

The Utilities of New Media for Organic Community of Indonesia

Gayatri Atmadi

University of Al Azhar Indonesia, Indonesia

0140

The Asian Conference on Media and Mass Communication 2013

Official Conference Proceedings 2013

Abstract

Making a commitment to eat healthy food is a great start towards a healthier life. Organic food has become very popular issue in Indonesia because it provides a variety of benefits. But in fact, as the biggest agricultural country in the world, people in Indonesia is not really aware about organic food. Consequently, Organic Community of Indonesia always endeavors to build awareness and perception of the benefits of organic products to public in today's digitalized world by using new media. The platform of Organic Community of Indonesia : *People, Planet, Profit, and Patriotic*.

By using the web site : *www.komunitasorganikindonesia.org* and facebook as the social media, the members of community have a clear identity and can be connected each other in a social networking. Besides, they can make conversation, encourage people to pass it on to other and find ways to travel on its own.

This research uses qualitative research methods based on depth interviews with the aim to describe the utilities of new media among some members of Organic Community of Indonesia. The utilities should be viewed as an opportunity to create connections as integrated network between customers and motivate them to engage socially in their interest. This research tries to find that the utilities of new media not only can connect members of community and be aware about organic food, but also can increase the prosperity of its member.

Key words : new media, social networking, indonesian organic community

Introduction

Making a commitment to eat healthy food such as organic products is a great start towards a healthier life. Organic food has become very popular issue in Indonesia because it provides a variety of benefits. A healthy lifestyle by back to nature became a new trend for some people as organic food attracted for many people. Sulaeman (2007) defined organic food as “ a food which comes from organic farming system that apply practical amangement with the aim to preserve ecosystem to achieve sustainable production nad controlling weed, pest and disease through various way such as recycling the residues of plants and livestock, selection and crop rotation, management of irrigation, cultivation and planting as well as the use of biological materials.”

According to *Griffiths* (2010), since the last few decades, the awereness of today’s society in agriculture, health and the global environment has increased through government and other campaigns of the importance of healthier eating and lifestyle.

But in fact, as the biggest agricultural country in the world, people in Indonesia is not really aware about organic food. Based on research from *Budi Suharjo, Muchlis Ahmady & Mohammad Reza Ahmady* (2013), there is barriers to purchasing organic food product from people has consume organic food such as the product only can found in specific places ; the price is more expensive than conventional foods ; some products are not always available ; rapid product expiration, difficult to distinguish with non-organic ; hard to found organic food in traditional market and only few information about the product’s benefit.

Consequently, Organic Community of Indonesia (KOI) always endeavors to build awareness and perception of the benefits of organic products to public in today’s digitalized world by using new media such as web site and facebook. By using web site and social media such as facebook, some people in this community can congregate online and share, sell and swap about organic information and products. Interactivity is a sequence of action and reaction. Social media have long been popular among Indonesians.

A survey shows that Indonesians are among the world’s biggest users of social media sites, particularly facebook and twitter. The widespread use of smartphones and (cheap) access to the Internet have further streng-thened the popularity of social media in this country. The business community has realized the effectiveness of social media and has taken advantage of it to reach out to as many customers and potential buyers as possible. (<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/04/20>)

Based on the explanation from *Mariel Grazella*, The Jakarta Post, June 18, 2013,“ Facebook has revealed it has 64 million users in Indonesia who actively access their accounts on a monthly basis and says this number puts the country in the social networking site’s top five largest markets.”

According to *Dan Neary*, Facebook Vice President for Asia Pacific, [thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), “ Indonesia is a mobile-driven market. Mobile phone subscription in Indonesia – a country with over 240 million people – reached 290 million in 2012 as people frequently carried two or more devices. An interesting point about Indonesia is that it is driven by small and medium businesses, which, based on statistics, number 50 million,” he said. “But one thing you will find is that they do not have the level of sophistication to take advantage of some of the complicated offerings that Facebook has when it comes to advertising. So we have made a concerted effort to make things easier,” he added. The size and growth of Facebook in Indonesia is fantastic.” (<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/06/18>)

Literature Review

New Media

Generally speaking, many people use new media for communicating with others in their everyday life. But what exactly are new media? According to Martin Lister, Jon Dovey, Seth Giddings and Kieran Kelly (2009:12-13), we take 'new media' to refer to the following: *New relationships between subjects (users and consumers) and media technologies* : changes in the use and reception of image and communication media in everyday life and in the meanings that are invested in media technologies. *New experiences of the relationship between embodiment, identity and community* : shifts in the personal and social experience of time, space, and place (on both local and global scales) which have implications for the ways in which we experience ourselves and our place in the world.

The above explanation would include : *Computer-mediated communications*: email, chat rooms, avatar-based communication forums, voice image transmissions, the World Wide Web, blogs, etc., social networking sites, and mobile telephony. *New ways of disturbing and consuming media texts* characterised by interactivity and hypertextual formats – the World Wide Web, CD, DVD, Podcasts and the various platforms for computer games. *Virtual realities* : simulated environments and immersive representational spaces. *A whole range of transformations and dislocations of established media* (in, for example, photography, animation, television, journalism, film and cinema). In other words, we can consider some of the main terms in discourses about new media, such as : digital, interactive, hypertextual, virtual, networked, and simulated.

According to Jan van Dijk (2006:9), the new media are defined by all three characteristics simultaneously : they are media which are both integrated and interactive and also use digital code at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. It follows that their most common alternatives names are multimedia, interactive media and digital media.

Social Networking

To make definition about networking, Nicholas Gane and David Beer (2008:16) give the explanation about a basic question : What exactly is a new media network? A simple answer is that it is an infrastructure that connects computers to each other and to a range of external devices and thereby enables users to communicate and exchange information. Networks, however, come in many shapes and forms ... Network can be classified into broad categories according to their general shape (Comer, 2004:107).

In general, the concept of social networking is the extension of the concept of internet. According to Rob Brown (2009:50-52), social networkd have evolved into online communities. ... The most popular social networks, with around 200 million users between them at the time of writing, are MySpace and Facebook, with the latter growing at faster rate and overtaking MySpace in terms of reach in April 2008.

Based on the explanation from Jan van Dijk (2006:20), the network society concept emphasizes the form and organization of information processing and exchange. An infrastructure of social and media networks takes care of this. So the network society can be defined as a social formation with an infrastructure of social and media networks enabling its prime mode of organization at all levels (individual, group/organizational and societal). Increasingly, these networks link all unit or parts of this formation (individuals, groups and organizations). In western societies, the

individual linked by networks is becoming the basic unit of the network society. In eastern societies, this might still be the group (family,community,workteam) linked by networks.

Public Relations

Generally speaking, public relations are a form of communication activities that is primarily directed toward gaining public understanding. According to Keith J. Tuckwell (2008:253), the goal of public relations is to conduct communication in such a way that an organization builds an open, honest, and constructive relationships with its various publics.... A survey among senior marketing executives suggests that public relations will be effective for raising awareness (83% response), providing credibility (67%), reaching influencers (63%) and educating consumers (61%).

According to Scott M.Cutlip, Allen H. Center & Glen M.Broom, (2011), public relations is the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the public on whom its success or failure depends.

Public relations is the practice of managing communication between an organization and its public. According to *Marla Aaron*, MRM Worldwide, on Heidi Cohen (2011), public relations is communicating your organization's messages at the right time and in the right place to the right audience. With the proliferation of tools and technologies, we can measure the value of those efforts and how they align with a business' overall mission.

Susan Young from Get in Front Communications, Inc, on Heidi Cohen (2011), explains that using traditional and digital media (free of charge) to educate and inform public masses about relevant issues and stories that are worthy of sharing and that have an impact on people. Public relations requires a creative, compelling, and concise approach, with a deep sense of the art of story-telling through our emotions and humanity. We have the power to move and influence people through the news and media.

Method

This research uses qualitative research methods. Qualitative method is effective in interpreting and understanding the complex reality of a specific social context. This research uses two qualitative research methods that are suitable for obtaining a specific type of data, such as participant observer (researcher is an individual member of Organic Community of Indonesia) and in-depth interviews with four participants.

Participant observer is appropriate for collecting data on naturally occurring behaviors in their usual context and in-depth interviews are optimal for collecting data on individuals' personal histories and experiences. The first informant, (CEJ), The Chairman of KOI and Administrator of web site & fb. The 2nd (BS) & 3th (ES) : The member of KOI as the entrepreneur (the small-medium micro business). The 4th (GA) : The member of KOI as Individual.

Results

As a new channels of communication, the new media such as website and facebook have social utility for some people as members of Organic Community of Indonesia. Mediated by internet, members of KOI can make (new) relationship among others and do interactive communications. For example in chatting room of website, any individual member needs information about

organic soaps and then the producer of organic soaps (as a member of entrepreneur) can give information about that products.

Organic Community of Indonesia (KOI : Komunitas Organik Indonesia) has motto : “ Building a Better Indonesia and a Better World “ Organic Community of Indonesia built as the concern for the Indonesian people quality of life. From what they eat, what they do and what they feel. Begin in 2008, this community emphasizing in Organic as Behaviors, not only products nor food. It’s involve in every aspects of life. Organic is beyond Food. Now KOI with their own capacity, gather all farmers, producers, consumers and fans of Organic, Green and Healthy Living in Indonesia.

Figure 1. : Logo of Komunitas Organik Indonesia (KOI)



The white flower as logo of this community has some meanings, such as : The flower as a symbol of good growing for the stages of human life. White colour of the flower is a symbol of the struggle for peace in our heart and the ellipse form of the flower describes differences in unity. There are many people with differences sciences background in Organic Community of Indonesia have only one mission.

Vision : Indonesia a Better Place with a Quality & Healthy Living for Every People

Mission : 1. Gather all Indonesian people who concern about Organic, Green & Healthy Living

2. Educate people of how to live in a quality life.

3. Deliver Organic, Green & Healthy products and services to Indonesian people and to the world.

4. Share natures gift for every people.

Actually it is not an easy way to reach these mission because many people in Indonesia still think about the expensive prices and the organic product only can found in specific places. Moreover, although they already knew about the organic products, they still not sure that products are better, more secure and more nourishing.

KOI also has 4 P as their Platform : People, Planet, Profit & Patriotic

People : Promote small producer's wealthy, healthiness of consumers & educate every people

Planet : Preserve environment & defending biodiversity

Profit : Sustainability of enterprise / cooperative as basic foundation

Patriotic : Prioritizing National Creations & Products

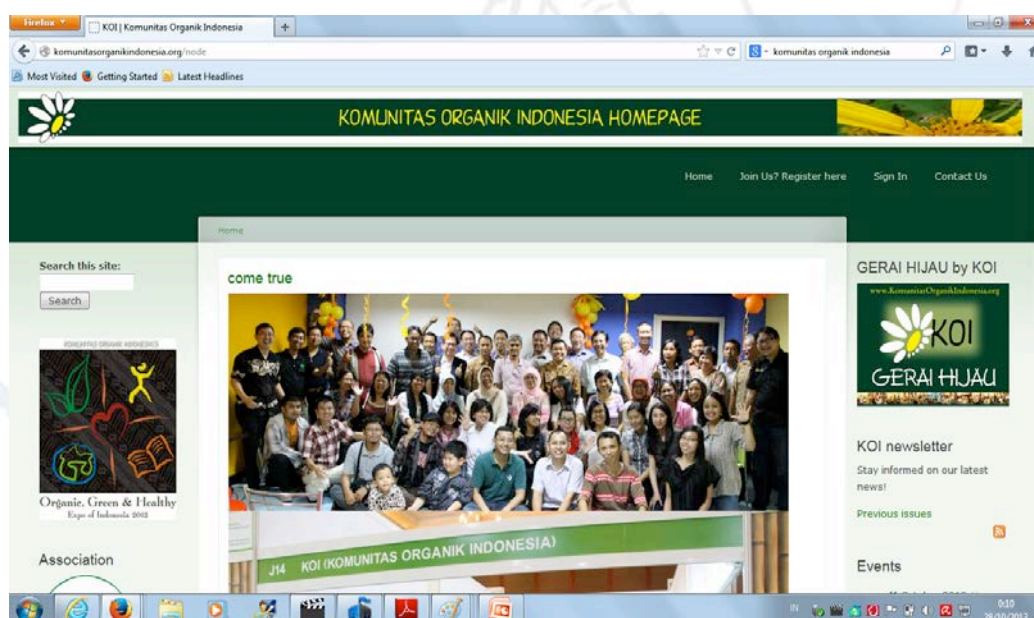
KOI is supported by Indonesian companies which highlight their quality and healthiness of their services and products. Some of the companies comes from, but not limited to, such as : mineral water, probiotic, herbal, organic issues, raw food resources, processed food, health & skin care, healthy activities, housings, healthy mind & self improvement, positive charity activities, green environment, etc.

KOI is a social based community from non-profit organizations, which has a vision of : "To give the most trustful and nonaligned information upon Quality & Healthy Living, from Indonesian entities, for Indonesian people and on Indonesian nation," said Christopher Emille Jayanata, the founder of Komunitas Organik Indonesia.

For maintain the good relationship between the founder of KOI and members, he communicates each others by Yahoo Milis : Komunitas Organik Indonesia, website : www.komunitasorganikindonesia.org, twitter @organiccommunity and facebook : Komunitas Organik Indonesia.

This research only focuses on website (www.komunitasorganikindonesia.org) and facebook : Komunitas Organik Indonesia because these new media are the most active among others and full of information about organic products.

Figure 2 : The Homepage of Komunitas Organik Indonesia



KOI's website : www.komunitasorganikindonesia.org (Komunitas Organik Indonesia Homepage) also introduce website : [Gerai Hijau.com](http://GeraiHijau.com) for promoting the organic products of the members to other members and public, such as : probiotic chicken, organic rice, bento shrimp roll, rambutan crispy, rice bra cookies, cheese dory finger and some organic vegetables and fruits.

KOI's website allows members to view images, links to other web pages, share opinion and make a dialogue so they can have two-way communication. This website creates a very positive impact on public relations that can allow members to interact with the information about organic products. For example, when there was an invitation about cooking class conducted by Wied Harry with topic " Good Food for staying Young 'n Healthy ", some members could exchange the worthwhile information about some healthy recipes.

Besides using website as media of communication among members of KOI, some members like using facebook to monitor the latest info of organic issues. There are a number of things that can we do with facebook, such as listing the up coming events, creating the specific group based on a particular area of interest or being linked to other social networks such as the photo-sharing with friends.

Figure 3 : Facebook as Social Media for Organic Community of Indonesia



Facebook : *Komunitas Organik Indonesia* is particularly beneficial in re-directing website traffic and invite members to attend some special events, such as KOI Heritage Food, monthly gathering with special topic on organic issues, expo and bazaar. By constantly updating fb account also keeps people thinking about what we have to know and offer, and we will be more likely to look at your website. We can update useful information, for instance new products or new releases that our members can usually benefit from.

Analysis of Finding

For this time being, there are 3.336 members using fb. and KOI's members can be informed about the special events for the next day, such as : *Cooking Class with Wied Harry, William Wongso Kuliner, Exhibitions : Investo, GreenBanking, GreenFest, GreenRight, Sedap Saji, " Green & Healthy Expo 2013 "*, etc. For those events, members can be educated for healthier life and KOI can promote and service the organic products, such as chicken probiotic, organic rice, vegetables organic, etc.

To disseminate many information to their members, KOI uses world wide web : www.komunitasorganikindonesia.org and facebook : Komunitas Organik Indonesia as social media. The web site of KOI offers the advantage of instant information exchange that is not possible in a real-life community. This interaction allows people to engage in many activities from their home, such as : searching for specific information, shopping and chatting with friends. Users of online communities also have access to many of specific discussion groups where they can form specialized relationships and access information in such categories, such as: politics, technical assistance, social activities, health and recreational pleasures.

Virtual communities provide an ideal medium for these types of relationships because information can easily be posted and response times can be very fast. Another benefit is that these types of communities can give users a feeling of membership and belonging. Users can give and receive support, and it is simple and cheap to use. Economically, virtual communities can be commercially successful and also making money through members who have small or medium businesses.

But, on the other hand, based on in-depth interviews with two participants, they can't depend on website and fb of KOI to increase their prosperity. They have to make their own website and fb, such as (BS) with www.healthybites.co.id + fb Healthy Bites and (ES) with keyrasoap.weebly.com + fb Keyrasoap. In fact, (BS) never accessed website and fb of KOI cause of his busy activities while (ES) sometimes accessed the new media of KOI.

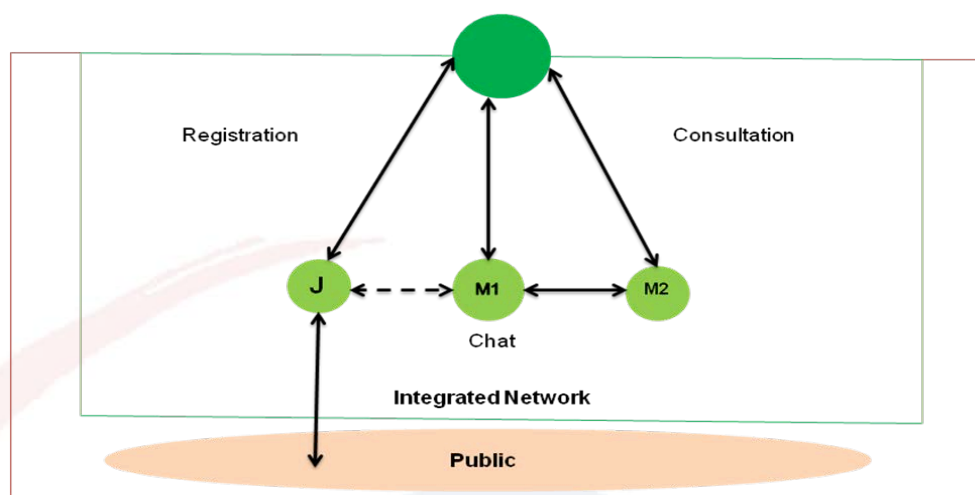
Anyhow, The Administrator of website and fb of KOI has play the important roles in public relations perspective, such as raising awareness of healthier life with organic products and educating members and potential members for the benefits of organic products. By reading some articles in website, members of KOI know that organic farming is better for the environment. Organic farming practices reduce air, water and soil pollution, increase soil fertility and use less energy. Besides, organically raised animals are not given antibiotics, growth hormones or fed animal by products.

Members of KOI also can learn about the differences between organic and non-organic produce, such as : Organic produce : No Pesticides. Organic products are grown with natural fertilizers (manure and compost). Weeds are controlled naturally (crop rotation, hand weeding, mulching and tilling) and insects are controlled using natural methods (birds, good insects, traps). On the other hand, non-organic products are grown with synthetic or chemical fertilizers. Weeds are controlled with chemical herbicides and insecticides are used to manage pests and disease.

Inspired by the explanation from *Jan van Dijk* about "The Integrated Network ", below is the explanation about the integrated network of information in KOI.

Figure 4 : The Integrated network of information in KOI

Administrator



J : Journalists M1 : Member as Entrepreneur M2 : Member as Individual

The integrated network of information in KOI means that the Chairman of KOI as Administrator can disseminate and control information about organic products and educate people of how to live in a quality life and share nature's gift for every member. There are two types of member's KOI : 130 members as Entrepreneur (the small-medium macro business), 1.800 members as Individual, while media partners (conventional + on-line media) support KOI to reach the larger scope in public.

For a new member of KOI, he or she should make registration first with the Administrator and then he will check the identities and accept them. After that, we can make a dialogue or consultation about many things around organic products and issues. It's so simple and everyone who interested in this community can join anywhere and anytime.

Some media partners of KOI are Sekar magazine, Tabloid NOVA, 89,2 FM Green Radio, 99,1 Delta FM Jakarta, 97,9 FM Female Radio Jakarta, Seputar Indonesia and MNC Group, Reader's Digest.com and Masima Radio Net can enlarge the scope of KOI to the public. All of them can support KOI activities, especially for special events and exhibition like "Green & Healthy Expo 2013".

Some functions of Website & Facebook of KOI

The founder of KOI (CEJ) acts as *Administrator* in managing communication between an organization and its member every day. Moreover, Administrator of KOI also has done some *Public Relations* function, such as promote the events and educate people how to have the healthy life. He also has supported *Public Relations* activities, such as promote many organic products by publishing Gerai Hijau.com via web site and facebook.

Website and fb of KOI have become one of the most powerful public relations tools that can publish special events, introduce new promotions of organic products and provide promotional support. Online public relations can be used as a supplementary or main mode of communication to reach target audiences. It has been said by many professionals that for this time being, a community will not survive without a link to the online world. In other words, the website and fb of KOI allow members to directly monitor the organic issues by clicking on, but can not increase the prosperity of its members completely.

Conclusion

As a young community in Jakarta for five years old, this community (KOI) tries to develop many kinds for the complete and better performance of their virtual media day by day. Website and facebook of KOI can create awareness and perception of organic products for a healthier life. In other words, some utilities of web site and facebook of KOI are :

1. To increase the amount of KOI's members.
2. To educate people how to have the healthy life with the organic products.
3. To promote some special events and some activities of the members of entrepreneur.
4. Together with the on-line journalists, media conventional, and “ Green & Healthy Expo 2013 “ exhibition can reach more people to learn about the healthy life for *A Better Indonesia and A Better World*.
5. As one of the most powerful public relations tools that can publish special events and introduce new promotions of organic products.
6. New media of KOI is good for monitoring the issues of organic products, but not for increase the prosperity of its member.
7. Some members prefer to make their own website and facebook to promote their organic products themselves to increase their prosperity.

Acknowledgment

Appreciating addressed to LP2M Universitas Al Azhar Indonesia (Institute for Research & Community Services) due to their financial support of my research for MediAsia 2013 The Asian Conference on Media & Mass Communication.

References

- Brown, Rob. (2009), *Public Relations and The Social Web*, London and Philadelphia : Kogan Page
- Cutlip, Scott M, Allen H.Center & Glen M. Broom, (2012), *Effective Public Relations Eleventh Edition*, USA: Prentice Hall International, Inc.
- Dijk, Jan van. (2006). *The Network Society* Second Edition, London : Sage Publications Ltd.
- Gane, Nicholas and David Beer. (2008). *New Media The Key Concepts*. New York : Berg
- Lister, Martin, Jon Dovey, Seth Giddings and Kieran Kelly. (2009), *New Media A Critical Introduction* Second Edition, New York : Routledge.
- Griffiths, J. (2010). *Organic Food and Drink*, Market Assessment 2010, Seventh Edition, Keynote
- Sulaeman, A. (2007). *Prospek Pasar dan Kiat Pemasaran Produk Organik*. Bogor : Bogor Institute of Agriculture.
- Suharjo, Budi, Muchlis Ahmady & Mohammad Reza Ahmady. (2013). *Indonesian Consumer's Attitudes towards Organic Products*. Proceedings of 8th Asian Business Research Conference, Bangkok, Thailand, ISBN : 978-1-922069-20-7
- Tuckwell, Keith J. (2008). *Integrated Marketing Communications* Second Edition, Toronto : Pearson Prentice Hall

www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/04/20/editorial-social-media-boost-services.html, accessed on July 20 2013, 12:39 PM.

www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/06/18/facebook-has-64m-active-indonesian-users.html, accessed on August 2, 2013, 10:15 AM.

[http://heidicohen.com/public-relations-definition/March 8,2011](http://heidicohen.com/public-relations-definition/March%208,2011), Marla Aaron - MRM Worldwide and Susan Young - Get in Front Communications, Inc., accessed on Nov 22,2013,10:12AM.



