related to adolescent habitual use of media in Indonesia. TNS data called “Digital Life”, commonly used by researchers related to mass communication or marketing communication in digital era, only perform the general data of people who use Internet access which are categorized into simple attitude group without specifically related to adolescent users. The absence of national baseline related to the adolescent habitual use of media in Indonesia causes the difficulty for formulating policy, framing regulation, or implementing a suitable program for the future of Indonesian adolescent. It also effects on the struggle of solving various cases of media use violation by adolescents. The research formulated in this article is how is the pattern of Indonesian adolescents’ habitual use of media as digital native. Media habit in this case includes media access, media use, and media consumption of new media. The research method is quantitative. The data collection is done through questioner by using simple random sampling.

Keywords: mass communication, new media, digital natives, media habit, media access, media use, media consumption, pattern of adolescents habitual, adolescents interactional.

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## **Introduction**

### **I. Research Background**

The development of technology of communication has caused several consequences in our everyday life. It has shaped a new media which provide an easy way to communicate and remove the space-and-time-limitation. This change of mode of communication, undeniably, influences the change of lifestyle of the society. Along with the domination of media and its role for society, clearly, the change of lifestyle is not only experienced by adult. The strong penetration of technology of communication causes the younger generation to have their own way of living their life, which is different from their older generation.

In the context of the new media, the younger generation, in this case adolescent, is categorized as digital native, or also known as net generation, digital generation, or millennials. John Palfrey and Urs Gasser (2008) further interpret the characteristic of digital natives as an individual who was born after 1980 (the digital era), an era when digital technology such as Usenet and bulletin board system are available online. This generation makes use of digital network technology access and has a skill and knowledge about computer (YPMA, 2011). They have common cultural norm which is created through a shared experience in the internet interaction using the new technology of communication of the new media. They think, live, create norm, and develop future vision differently from their older generation, the generation before the digital era. More specifically, they have a habit of using media- both as a passive user and active user- with a completely different pattern from the older media users. The future of the world is the world of digital natives. The culture and lifestyle of the future is shaped by the culture and lifestyle of digital natives. The question is how much we understand about life, habit, and habits of Indonesian children as digital natives in Indonesia? So far, there is no comprehensive and massive data available related to Indonesian children media habit. TNS data known as "Digital Life", commonly used by researchers to do their research related to mass communication or marketing communication in digital era, only perform the general data of people who use Internet access all over the world which are categorized into simple attitude group without specifically related to adolescent users (YPMA, 2011). Even if there is any exploration further from just the number of users, the baseline use by most of researchers are small partial group of researchers in local context with sporadic system and various kind of instrument from different kind of indicator of variable.

The nonexistence of national baseline related to Indonesian adolescent media habit causes the difficulties both for government and other domestic and foreign research groups to design a or to implement an effective regulation for the future program of Indonesian adolescent. In many cases of violation happened in the past, the experts find it difficult to do a massive research to come into a comprehensive result and recommendation because of the non-existence of national baseline of the Indonesian adolescent habit as a stepping stone. The Indonesian association of communication study, known as *Asosiasi Program Studi Ilmu Komunikasi Indonesia* (ASPIKOM), has an awareness to give a contribution to the future of the digital native. By observing the non-existence of data, ASPIKOM design a research program to explore the Indonesian digital native media habit. By creating a network with other communication department all over the country, ASPIKOM has reliable resources to

undertake survey related to *digital native* media habit all over Indonesia. Through the contact of Communication department in every area in Indonesia involved in this research, the need of representative national baseline of Indonesian adolescent media habit can be comprehended.

## **II. Research Questions**

Based on the need of national baseline of Indonesian adolescent media habit as digital native, the research question for this study is formulated as follow:

“How is the pattern of Indonesian adolescent media habit?”

Media habit can be interpreted in a various senses, it includes media access, media use, and media consumption. As digital native, the interaction between adolescent and media is more specified into new media. New media is defined as “..unique forms of digital media, and the remaking of more traditional media forms toadopt and adapt to the new media technologies” (Flew, 2005:3-4). New media is classified into traditional media based on the aspect of “digitisation, convergence, interactivity, networks &networking”. Therefore, everything based on the internet and digital technology such as handphone/smartphone, internet, social media and all of its features **including** digital camera, DVD/CD player, online radio, videogame, *file sharing software*, **plus** the whole activities involved such as taking picture, sending email, texting, sharing file, downloading, *posting, updating, networking*, etc are categozied as the new media.

Through the clear distinction of types of media, media activities, and the exploration target, the research questions are specified as follows:

1. How is the new media being accessed by the adolescents in Setiabudi sub district?
2. How is the new media being used by the adolescents in Setiabudi sub district?
3. How is the daily life practice of new media use in the adolescents in Setiabudi sub district, particularly in term of entertainment, business and the consequences of the new media?

## **III. Objectives of the Research**

Based on the research question formulated above, the objectives of this research are:

1. To observe how the new media is being accessed by the adolescents in Setiabudi sub district
2. To figure out how the new media being used by the adolescents in Setiabudi sub district.
3. To comprehend the daily life practice of new media use in the adolescents in Setiabudi sub district, particularly in term of entertainment, business and the consequences of the new media

## **IV. The Significance of the Study**

The study is intended to produce national baseline related to the adolescent media habit in Setiabudisubdistrict as a digital native. This baseline will be a part of Indonesian baseline data along with the result from other members of ASPIKOM.

## **V. Literature Review**

### **Us, Internet, and Information Society**

The history of human civilization has taught us a lot of things. One of things is the fact that civilization is not static—we are revolving society. The first phase of civilization is the hunting society, marked by nomadic lifestyle. Next is pastoral society which was marked by the massive farming lifestyle. After centuries of living pastoral lifestyle, the ability of human conquering the nature became a mechanical power which resulted to a revolution to the next phase: Industrial society. Nowadays, every activity done by human being is dominated by production activity and information exchange, therefore the society of this era is called as Information society.

The emergence of technology has changed and brought society went through several phases of civilization. Theoretically, the cultural change of the society as the impact of the development of technology is discussed based on its technological determinism scope. The theoretical views on this scope are framed based on the assumption that technology has caused social change—therefore media of communication is seen as one of type of technology which has possibility “..to change everything in the society” (Straubhaar&LaRose, 2004:26). There are several variations of theoretical views related to technological determination. Even though some of them equally assume that massive change occurs as the impact of the emergence of technology, several variations have different emphasize both on social and cultural technological impact as the cause.

In the contexts of communication, Straubhaar&LaRose (2004) further interpret that there are main theories reveal the variation of technological determination penetration; medium of the message, technology as the dominant impulse, and media drive culture. The details of explanation of each variation are as follows.

First, the theory of technological penetration as the medium of message is revealed by Communication expert from Canada, Marshall McLuhan. On his book “Understanding the Media” (1964), frames that the new technology of communication has a role in determining the culture of society. Further, he defines “... it is the form of the media, rather than their content, that matters” (Straubhaar&LaRose, 2004:26). Even though McLuhan was not experiencing the era of internet, his “global village” phrase on his classical book explaining the impact of electricity in creating personal relationship in massive scale is still valid until today.

Second, technology is the dominant impulse in the society. In the scope of Technological Determinism, technology is assumed to have a huge influence both in the level of individual habit and in the industrial level. Further, technology has an enormous role in changing cultural and social behavior of the society. This is the phenomena happens in the society nowadays, where technology—including the new media—creates new habit and changes, or even ruins, the old habit.

Third, technology is media drive culture. The emergence of technology changes the society’s lifestyle. Since the role of technology of media and telecommunication is dominating, thus the culture and lifestyle of the society are oriented based on the media.

Various kind of technology of communication has revolved the world. The peak of the revolution is the present condition where the digitalization and internet emerge, from the first generation of computer, World Wide Web invention, to the creation of social media. Since then, the new terminology is created: new media.

New media is the most recent development of technology of media and telecommunication. The main key point which differentiates new media and traditional media is the 'digitization & convergence', 'interactivity', and 'networks and networking' characteristic. Not only digital media, new media is also categorized as “development of unique forms of digital media, and the remaking of more traditional media forms to adopt and adapt to the new media technologies” (Flew, 2005:3-4). Internet—including its whole transformation is categorized as the new media. The transformation of internet itself happens in three waves. Josep R. Dominick characterized the first wave as Web 1.0 (1995-2003), where the use of internet became a passive consumers and consume all texts which has been provided by the content producers. It has static characteristic. In Web 2.0, the most revealing characteristic is the existence of sharing process and collaboration. The position of the user in this case is seen as more active. While in Web 3.0, social media is seen as the most significant characteristic. It completely changes the role of public users.

## **Adolescent as the Audience of the New Media**

The adolescent period is one of period of an individual person where a lot of changes happen. This period is started by several important characteristic changes, such as independency (being more independent individual who are not depended on the family), sexual interest, self-awareness, etiquette and moral awareness (SalzmandanPikunas, 1976 dalam Yusuf,2004:71). This period is a transition period from childhood into adulthood. It means that in this period, healthy adolescent period will bring positive adulthood in the future (Yusuf, 2004:71). To achieve that thing, therefore some psychologist identify tasks of adolescent development as follows:

1. Accept their physical appearance with its various range of quality
2. Achieve emotional independence from the parents and other authority figures.
3. Develop interpersonal communication skill and learn to socialize with their peers or other people, both as an individual and as a group.
4. Find the role model to create their identity.
5. Accept who they really are and have a self-esteem toward their own ability.
6. Strengthen self-control based on priority scale, principle, or philosophical view of life.
7. Have an ability to leave the childish behavior. (Kay dalam Yusuf, 2004:72-73)

In those tasks, it clears that the environment plays important role in the adolescent life. In the model of traditional parenting, the environments are categorized as; family, friendship network, and neighborhood. But, nowadays, with the domination of media in the human life, the pattern of traditional parenting has been challenged by the existence of media. Once the leave their family, teenagers—evenchildren—has media as their new “caretaker”.Through media, adolescent learn about real life experience and at the same time learn about socialization norms in the society—based on the reality framed by the media.

Dealing with media, adolescent reveals their dynamic characteristic. Basically, they are curios, unstable, and easily affected by the media (The Habibie Center, 2010 : 7).On the other side, they are familiar with technology, open minded to a new thing, and more idealistic. It is often argued that young people growing up in the presence of Internet andnew media are 'techno savvy'. They are assumed to posses new media attitudes andskills which older generations do not... This new generation has been positivelycharacterized as 'the Net Generations' (Tapscott, 1998) or 'Digital natives' (Prensky,2001), or 'Millenials' (Howe & Strauss, 2000) due to their often unquestioned proficiency of in accessing and using technology and new media.(Zimic, 2009:1)

Even though the claim of 'techno-savvy' is considered to be problematic in several studies, it is undeniable, the adolescent is the dominant user of gadget and telecommunication. “As early adopters of new media, youth are in many ways the defining users of the new media” (Montgomery, 2000:61). The adolescent of this generation is 'net geners', who have their own uniqueness. “Their brains have developeddifferently. Their brains process fast-moving images differently” (Tapscott, 2009 quoted from Zimic, 2009:131).

The consequence from the different way of thinking is on the norm, habit, and the behavior of the adolescents who were born in this digital era. Tapscottelaborate the “8 Norms of Internat Generation” as follows:

1. Freedom

- Highly appreciate freedom in expressing and making decision.

2. Customization

- Modify whatever thing they face—includingtechnology—to personalize it as unique as their personality.

3. Scrutiny

- Accustomed with the information access, so it is easy for them to track vatiuous sources of intended information or study.

4. Integrity

- Appreciate the value of honesty, transparency, and have a high expectation of etiquette.

5. Collaboration and Relationship

- As the multitasking generation, they should be accustomed with various kind of information and other network information.

6. Entertainment

- Apply an entertaining approach in producing or consuming information.

7. Speed

- Prioritizing speed in working on a something—and expecting everything is done quickly.

8. Innovation

- Disagreeing the entire standard and conventional thing. Accepting challenge and new idea and being innovative.

(YPMA, 2011:2-3)

Participating in online media is one of character which differentiates adolescent of this era from the previous era as the digital native. ShentondanMcNeeley (1997), elaborate several motives in participating in online media are as follows:

1. A chance to create friendship and relationship which is assumed to be more difficult created in offline community.

2. A skill to shape an identity

3. Spread out a new idea among other people who have the same point of view.

4. A chance to meet people who has the same interest-no matter how strange is the interest.

5. The search for romantic or sexual relationship.

6. A chance to express opinion and point view which is impossible to be done in mainstream media because of lack of access.

(Flew, 2004:69)

In fact, from all of the motives mentioned above, we have no idea the most common and dominant motive which become the main motive for adolescent to participate in the online media. In Australia, 96% school homework done by adolescent student are done by involving internet- both in a big or small scale. The same case happens in England, where the main function of Internet use among adolescent students is to do research and search for other things based on their interest. Meanwhile, in 2009, The Educational Department of United State for the first time figured out that the average performance of students who do online study is higher than students who do face-to-face study. “Nearly half of European11-16 year olds say that they find it easier to be

themselves on the Internet than when they are with people face-to-face” (Carwardine, 2011). It shows that when online media is used for education, it will give positive results. Sadly, on the other side, as it is previously predicted, the socialization ability of adolescents in the real world is decreasing along with their intense interaction in virtual life.

Adolescence is a period of identity discovery, a period where an individual explores their skills to ‘play’ several roles to find the most suitable identity for themselves. It is expected that through the discovery of identity in this period will shape a stable personality for their adulthood. But in reality, the discovery of identity exploration goes wrong. Nowadays, the discovery of identity is interpreted by Flew (2004: 69) as “... a greatly enhanced scope for play, deception, and the adoption of different and multiple personas that online communities enable”.

Youth Protection Roundtable Tool Kit elaborates another risk of online contact by adolescents (2009) are: harmful advice, identity theft, money theft/phishing, commercial fraud, grooming, bullying, disclosing private information, and profiling (Wilson et al., 2011:133).

These kinds of risks are problematic and should be solved.

The main thing that should be considered in solving this problem is what kind of activity is done by adolescents in the media interaction—especially with the new media.

We are still at the early stages of piecing together a more holistic picture of the role of the new media in young people's everyday life... what is generally lacking in the research literature overall is the understanding of how new media practices are embedded in broader social and cultural ecology. Although we have a picture of technology trends on the one hand, and spotlight on specific youth populations and practices on the other, we need more work that brings these two pieces of the puzzle together. (Ito et al., 2008:10)

Digital Youth Project developed by Ito, et.al (2008) define several important aspects related to the activities done by adolescents in the new media, as follows:

### 1. Genre of participation

Genre of participation is based on the type of involvement or the convention of the users of the new media which are different from each other. Genre of participation is a way to identify, interpretatively, a set of social characteristics, culture, and technology which are known as practice by the users. Genre of participation are differentiation into:

- a) Friends-driven participation, is a type of interaction or negotiation practice which is done daily by the adolescents to people around them, especially to their peers. The main intention of this activity is strengthen friendship relationship.
- b) Interest-driven participation, is a type of interaction or media practice which is based on the main interest of the users. This thing is done through specific activity, niche, or marginal identity. The adolescents differentiate the interest-driven participation into 'the geeks', 'the freaks', musician, artist, and the 'dork' which is identified as a smart, different, creative, and generally socially marginalized from other adolescents.

In the end, this participation genre resulted into three different adolescent involvement with media; hanging out, messing around, and geeking out. Hanging out, the media users as the part of real life interaction which is done face to face. Messing around, the media intensively use media to explore specific interest—and as the consequence they interact and socialize with other users who has similar interest.

### 2. Participation in networked publics

This term explain the participation in the public culture which is supported by online networking. 'Networked publics' is a terminology refers to an active participation from social network distributed for the dissemination of culture and knowledge as the main theme.

### **Related Studies**

The adolescent profile as the users of media considered as one of the topic in audience study. Some studies focus on the media habit which is developed by media, along with the demography and the psychographic of adolescent as new media users. This kind of study normally is a part of quantitative market research. Some parts of the study is related to this study based on its concern on specific characteristic from specific audience segmentation.

Synovate's studies in some Asian countries (including Indonesia), presented in Asia Pacific Media Forum 2006, shows that in 2006, Indonesia was still dominated by television (60%) instead of internet (19%). This condition is contrast to the present condition. There are several interesting facts point out through the research. In the activity of 'downloading into mobile', the age group of 20-29 years old is the most dominant one (51%), followed by 15-19 years old age group (15%). In the case of duration of media use the age group of 20-29 years old is still in the first position (2.9 hours per day), followed by 15-19 years old age group (2.5 hours per day) (Susatyo, 2006)

Study related to New Media Usage in several European countries indicates the decreasing role and popularity of television. However, most of the respondents being observed still mention that television is their first option to get information. In fact, 82% of respondents mention that they still watch television on daily basis. On the other side, the use of internet is growing rapidly. From 56% of respondent who admit to use internet, 41% of them use it for surfing every day. The number of adolescents who use internet is increasing from 2010 to 2011. In 2010, the percentage is 68% and it increases into 80% in 2011 (LPSOS, 2011).

Based on the observation of internet use in Indonesia, TNS on 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2010 published their study entitled “Digital Life”. The result of the research shows that 70% of internet users in Indonesia use internet to access social media as the main activity. Another research done by *Yayasan Pengembangan Media Anak (YPMA)* on March 2011 figures out that internet is introduced to the adolescents by their parents and teachers, some of them even learn it autodidact.

To serve in virtual life, Indonesian digital native use several gadgets, such as PC, laptop, hand phone, or Blackberry. Every day, in average, they spend 1.5-3 hours on internet. The most popular website for the adolescents is Twitter as the most accessed social network. Sadly, the media literacy level of Indonesian digital native is not equal to their internet navigation skill (YPMA, 2011:5-6). Same thing is also found in the study of internet use in Bandung, in the middle of 2010. Even though the adolescent intensively interact to their peers in the virtual life, the digital native in the city do not have sufficient media literacy—and so does their parents. (Astuti, 2011:27).

## **VI. Research Method**

The survey method is used for this research through questionnaire distributed to respondents in several cities. The number of sample represents the number of population in one city/municipality for the adolescent age category (15-19 years old) and has an educational access, by using random sampling which was determined by Yamane formula.

It is decided that in every area a member of ASPIKOM should distribute 400 questionnaires to 400 respondents. Based on that decision, in DKI area, there will be several universities involved. For Central Jakarta, Communication Department of UnikaAtma Jaya and Fikom of Dr. MoestopoBeragama University contribute to give 80 respondents, which means each university contribute to give 40 respondents. However, based on the field exploration, Communication Department of UnikaAtma Jaya contributes 79 respondents.

### **Description of Communication Department of Atma Jaya Catholic University**

In this research, every university is given a chance to develop their research based on their main interest. The Department of Communication of Atma Jaya Catholic University decided to explore the study on SMA and SMK students (same level as high school students) in Setiabudi sub district, South Jakarta. The population of SMA and SMK students in the area are taken from several schools:

- SMA Negeri 3
- SMA Negeri 43
- SMA Negeri 79
- SMK Yaspem
- SMK RPI
- SMK Budi Asih
- SMK DaarulUlum
- SMK Respati
- SMK Muhammadiyah 15

The number of population is based on the number of students live in the Setiabudi sub district. Sample is determined based on accidental sampling technique. This research is a descriptive research, which describes the indications, characteristics, or attitude observed through indicator variable.

There are three different aspects as the variables of this reserch:

1. Media Access Variable

The possession and way of accessing the new media as the measurement.

2. The use of New Media Variable

media use and the intensity of new media use are used as the measurement of this variable.

New Media Practice Variable:

**the additional variable from Communication Department related to the focus on entertainment, business, and the impact of the new media.**

The role and function of new media in the daily life will be used as the measurement of this variable. Based on the need, the data will be set up based on the relevant measurement scale.

## VII. Analysis

The main objective of this research is to create a baseline related to the media habit of Indonesian adolescent as digital native. This part contains the analysis of the research which will perform the result about the adolescent attitude in using the new media: the mapping of the habit of Indonesian adolescent in using the new media with the focus on its role and function in daily life, especially in the term of entertainment, business, and its negative effect: In the practice of new media in the daily life of Indonesian adolescents, especially based on the entertainment consideration, the Indonesian adolescents prioritizing internet speed, easy access, and up to date contents. Other reasons such as economical reason, trend, and influence from their peers are not considered as the main reasons of media practice by respondent. The most common way of getting entertainment is done by googling/searching through other searching engines rather than looking for influence from other media ( such as tv, radio, newspaper, magazine, book, etc). Other than a recommendation from a friend, another media such as website and public advertisements (in mall, hotel, plaza, tourists' attractions, etc) are less influential for adolescents.

Further, the observation of daily practice of media use by Indonesian adolescent in term of business done by the respondents show that the most popular businesses are hobby, fashion, and accessories (souvenirs& other products), automotive, food, art (music, film, dance, painting, etc), electronic, cosmetic and service.

In the new media practice in the adolescents' daily life, it is found out that pornography is one of the highest negative effects from the internet mentioned by the respondents. Another negative side effects mentioned by the respondent are hacking (hacking the system without permission/stealing) and plagiarism (copying other people's work without any copyrights). While small portion of the respondents mentions that negative information is another negative effect of the internet. It includes online bullying, mean commentary, verbal and audiovisual violence, inappropriate content, racial, religious, and ethnical conflicts.

However, there are several different result performed on the survey about the negative thing known by the respondent from internet, negative thing experienced by the respondent from internet, and negative thing happen to other people known by the respondents. In the case of negative thing known by respondent from internet, pornography is considered as the most negative thing with 74.8% percentage. Meanwhile, for the negative thing experience by respondents through internet, negative commentary from other users is in the first position with 39% of percentage. The hacking problem done by the hacker who ruin or illegally access website system is mentioned by 59% of respondent in the case of negative thing happen to other people in internet. It means that pornography is the most common negative effect of the internet based on the respondents' opinion, even though this problem is not always experienced by respondent or other people known by respondents.

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