

Edwin Jurriëns & Ross Tapsell (Eds.)

**Digital Indonesia: Connectivity and Divergence**

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It is inevitable that attention is being given to digital technology when it is increasingly dominating various sectors of modern life. Technological advancement relies on digital technology, and therefore a society which is able to harness digital technology will gain benefits from it in the future. However, if digital technology is not used properly, it can create negative impacts too.

Indonesia is one of the nations in the process of maximising the use of digital technology for its development. Since the internet came to Indonesia in the second half of the 1990s, digital technology has contributed to shaping the country's culture and identity, as well as its living and working practices. Its role can be seen in the growth of Indonesia's promising digital economy and digital platforms which are now commonly used in the political sphere as places where freedom of expression can be exercised and opinions can be voiced on various issues. Nevertheless, there are challenges which have to be solved since the country's developing digital technology network still only reaches a small part of Indonesia, focused around Java and Sumatra. Many regions still have no infrastructure for digital communication and information while other communities can only access underdeveloped resources in this area.

Edwin Jurriëns and Ross Tapsell's edited collection *Digital Indonesia: Connectivity and Divergence* is based on papers presented at the thirty-fourth annual Indonesia Update conference held at Australia National University (ANU), on 16-17 September 2016. Indonesia Update is an initiative which gives a comprehensive overview of developments in Indonesia and offers opportunities for broad discussions about different topics related to it. The 2016 conference focused on the ways that digital technologies are making an impact on different disciplines and fields in Indonesia.

Jurriëns and Tapsell set out to explain the opportunities and challenges created by the impact of digital technology on Indonesian society. Their explanation is delivered through a number of case studies which show the relationships between digital technology and different sectors of life in Indonesia, and the studies are clustered into five sections which, the editors claim, represent "closely interrelated aspects of digital Indonesia" (p. 5). These sections focus on connectivity, divergence, identity, knowledge, and commerce; however, insufficient space is allocated to explaining the reason behind this clustering. A clearer explanation about how the editors chose those different aspects and how they interrelate with each other would have helped the reader to navigate their way through the book more easily.

The collection contains 14 papers written both from macro- as well as from micro-perspectives. In Chapter Three, Emma Baulch offers a broad view of the social and political impacts of changes in Indonesian people's mobile phone usage while, in Chapter Nine, Martin Slama provides a detailed analysis of the relationship between social media and Islamic practice through an explanation of the ways in which "Indonesian Muslims are using social media for religious purposes" (p. 147).

A number of insightful chapters are written by digital technology practitioners who offer insights from the field. For instance, in Chapter Two, Yanuar Nugroho and Agung Hikmat offer "An insider's view of e-governance under Jokowi" and assess that governance in terms of its political promise and vision. The co-authors, who work in the Executive Office of the President, explain the e-governance strategy President Joko Widodo's government has developed to facilitate communication between citizens and their government in a bid to deliver more efficient and transparent governance. In Chapter 14, Bede Moore, who is the co-founder and former Managing Director of Lazada Indonesia (an e-commerce company) gives his perspective on the development of Indonesia's e-commerce industry, with a particular focus on the period from 2011 to 2016.



The edited collection gives readers a thorough understanding of the current digital technology situation in Indonesia, and it addresses the key opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. For instance, in Chapter Five, Onno W. Purbo discusses the efforts that government and communities have made to provide better internet access, particularly for villages and rural areas. Purbo believes there is an opportunity to close the “digital divide” through the use of top-down and bottom-up strategies. Top-down strategies can be implemented by the government through “information technology” programmes, while bottom-up strategies can be developed by communities themselves through projects such as the development of community-based rural internet networks. In Chapter Ten, Nava Nuraniyah addresses a quite different challenge when she examines the issues involved in responding to online extremism. She examines the use of Telegram, a mobile chat application, by the pro-ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) group in Indonesia.

The book succeeds to a great extent in its bid to map out the opportunities and challenges created by the development of digital technology in Indonesian society. The collection’s biggest strength comes from the diversity of its authors. The book’s researchers and academics provide varied perspectives and new insights into how digitalisation is shaping Indonesian society, while digital technology practitioners offer key insights into how digital technology is being implemented across Indonesia. The combination of these two perspectives makes this book an excellent reference point for students of digital information studies and for those involved in decision-making processes related to digitalisation.

The scope of this book is somewhat limited, however. When a collection draws on conference proceedings, it cannot always offer cover the full range of possible perspectives. It would, for example, have been valuable to have had more information on the links between digital technology and “fake news”, particularly in relation to political issues where misinformation can spread through social media quickly with powerful effects. Nevertheless, this book, which can be recommended to researchers and those involved in the development of digital technology and policy, can play an important role in encouraging further research and discussion about the impact of digital technology on society in Indonesia and other places as well in relation to a wider set of issues and sectors, such as small businesses, the role of youth, and education practice.

All in all, the organization and presentation of this book itself are satisfactory. The writing structure of each chapter helps the reader to follow the arguments that the writers want to explain. This book is much recommended to any individuals, such as students, lecturers, researchers, and practitioners, who are interested in digital technology issues. However, individuals who have interest in different issues, such as social, political, economy, law, and peace studies can benefit from it as well. This book also provides a good reference for the decision makers.

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