Digital Media and Public Access to Educational and Political Information in Pangandaran in the Digital Age

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Abstract
This study discusses the use of digital media and the public's access to information in the fields of education and politics in Pangandaran Regency, West Java. In regards to assumptions of the Social Constructionism Theory (SCOT), people's understandings about the presence of technology in their life depend on how they interpret and treat the technology. As to the assumptions related to the public sphere, the potential for digital media to serve as a public sphere could also be questioned. This research uses a case study conducted by applying several data collection techniques, namely; in-depth interviews, observation and documentation studies. This study found that the high use of digital media in Pangandaran is not only the result of easy access but also people's perspectives of technology. Digital media can be an alternative to find educational information. However, there is still a lack of information which is needed very much by the public about educational scholarships and studies at universities. Meanwhile, political information is limited due to a lack of effort to disseminate government programs that are directly related to or will directly benefit the public. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that digital media has the potential to become a public sphere with a very limited function, namely a sphere where public interests can be discussed and citizens' awareness of and participation in education and politics can be increased. In addition, the use of digital media can only be increased if there is awareness among individuals or institutions to utilize digital media so that the quality of digital literacy and political will possessed by all parties including the public, government and members of the Pangandaran Regency Regional House of Representatives will improve accordingly.
Keywords: digital media; public access; digital era; educational information, political information

Introduction
The use of digital media in Indonesia continues to increase. According to data in 2021, there were 202.6 million internet users in Indonesia (We Are Social, 2021). The number increased significantly compared to 175.4 million recorded in 2020 (We Are Social, 2020). In addition, in 2021 there will be 345.2 million mobile phones in Indonesia that are connected to the internet. The number also increases from 338.2 million in 2020. The number of mobile phones circulating in Indonesia exceeds the country's population both in 2020 at 272.1 million and in 2021 at 274.9 million) (We Are Social, 2020, 2021).

Referring to the data description above, the digitalization era has affected most of the Indonesian citizens. However, it is also undeniable that there are still people in various parts of Indonesia that have not been reached by digital infrastructure. Indonesian Minister of Communication and Information, Johnny G Plate emphasized that the era of digital transformation for Indonesia must be implemented and reach all regions of Indonesia. He further revealed that President Joko Widodo also wants to ensure that no one shall be left behind in the digital transformation process in Indonesia.

To that end, Indonesia still has homework that is not easy, due to the fact that, according to the Minister of Communication and Information, there are still 12,345 villages and sub-districts located in the remote, isolated, and inaccessible areas as well as in commercial areas and even some areas in the nation's capital, which are still experiencing or belonging to blank spot areas (Yusuf, 2022). In addition, the results of a survey show that 65% of university students attending online classes during the Covid-19 pandemic had problems with internet networks or quotas (Yusuf, 2011).

As one of the provinces which is located on the island of Java and is not far from the Indonesian capital city of Jakarta, West Java has relatively good internet access compared to the eastern part or remote and isolated regions in Indonesia. The Internet changes people's behaviour, especially related to the use of digital media or internet-based media. The average daily internet usage in Indonesia is 8 hours 52 minutes. This data aligns with the time spent by several community members, especially teenagers in Pangandaran, who admitted that they are connected to the internet via their cell phones from the moment they wake up until they go to bed, in between the various mandatory activities they have to do.

As a new regency which is located on the south-eastern tip of West Java, Pangandaran has begun entering the era of digitalization, which has influenced the lives of the Pangandaran people, either bringing about positive progress or even creating new problems to their lives. (Maryani et al., 2022). Therefore, in response to the digital era, the discussion is not only limited to technical issues but also is viewed from the social aspect or social changes that occur in the society. This study will discuss the social aspect of using the internet or digital media in Pangandaran and its implications from the standpoint of the social aspect, namely access to information in the fields of education and politics

Theoretical Framework

Digital media, that has different characteristics from previous media or analogue media, leads to various technological and social implications for its users. The characteristics of digital media include the following characteristics, namely digital, interactive, hypertextual, networked, and virtual/simulated (Lister et al., 2009).

Therefore, due to these notions, it is assumed that the communication process that occurs through digital media produces interactive communication according to the media it uses. Digital media-based communication also produces a communication process that does not have a limited quantity of content (hypertextual) and is able to reach audiences without being constrained by time and place as long as it is connected to the internet (networked). Digital media-based communication, basically, is a virtual reality that can be distinguished from reality in the real world even though both can be connected in various forms of offline activities from communities that were previously online. One of the important aspects of digital media is that it allows globalization, which then needs to be aligned with the local or regional context (Castles, 2001).

Theoretically, the presence of digital media in society can be seen from two main views, namely the theory of technological determinism and the theory of social constructivism. In short, technological determinism can be seen as a view that assumes that technology plays a major role in determining changes that occur in society. Communication technology shapes ways of thinking and behaving, and can bring people to move from one technological age to another (Hauer, 2017). Regarding its presence, McLuhan sees that technology can influence people in perceiving the existing reality and determine what kind of logic is used to see that reality. Therefore McLuhan argues that "A medium affects the society in which it plays a role not by the content delivered over the medium, but by the characteristics of the medium itself" (Hauer, 2017).

On the other hand, the presence of technology is understood by the theory of Social Construction of Technology (SCOT) or the theory of social constructivism with the assumption that human development is socially determined and knowledge is constructed through interactions with others. In contrast to technological determinism which focuses on the technology, social constructivism focuses more on individual learning that occurs because of the said interactions within the group.

The proponents of SCOT (social constructivist) argue that technology does not determine human action but rather it is human action that shapes technology. Therefore, how technology is used cannot be understood without understanding how technology is embedded in its social context. Referring to the SCOT view, this research will elaborate on technological developments in Pangandaran based on its socio-cultural context. Referring to several studies, it is found that people do not always accept new technologies that they consider inappropriate. In addition, digital media as a source of information also requires the credibility of other sources such as organizations whose credibility has been recognized to be referred by their users (El Madja, 2021; Siswanta, 2018; Yuliarti, M. S., Siagian M., Wardaningtyas A.K, 2020). This theory has been criticized for overemphasizing actors on agents and neglecting structural and developmental aspects. The use of this theory is associated with Gidden's theory of structuration which emphasizes the reciprocal interaction between agents and structures (Octavianto, 2014).

The development of digital media, both technologically and its use, in Indonesia continues to increase (We Are Social, 2020, 2021). This upward trend also occurred in the district of Pangandaran based on the observations and statements of several informants, including village officials, media practitioners, and local residents. The basic question that arises is how significant is the presence of digital media in the lives of the Pangandaran people, especially in relation to public access to their interests?

Therefore, it is important to look at public access to information related to the public interests and the development of a digital or virtual space where the system and the rules applied can be freely accessed by the public so that it has the potential to become a public sphere. A sphere can be said to have potential because it has one of the characteristics of the public sphere, which is, the ability to access (Habermas, 1989). Meanwhile, the limitation in accessing digital public sphere is not on the system or the rules that are applied but on the technological aspect, both related to infrastructure and user expertise or the digital divide. Research in the Middle East and Africa proves that young people and the middle class in Egypt are able to express their aspirations in a new public sphere which then spreads and forms collective awareness about the need for change.

Digital media has become a cheap, easy and effective instrument of movement (Rahmanillah, 2018). However, other studies reveal that respondents do not engage in communicative actions typical of the public sphere because they avoid online political discourse (Kruse et al., 2018). One study in Russia revealed that social media has an impact on political awareness based on changes in perceptions of social and political institutions and encourages public readiness to be more actively and openly involved in public policy through the media (Gennadievich Baluev & Igorevich Kaminchenko, 2015). Social media is also considered to play a role in the production, dissemination, and consumption of important news and information and will continue to increase significantly. It is therefore important to consider the broader implications of how the public interest in social media governance is taking sphere. Efforts are needed to articulate and implement a social media governance model that is more proactive than reactive towards the expansion of the role and function of these platforms in the dissemination of news and information (Napoli, 2015).

Public sphere is an interesting thing to develop in a society that adheres to a democratic system. In a political system that is based on free speech, it is strange to find so many audiences who could not speak their minds freely (Jackson-Beeck & Kraus, 1980). In a democratic system, basically the holders of power are the people who trust it to a group of people (executive, legislative and judicial) who are institutionalized and have legitimacy to seek justice and public welfare. In regards to the discussion of public sphere and public access, it will involve various information related to the public interest (Toepfl & Piwoni, 2015).

In line with the context of Pangandaran as a new Regency, information about political and educational information is important to be discussed. This assumption is based on the political reality that the relatively new Government of Pangandaran Regency still needs to be developed, and therefore, the development of its human resources, especially through education is needed.

There will be very broad discussion of political information if it refers to the various existing political understandings. This study establishes political information by referring to several political notions. The understanding of politics, according to Gabriel A. Almond, is defined as an activity that is closely related to the control of public decision-making in the lives of certain people in a certain area. Additionally, according to Joyce Mitchel, politics is also said to be a collective decision-making or the making of a general policy aimed at the community. Meanwhile, Roger F. Soltau explained that politics is a study of the state, the goals of a country, the institutions that will carry out these goals and the relationship between the state and other countries and the state and the people in it (Anggara, 2017).

Based on the three understandings above, there are three important things in a political sense, which are the decision-making process and its implementation, carried out by authorized institutions, to achieve certain state or regional goals for its people. Therefore, in this study, political information is limited to information related to the management of power or authority by state administrators and the results of their work. In a democracy based on the *trias politica* system, or three separations of governmental branches, the management of the state or the implementation of the political system of a country refers to the government (executive), People's Representative (legislative), or law enforcers (judicative). All three work in a system that is set together to achieve the goals of the country or region.

Digital media in Indonesia has proven to play an important role in driving significant changes in the democratic process as such political participation (Kholisoh, N. Yuliawat, E, Suci, R.N, Suharman, T, 2019). Through the greatest variety of information and connections of activists to the global level, Indonesia can bring down a regime that is considered authoritarian and corrupt (McCoy, 2019).

All three branches work in a system that is set together to achieve the country's goals. Legitimized power in the political system aims to achieve justice and welfare for the community or its citizens in the political system. As a regency, the regent as the holder of governmental power has the legitimacy to seek welfare for its citizens through the government he runs. The honourable chairman and members of the People's Representative Council have legitimate powers in the area of legislation or policy-making and also monitor and assess the work of the government for which they have legitimized to ensure justice for all parties in their working area.

Based on the discussion above, the political information in this study is the content or information related to the performance and work products of these three branches which are expected to be accessible to the public as mandates in a democratic system. Therefore, people's access to their performance and work products aimed at creating justice and public welfare needs to be known, felt and utilized by the community. Meanwhile, community participation only occurs if the community has access to both as a source of information and a channel to express their opinions or opinions (Yusuf, 2011).

Related to educational information that will be discussed in this study, in general the definition of education itself can refer to the broad understanding or the narrow understanding of education (Tanwir, 2015). Education, in a broad sense, is something that affects a person's growth as a learning experience that exists in all environments. While narrowly, education can be interpreted as everything related to educational institutions both schools (primary and secondary and higher education) in the process of acceptance and learning process) both formal and informal.

Based on the above discourse of education, the information in this study will refer to educational information in a narrow sense, which is various information related to formal and informal educational institutions. Educational information can be related to institutional and practical information, for example related to the admission system, learning processes, and their graduates.

Material and Methodology

This research is a qualitative research that specifically uses case studies in its procedures (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This research will analyze in-depth the use of digital media and public access to educational and political information in Pangandaran, West Java. Pangandaran was chosen as the case because currently, compared to other regencies in West Java, Pangandaran is the newest regency (inaugurated October 25, 2020). Pangandaran is also a regency that is developing into the most famous beach and tourist destination in West Java.

The collection techniques used in this study were in-depth interviews, observation and literature study. Interviews were conducted on government officials, community leaders, media practitioners, observers of the internet and social changes, as well as Pangandaran residents (aged 15-25 years) who are assumed to be active users of digital media. Observations were made on digital media which is widely accessed by the Pangandaran community; online media, both websites and social media platforms that reach Pangandaran audiences and social situations, as well as access to the use of digital media in the community.

The data analysis technique was carried out in accordance with the procedures described by Miles and Huberman. Data analysis is carried out interactively and continues until the required data is complete and has produced saturated data (meaning that the data source no longer generates new data related to the required data). Referring to Miles and Huberman, data analysis includes three stages of data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994), namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification.

In the Data Reduction stage, the researcher summarizes, selects important data, and focuses on the appropriate and needed data related to the use of digital media, available educational and political information, as well as public access and needs regarding the content. The next step is the Data Display stage where the researcher describes the data that has been selected into a comprehensive and in-depth narrative related to the use of digital media and public access to educational and political information. The presentation is conducted in the form of charts, pictures, and tables which show the relationship between categories or related aspects. Finally, in the final process, the researcher carried out a Conclusion Drawing and Verification, which is the process of verifying all the narratives presented and confirming important findings related to the use of digital media and public access to educational and political information in Pangandaran.

Result and Discussion

The presence of various digital media that can be accessed by the public, especially in this study the Pangadaran citizens, is interesting to see from several aspects. First, as a Regency, Pangandaran has various potentials both in terms of the business of several marine products and plantations, and especially in the tourism sector. Pangandaran Beach has long attracted local tourists as a must-stop destination. There are various interesting tourist sites in Pangandaran in the form of beaches, waterfalls, rivers and other places of interest.

Opportunities and Challenges of Pangandaran Regency

Pangandaran has a variety of beaches that serve as tourist attractions, namely Pangandaran Beach, Pasir Putih Beach, Batu Hiu, Batu Karas, Karapyak, Karang Nini, and Madasari Beach. In addition to beach tourism, there are several interesting rivers as a place for body rafting (Ciwayang and Citumang Rivers) and Tubing River (Green Santirah), as well as Green Canyon, a with rock cliffs passages and grandiose stalactites.

Pangandaran also has various waterfalls locally known as *curug* (Curug Luhur Pangandaran, Taringgul or Ciparakan, Jebulan Pangandaran, Bojong Pangandaran, and Curug Cigayor). In addition, there are also unique and one-of-a-kind places such as Sinjang Lawang Cave, Pangandaran Nature Reserve, Wonder Hill Jojogan and Pangandaran Tourist Village.

Due to the various tourist sites owned by Pangandaran Regency, the formation of Pangandaran Regency which was formerly part of Ciamis Regency is very reasonable and necessary. Based on the tourism potential of Pangandaran, it requires a special kind of development that is different from that of Ciamis, especially in the tourism sector. As a tourist resort, Pangandaran Regency has the potential to continue to be developed as a tourist destination for both domestic and foreign tourists. However, the formation of Pangandaran Regency also demands the readiness of its community to develop and

manage their territory properly according to the needs, opportunities and challenges that exist. This is related to the era of regional autonomy which requires Pangandaran Regency to be more independent as stated in the General Provisions on Regional Autonomy in Law No. 22 of 1999 Article 1 paragraph (8).

The paragraph stipulates that Regional Autonomy is the authority of an Autonomous Region to regulate and manage the interests of the local community according to their own initiative based on the aspirations of the community in accordance with the laws and regulations.

In relevance to the situation and condition of Pangandaran as a new regency, it is necessary to develop its human resources in accordance with the existing opportunities to develop the regency. In addition, a strong and democratic regional government is needed for the regency that has the opportunity to become a popular tourist resort not only at local, national but also international levels. The needed quality of human resources is not only related to the various skills they have, but also the cultural resilience of the community to face various interactions with tourists from different cultures. Good human resources are also expected to be able to participate in managing and controlling the management of Pangandaran by the local government.

Based on Pangandaran Regency's needs for human resources and the Pangandaran area management system by the local government, this research will focus on two important issues, which are public access to information about education and politics. These two issues become very important for Pangandaran Regency which needs to develop its human resources in accordance with various changes that occur in technical, economic, social, and cultural fields. In addition, community participation is also needed to control the new government in managing Pangandaran Regency in West Java which has various opportunities as well as challenges.

Digital Media and Public Access to Educational Information

Teenagers in Pangandaran have been able to access a variety of digital media platforms which help them find and obtain information related to the higher education they are going to choose, as expressed by a student of Padjadjaran University. The informant stated that after the school issued the rankings of the students who were entitled to take part in the National Selection for State University Admission (SNMPTN) and he found himself qualified for it, he immediately looked for the study program he was interested in through various digital media platforms as stated below:

> "so, after I got included, I looked and browsed on my own from YouTube, from websites about future opportunities, which major would be better. Then, I saw that Informatics Engineering would be good in the future because of the change of era and developments of technology, so I chose it (ITB Informatics Engineering). But I didn't get in."

SNMPTN itself is the admission of new students at State Universities without going through a test. SNMPTN participants, through the registration process, verify their data on the School and Student Database (PDSS). PDSS is an information system where all student report card score data will be collected and stored. All of the score data will be used as important input data so that students can participate in the SNMPTN or also known as the invitation route. Because the applicants who are accepted are students invited by State Universities, the selection was made by, among others, considering the academic achievements of the registrants of State Universities. The State Universities also consider the National Examination scores obtained by students and their schools, the track record of the alumni of each registrant's school, as well as the regional school rankings or school accreditation levels.

Based on the description above, the consideration of the said informants who only saw programs that were deemed necessary in the future, without considering various other information resulted in a decision on the choice of study program with a very low chance of being admitted. This means that the informant would supposedly be able to choose the same study program at several other universities whose competition is not too tight and the informant's school of origin could actually still compete with other schools. Detailed information like this is generally only obtained by registrants who join after-school learning institutions which are generally found in urban areas. In other words, there is still a gap in access to information obtained by the public

from the digital media they use regarding very important educational information.

The presence of local digital media that can carry local news also has the opportunity to develop information in the field of education in the region. One of the highlights was the access received by an informant from a local online media, namely 'Pangandaran News', regarding the opening of the Study Program Outside the Main Campus of Universitas Padjadjaran (PSDKU pad). The informant stated that he only read the information in the said local online media and immediately registered and participated in the selection. The informant got admitted to the Unpad PSDKU Communication Study Program. After graduating, the informant then pursued higher education for the master's program in Communication Science at the main campus of Universitas Padjadjaran, Jatinangor, Sumedang.

In addition to educational information to continue their studies at universities, information on scholarships for students that can be accessed by the public in Pangandaran is also very minimal. One of the informants said that educational information is one of the information which according to him is rarely obtained from digital media although the information is really needed by them, as stated by the informant as follows:

> "Usually, the most needed information in Pangandaran is information about scholarships, ma'am. If you want it (to exist). Because usually information about scholarships is difficult to obtain, even scholarship information from the Pangandaran Regency government. Even if it is there, it is not clear."

The same thing was stated by another informant as follows:

> "Information about education is still limited. Information about what it wants to be and what it looks like is limited, and there is not enough information from the institutions themselves. I didn't have that much information about education, so educational information is still limited, and I don't know what to do. Let's see, where do I know information about universities? I gained all of the information from my friends, from mouth-to-mouth information, there is almost no information I gained from media, even though that kind of information is extremely needed."

Based on various data related to the public's access to educational information, it can be focused on several important things. The presence of digital media has become an alternative information search engine for some teenagers to obtain further information other than those obtained directly from the school. However, in general, the information they can get from digital media is general information and lacks depth. The limited information obtained ultimately affects the quality of decision-making related to the education they take. The problem is related to the unavailability of initial information that can direct them to the right sources of information. In addition, they are also affected by their lack of digital competence in selecting and evaluating information sources.

Digital Media and Access to Political Information

The presence of digital media and its use in Pangandaran is assumed to have implications on the public's access to various information, including information about politics. Political information in this study is limited to the understanding of information about various government programs or government policies that are necessary for the Pangandaran public to know. The government's use of digital media to improve its information services to the public is in accordance with Law No. 14 of 2008 concerning Public Information Disclosure (KIP) and Law No. 19 of 2016 as an amendment to Law No. 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE).

Through the use of digital media, the government can develop e-Government and utilize social media to increase public access and control of information related to the public interest. The implementation of e-Government and the use of social media by the government is expected to create transparency in order to prevent and take action against corruption (Simarmata, 2017). In addition, effective democracy requires that its citizens or the public know about the system and how government is implemented (Jaysawal, 2013).

In other words, the local government must have switched from conventional bureaucratic communication to digital-based communication. Meanwhile, in Pangandaran Regency, according to one informant, the communication carried out by the Regional

Government is still conventional. The informant stated:

"In my opinion, so far, what I feel is that the regional leadership generally only conveys information to the officers (directly) under them, ma'am. Because here there is no local media such as television (channel) so there is no information that can be received simultaneously by the community. So, we only know that information from opinion leaders is at lower levels. Usually, information from the Regent is conveyed to the head of the service, then from the head of the service it is passed on to the village head then from the village head to the community leaders, and finally to the residents".

The hope that digital media can also be used by the government and become a source of information for citizens related to the government was also acknowledged by a student, who stated that:

"I've seen the news about Pangandaran from the West Java Government's official website, and I think that the use of conventional media should follow digital media because for now it's digital media that is simple and much in demand, so it is the government, in disseminating information to the public, who must adjust. Because there are so little followers of conventional media, (so) where do you have to follow the hype? The government-related information that (we) want to receive includes important information from the government that the public needs to know, or has a direct impact on the community, such as socializing government programs in villages. In addition to the use of digital media, the community also mention the importance of the local media's presence such as local television or local radio which rarely provide specific information about local government policies…"

Referring to the facts presented by the informants, the presence of local media or public media is also something that must be developed. This is a challenge for TVRI and RRI to expand their reach to the audience, including through digital media. The presence of broadcast media at the Pangandaran local level does not exist, as stated by the following informant:

"There are no local broadcasting media here, and therefore most of the local media that exists here is online media, and the strongest political style here is also through online media such as online news portals."

The importance of local media in Pangandaran was also expressed by one of the teachers, who stated that:

"Of course, the public movement will not be able to expand widely if there is no local or national media because the ideas are echoed from the media".

In addition to the fact that digital media can be used as a channel to disseminate and access policies or programs needed by citizens or the public, digital media are also be able to obtain and deliver government information and critics of the government itself, be it executive or legislative. Regarding news related to criticism of leaders, both executive and legislative, is usually published by an online media portal called Ruber, especially news about politics. Ruber as an online media portal that carries criticism of the government was also expressed by another informant, who stated that:

"The Pangandaran community tends to be more towards *ruber.id* or *pikiranrakyat.com* or *kapol.id* who are from Tasik but also (exists and relatable) in Pangandaran."

All of the media portals mentioned by the informants are online news media or new internet-based media or digital media. One of the criticisms included, for example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, members of the Regional People's Representative Council actually bought official cars. In addition, there are reports about members of the Regional People's Representative Council taking advantage of their positions to include employees or what is called Nepotism. The criticisms conveyed by the online media are quite informative and have an impact, for example, encouraging student demonstrations to take place at the office of the Regional People's Representative Council. This means that digital media is an alternative media to obtain political information, especially regarding criticisms of the executive and legislative branches.

An informant also stated that criticism spread by online media is important because it can encourage public participation and involve

the community in controlling the government. Due to the fact that they are elected by the community, it is the community that have the right to control their performance. Given the criticism in the media, the public become aware and can also participate in warning the government if it deviates from its original work. However, news that is critical usually also carries a risk if the issue raised is very sensitive. An online media journalist said that violence against journalists also occurred in Pangandaran through thugs who threatened them. When that happens, they generally stop the investigation because no one will care about their safe beings and life if they experience bad things because of their news.

Digital media can also be a source of information for the government regarding news coverage that has an impact on its citizens. This was stated by an informant who works as a teacher as follows:

> "When there was a Papua case involving students in Jogja and it was spread in online media, the Regent and security forces also came to the multicultural school to ensure that Papuan friends here were also safe. That was the most concrete example."

The multicultural School was founded by Ai Nurhidayat who together with his friends in Parigi Village established a senior high school that enrols students from various regions in Indonesia. This school enrols children who are unable to attend school or children who have dropped out of school through various NGO networks in their area. The multicultural school raises funds for students both for transportation costs to Pangandaran and their living expenses during their stay with the school. The multicultural school uses the name of SMK Karya Bakti (the name of a school that almost closed due to financial difficulties to continue operating). The presence of this school is a good start to prepare the Pangandaran public to know people from different places and cultures as they might meet in the digital era through digital media.

Conclusions

Based on the discussion of the data obtained and referring to several assumptions of the theory of social constructivism of technology and the concept of public space, there are several important things that need to be considered from the findings of this study.

The use of digital media in Pangandaran is recognized by various parties as experiencing an increasing trend, especially among teenagers and children. Apart from being triggered by the available access, the problem of people's perspective of technology is also the background. Although it still has many limitations, digital media has the potential to be an alternative in finding information related to educational and political information that can be accessed or obtained by digital media users in Pangandaran.

Information in the field of education from various digital media is generally considered to be very limited and not to meet digital media users' needs for educational information, for example the lack of information about various types of educational programs that align with the context of the Pangandaran region, competition in the selection system for higher education and educational scholarships.

Information about the political field related to the program or performance of the government and members of the Regional People's Representative Council is still limited. Public access to a variety of information related to the programs and performance of these institutions is still very limited. The political information needed is especially related to the dissemination of government programs that are directly related to or will immediately benefit the public. Various government programs for the public still go through the conventional path, which is bureaucratic. In addition, there are no digital-based communication channels that are generally known by the public to access a variety of important public information from the Regional House of Representatives.

Admittedly, although information about politics is limited, digital media can be a source of information for the public about some of the criticisms against the government and members of the Pangandaran Regional House of Representatives. The criticism spread by the online media in Pangandaran was able to lift the public's political awareness to participate in controlling the government and the Regional House of Representatives. The presence of digital media to disseminate information or gather information from the public has not fully been taken advantage of by various institutions in Pangandaran.

Based on these findings, it can be said that digital media has the potential to become a public space with a very limited function, namely a place where public interests can be discussed and citizens' awareness of and participation in education and politics can be increased. In addition, the use of digital media can only be increased if there is individuals' or institutions' awareness to utilize digital media, so that the quality of digital skills and political will possessed by all parties including the public, government and members of the Pangandaran Regency Regional House of Representatives will improve accordingly. The presence of local online media in Pangandaran helps the public get information about various events that occur in Pangandaran, especially because there is no local television or radio station in Pangandaran.

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