

## ENHANCING NEWS LITERACY IN INDONESIA THROUGH MICROSITE DEVELOPMENT

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**Abstract:** *The development of digital technology has transformed patterns of news consumption from conventional media to digital platforms. However, this shift has also contributed to the widespread dissemination of hoaxes, misinformation, and disinformation. Low levels of news literacy among digital media users have further exacerbated this condition, as evidenced by limited abilities to verify sources and distinguish facts from opinions. This study aims to describe the state of news literacy within Indonesian society and to analyze the role of microsite development as an effort to strengthen news literacy. Microsites are selected as a strategic educational medium due to their focused content, structured presentation, and minimal distractions compared to large-scale websites. Through Indonesian society, the development of a microsite is expected to serve as a systematic educational space that helps the public transition from passive information consumers to active and critical participants. This research is expected to contribute academically to the study of digital media literacy and practically to the development of effective and sustainable media literacy initiatives.*

**Keywords:** *News Literacy, Microsite, Hoaxes, Indonesian Society.*

### Introduction

In the current digital era, the rapid development of information technology has fundamentally transformed the way people consume news. Previously, news consumption was dominated by print media and traditional broadcasting. Today, however, digital platforms such as online news portals, social media, and instant messaging applications have become the primary channels for disseminating information. Although access to news has become faster and more convenient, this transformation has also introduced new challenges related to the quality and credibility of information. Society is increasingly exposed to unverified news, which has the potential to spread hoaxes, misinformation, and disinformation.

In contemporary journalism, the speed of news dissemination often outweighs accuracy. Journalists are now required not only to report quickly but also to ensure the veracity of the information presented. Carlson (2018), in his article "Journalism in a Digital Age," emphasizes that speed should not come at the expense of fact verification, and that journalists must prioritize accuracy in order to maintain public trust. Similarly, Lewandowski (2020), in his study "The Role of Fact-Checking in Journalism," argues that fact-checking is a key component in preserving news integrity and enabling journalists to address the challenges of

today's fast-paced information environment.

The issue of low news literacy among digital media users have become a major concern. Many individuals lack the skills necessary to verify news sources, which can lead to misunderstanding and broader social consequences, including conflict and declining trust in the media. The widespread circulation of hoaxes in Indonesia illustrates the critical nature of this issue, as false information is often accepted and shared without adequate analysis. Data from Mafindo (2025) recorded 1,593 hoax cases throughout 2024–2025, with a peak of 180 cases in July 2025. The low level of news literacy, reflected in Indonesia's digital literacy index of only 3.5 on a five-point scale (one of the lowest globally), makes it difficult for the public to verify sources and context or distinguish facts from opinions, thereby increasing the risk of social conflict and polarization.

Mihailidis, P. (2014), in his study entitled "The Role of Media Literacy in the Fight Against Misinformation," argues that strong media literacy can reduce the negative impact of fake news and equip society with critical skills to analyze the information they receive. Meanwhile, Hobbs, R. (2017), in "Media Literacy: A National Priority for a Changing World," notes that the enhancement of news literacy should be a national priority, particularly in an increasingly complex information environment, to help people become more informed and discerning consumers of information.

According to Tandoc et al. (2018), the proliferation of fake news on social media has significantly shaped public perceptions, positioning media literacy as a crucial tool for ensuring the dissemination of accurate and legitimate information. UNESCO defines information literacy (including news literacy) as the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use information to address problems within an information society. This definition encompasses social practices related to knowledge, language, and culture. Such an approach highlights the importance of critical attitudes toward digital news, where news literacy extends beyond reading to include contextual verification and bias assessment in order to prevent the spread of misinformation.

Responding to the low level of news literacy among the public and the massive circulation of hoaxes, a community initiative called NewsLiteracy was established. This community aims to educate and enhance public understanding and skills in navigating complex digital information flows, while implementing various educational initiatives to empower citizens to consume news critically and responsibly. Since its establishment, the community has conducted activities such as workshops, seminars, and social media campaigns designed to raise awareness of the dangers of hoaxes and the importance of news verification.

Along with the continuous development of digital media, this study seeks to further develop a microsite for Indonesian society as a highly relevant digital platform. In digital communication practices, microsites have emerged as a widely used strategy among media and marketing professionals. According to Luthfi Hanif (Rumahweb Indonesia, 2024), a microsite is defined as a mini website or simplified webpage created for specific purposes, such as promoting products, events, or particular activities. Similarly, UTAS (2025) describes a microsite as a digital strategy in the form of a small website designed to support specific campaigns, including product launches, interactive campaigns, or exclusive events, with the goal of providing a more personalized user experience.

Microsites not only offer concise and focused educational content but can also function as effective tools for strengthening news literacy among the public. Through this approach, users are expected to become more active and critical in responding to news, as well as more capable of distinguishing factual information from hoaxes. Consequently, the development of

a microsite represents a strategic step that is essential for Indonesian society.

This microsite is developed as a digital educational medium aimed at improving public news literacy amid the overwhelming flow of digital information. It is designed to help users understand how news is produced, recognize hoaxes, and cultivate critical thinking habits before accepting and sharing information. By presenting concise, visual, and easily comprehensible content, the microsite serves as a self-directed learning platform that can be accessed anytime and by anyone.

The primary benefit of the microsite for Indonesian society lies in its role as an educational and empowerment tool. It encourages users not only to become consumers of information but also to independently evaluate the credibility of news. In addition, the microsite strengthens the community's social function by providing participatory and discussion spaces, thereby fostering a culture of responsible information sharing. For Indonesian society itself, the microsite acts as a digital activity hub that expands educational outreach, archives literacy materials, and enhances society's identity and credibility within the broader news literacy movement.

Operationally, the microsite is accessed via a link provided on the NewsLiteracy community's Instagram page and presents systematically and contextually structured news literacy modules. Users can learn fundamental concepts of news, types of hoaxes, and practical steps for information verification. The microsite also integrates credible fact-checking tools, enabling users to directly practice the verification process. Management of the microsite is conducted collaboratively by the NewsLiteracy team through regular content updates and integration with other community activities, such as workshops and social media campaigns. With a simple yet structured operational mechanism, the NewsLiteracy microsite is expected to serve as a strategic medium in fostering a more critical, informed, and responsible society in navigating information in the digital era.

Previous studies have largely examined digital literacy in general through national surveys or school-based programs, such as the impact of the School Literacy Movement on reading news texts. However, limited research has explored the development of microsites as a specific medium for strengthening news literacy within community-based initiatives such as NewsLiteracy. The ADDIE model has often been applied to early childhood literacy media or general electronic modules, such as literacy kits or elementary school digital media, without a focus on adult news verification in the context of digital hoaxes. This indicates a lack of empirical studies on participatory community microsites for context-specific news literacy in Indonesia.

This study applies the ADDIE model to systematically develop the microsite. The process begins by identifying low levels of news literacy within Indonesian society through surveys examining exposure to hoaxes. The design phase involves structuring a concise microsite (including verification modules, interactive quizzes, and discussion forums) aligned with

UNESCO's definition of literacy as the ability to identify and evaluate information. The development phase includes creating a prototype using tools such as Google Sites and Canva, which is validated by media and content experts (with a target validity exceeding 90%). The implementation phase integrates the microsite into community activities through small- and large-scale trials. Finally, the evaluation phase measures effectiveness using pre- and post-tests of news literacy.

## Literature Review

**Journalism Transformation and Challenges in the Digital Era** The development of information technology has fundamentally transformed the landscape of news consumption, shifting the dominance of print media and traditional broadcasting toward digital platforms such as online news portals and social media. Although this transformation offers speed of access, new challenges have emerged regarding information credibility, where the speed of news dissemination often compromises accuracy.

In this context, the role of journalists and fact verification becomes crucial. Carlson (2018) emphasizes that speed should not come at the expense of fact verification, and journalists must prioritize accuracy to maintain public trust. Lewandowski (2020) asserts that fact-checking is a key component in preserving news integrity and addressing the challenges of a fast-paced information environment.

**The Urgency of News Literacy in Combating Misinformation** Low levels of news literacy among digital media users are a primary concern, as the inability to verify sources can trigger misunderstandings and social conflict. This is reflected in data from Mafindo, which recorded 1,593 hoax cases throughout 2024–2025, as well as Indonesia’s digital literacy index, which remains low (3.5 out of 5), making it difficult for the public to distinguish between facts and opinions.

**Previous Studies Highlighting the Importance of Media Literacy as a Solution.** Impact of Literacy: Mihailidis (2014) argues that strong media literacy can mitigate the negative impact of fake news and equip society with critical analysis skills. National Priority: Hobbs (2017) asserts that enhancing news literacy must be a national priority to cultivate intelligent information consumers. Public Perception, Tandoc et al. (2018) note that media literacy is a crucial tool for ensuring the dissemination of accurate information amidst the proliferation of fake news that shapes public perceptions.

UNESCO defines information literacy as the ability to identify, evaluate, and use information effectively, which encompasses contextual verification and bias assessment. **Microsites as a Digital Educational Strategy** In response to educational needs, microsites have emerged as a relevant digital strategy. Luthfi Hanif (2024) and UTAS (2025) define a microsite as a mini-website or simplified page designed for specific purposes, such as campaigns or focused education, to provide a more personalized user experience.

The utilization of microsites within the context of the NewsLiteracy community possesses several strategic advantages, such as: **Focused Education**, the microsite presents concise, visual, and easily comprehensible content, functioning as a self-directed learning platform accessible at any time.

**User Empowerment**, this medium encourages users not only to become consumers but also to independently evaluate the credibility of news.

**Activity Hub**, For the community, the microsite serves as a digital activity center that archives literacy materials and strengthens the credibility of the movement.

**Focused Education**, the microsite presents concise, visual, and easily comprehensible content, functioning as a self-directed learning platform accessible at any time.

**User Empowerment**, this medium encourages users not only to become consumers but also to independently evaluate the credibility of news.

**Activity Hub**, For the community, the microsite serves as a digital activity center that archives literacy materials and strengthens the credibility of the movement.

**Research Gap and Development Approach** Previous research on digital literacy has generally focused on national surveys or school-based programs, such as the School Literacy

Movement (*Gerakan Literasi Sekolah*); however, there is limited exploration regarding the development of microsites for communities. Furthermore, the ADDIE development model is often applied to elementary learning media or general electronic modules and has not been widely utilized in the context of news verification for adults within community initiatives.

**Method**

This study employs a Research and Development (R&D) approach utilizing the ADDIE model, which comprises the Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation phases. This model was selected due to its systematic nature and suitability for the development of digital educational media. The research focuses on the development of a participatory microsite as a means to strengthen news literacy for the NewsLiteracy community and the general public, accessible via the community's Instagram link.

The analysis phase was conducted to identify the low levels of news literacy and the high prevalence of hoaxes. The findings from this analysis served as the foundation for designing a microsite that features verification modules, interactive quizzes, and discussion forums, with content adhering to UNESCO standards and a user-friendly visual design. In the development phase, a prototype was created using Google Sites and Canva, which was subsequently validated by media and content experts with a targeted feasibility score exceeding 90%. The validated microsite was then implemented through small-scale and large-scale trials and integrated into community activities as a digital learning hub.

**Result and Discussion**

This section presents the validation data for the microsite product developed using the ADDIE model. The data were obtained from the validation conducted by two experts (a media expert and a content expert) as well as limited field trials involving NewsLiteracy Community.

Table 1. Validators

Subject	Expert of	
Material Experts	1.	Head of Indonesian Literacy Research
Media Experts	1.	Graphic Designer
Assessment	1.	NewsLiteracy Community

Source: primary data.

The results of news literacy community evaluations and expert validations (media and content experts) are presented below.

Table 2. The Media Expert’s Validation

No Aspect	Number Of	Total	Max	%	Category
Media	6	28	30	93%	Eligible
Learning	5	23	25	92%	Eligible

Source: Primary data

The News Literacy Microsite product has undergone expert validation and achieved highly satisfactory results. Based on two main aspects—media and learning—both were evaluated and classified as Eligible.

The media aspect obtained a score of 28 out of 30 (93%), indicating optimal visual quality, effective navigation, and strong technical performance, all of which contribute to a positive user experience. The learning aspect achieved a score of 23 out of 25 (92%), confirming that the news literacy content is accurate, relevant, and pedagogically well-structured, thereby effectively supporting learning objectives.

Overall, the consistent scores exceeding 90% demonstrate that the product is well-developed in terms of both presentation and content. With an Eligible status in both categories, the microsite is considered highly suitable for implementation without the need for major revisions.

Table 3. The material experts' validation

No Aspect	Number Of	Total	Max	%	Category
Learning	2	8	10	80%	Strong
Quality	3	10	15	67%	Strong
Benefits	3	11	15	73%	Strong

Source: Primary data

The News Literacy Microsite was evaluated as “Strong”, with an average score of 72.5%. The Learning aspect emerged as the primary strength (80%), indicating pedagogical effectiveness and systematic content delivery. The Benefits aspect (73%) confirms the usefulness of relevant content, while the Quality aspect (67%) still requires improvement in terms of content depth and accuracy. Overall, the product is suitable for use; however, revisions to content quality and perceived benefits would help elevate it to the “Very Strong” category.

The researcher collected the evaluation of this microsite from the News Literacy community in North Sumatra.

Table 4. Newsliteracy Community Assesment

No Aspect	Number Of	Total	Max	%	Category
Media	4	283	300	94%	Eligible
Learning	5	341	375	91%	Eligible

Source: Primary data

The News Literacy Microsite received a very positive response from the public. The Media aspect achieved a score of 94%, indicating an attractive visual design, easy navigation, and a user experience free from technical obstacles. The Learning aspect obtained a score of 91%, signifying that the news literacy content is clear, communicative, and relevant to everyday needs.

The consistency of these high scores reinforces the product’s position as a “complete package,” combining user-friendly design with educational and beneficial content. In line with the studies by Budiman et al. (2023) and Suartika et al. (2024), the success of digital platforms is determined by the integration of usability and content relevance. With an Eligible status in both aspects, the microsite is declared to have successfully passed the User Acceptance Test (UAT) with highly satisfactory results.

Table 5. Percentage Validation and Assessment Result

No	Validity Result	Presentace Qualification	Category
1	The Media Expert's Validation	93%	Very Good
2	The material experts' validation	73%	Good
3	Newsliteracy community	92%	Very Good

**Conclusion**

Based on the validation results, the development of the news literacy product shows a positive level of validity and feasibility. The media expert's validation reached 93%, which falls into the *very good* category, indicating that the design, presentation, and technical aspects strongly support the effectiveness of the news literacy content. Meanwhile, the material experts' validation obtained 73%, categorized as *good*, suggesting that the content is appropriate and relevant, although there is still room for minor improvements.

Furthermore, the evaluation from the news literacy community resulted in a percentage of 92% in the *very good* category. This reflects a strong acceptance and positive response from the target users, indicating that the product is engaging, understandable, and useful in supporting news literacy learning. Overall, these results demonstrate that the developed news literacy product is valid and suitable for use, with strong support from experts and the community.

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