Community Engagement and Facilitation in Village Digital Transformation: Leveraging Websites to Enhance MSME Development and Public Information in Kedungdowo Village

[1]Sri Ayudha Mujiyanti*, [1]Arico Ayani Suparto, [1]Rasidi, [1]Ahmad Fatoni, [1]Putri Delila Sari, [1]Rahman Hidayat, [1]Diah Ayu Wardani, [1]Dwi Lisnawati, [1]Alviyatul Qomariyah, [1]Farhan Fadilah

[1]STKIP PGRI Situbondo, Indonesia
*Corresponding author
E-mail: ayudhaxyz@gmail.com

Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to support the digital transformation of Kedungdowo Village by enhancing the use of its website for public services and the promotion of local potential, particularly MSMEs.

Method: The activity employed a participatory approach involving socialization sessions, focused group discussions, and hands-on assistance for village stakeholders.

Practical Applications: The program resulted in a structured plan to optimize the OpenSID system, including a domain update and improved content management to promote village resources.

Conclusion: The initiative successfully improved digital literacy among village actors and established a model for community-based digital governance in rural areas.

How to cite

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Introduction

In the era of regional autonomy, villages hold a strategic role in determining the success of development, as they directly interact with the community, particularly in the delivery of public services. However, village officials continue to face various challenges, one of which is the low level of skills required to respond to the increasingly complex demands of society. The continued use of conventional archival management practices also increases the risk of damage due to natural disasters such as floods and fires, as well as pest disturbances like termites (Rozi & Tomi, 2017). On the other hand, communication serves as a crucial aspect in conveying information and representing the village to the public (Salim, 2013). In a digital society, citizens demand transparency, fast public services, and easy access to information in government management, including at the village level. Village governments use websites as communication bridges to connect with citizens and deliver information, services, and documentation effectively. These websites also help local administrations showcase various activities and improve the quality of public engagement. Kedungdowo Village, as part of the village governance structure, needs to manage information more efficiently, transparently, and in a way that is easily accessible to the community. Therefore, adopting information technology through a village website serves as a strategic step to improve village management.

Since 2023, Kedungdowo Village has operated a village website using OpenSID from OpenDesa. However, the village staff still require training on how to manage and utilize the available features in OpenSID to promote the potential of Kedungdowo Village. The presence of a village website not only assists village officials in disseminating information and promoting local potential, but also facilitates administrative processes and data management. Raw data can be processed into meaningful information, ready to be used for decision-making and improved public service delivery (Behl & Manju, 2014).

The specific objective of this activity in Kedungdowo Village is to address the lack of promotional tools for local potential and the suboptimal delivery of information services. The proposed solution is to utilize the village website as the primary platform for information services and the promotion of village potential, including local MSMEs. This activity aims to enhance the understanding and skills of both community members and village officials in managing and utilizing the village website effectively, thereby accelerating village development and improving public access to information and services. Furthermore, the explicit inclusion of the term "assistance" in the activity description indicates that the goal goes beyond mere information dissemination. It suggests a focus on building practical skills, supporting implementation, and providing ongoing guidance. This report will outline how the activity seeks to achieve these goals through interactive material delivery and hands-on mentoring processes.

The promotion of village potential is a strategic effort to introduce and develop local resources such as tourism, flagship products, culture, and the creative economy so they can gain wider recognition beyond the local community. According to Nugroho and Dahuri (2012), well-managed village potential, when supported by appropriate promotional strategies, can serve as a key driver of local economic development. Effective promotion requires the use of relevant media, including social media, exhibitions, and digital platforms such as village websites.

Susanto's (2020) states that the use of information technology and village websites significantly supports the dissemination of information about village potential in a broader, more efficient, and real-time manner. Furthermore, Wijaya's (2019) emphasizes the importance of active participation from both the community and village government in implementing participatory-based promotional strategies. Collaboration among village officials, MSME actors, youth groups, and community leaders can strengthen promotional content, making it more authentic and representative of local values.

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Method

The socialization and assistance activity was conducted on Monday, July 14, 2025, starting precisely at 09:00 AM (WIB). The chosen venue for the activity was the Kedungdowo Village Hall. Selecting the Village Hall as the location reflects official support from the local village government and provides convenient access for local residents. This choice reinforces the community-centered approach inherent in public administration programs of this nature. Scheduling the activity at 09:00 AM also demonstrates a strategic effort to maximize attendance by aligning with regular working hours for village officials and accommodating community members who may have completed their early morning agricultural or household tasks, thereby promoting optimal participation.

The participants of the activity consisted of various key stakeholders essential to village development, including the Village Secretary (Sekdes), other village officials, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME) actors in Kedungdowo Village, and members of the general public. This group encompassed village authorities (such as the Village Head and relevant Village Operators), community leaders, representatives from local community organizations as well as individual citizens who are direct beneficiaries of the socialization and assistance efforts.

The implementation process of the socialization and assistance program was divided into several phases. The first phase was the preparation stage, which involved a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with local residents and field observations to tailor the content of the socialization and assistance activities. The FGD served as the foundation for identifying priority topics and determining the appropriate approach for the mentoring process. The second phase was the implementation stage, which included content delivery, tutorial sessions, and interactive discussions. The final phase was the assistance stage, which ensured that the delivered materials could be effectively applied to optimize the Kedungdowo Village website using the OpenSID system, particularly for promoting the village's potential.

Result

This activity was attended by 42 participants, consisting of 7 village staff members, 10 MSME owners, 7 university students conducting fieldwork, and 18 interested community members. The participants received materials from speaker and facilitators form STKIP PGRI Situbondo and Kominfo Situbondo.

Table 1. Socialization Session

No.	Socialization Theme	Duration (minutes)
1.	Introduction to the Village Website (OpenSID)	20
2.	Features and Functions for Public Services	30
3.	Using the Website to Promote MSMEs	30
4.	Managing Village Data and Content Updates	20
5.	Introduction to the Plaza Situbondo	30
6.	Entrepreneurship Enhancement	30
7.	Q&A and Community Feedback Session	30

Source: Author's Work, 2025.

Participants attentively engaged with the presentations delivered by the speakers and facilitators, and provided feedback in the form of shared experiences and questions. The discussion proceeded effectively and constructively. As a result of the socialization session, it was agreed that Kedungdowo Village would change its domain from kedungdowo.desa.id to kedungdowo-arjasa.desa.id, in accordance with the latest government regulation stating that desa.id domains are to be managed by Kominfo. Following the socialization session, the next phase was the assistance period, scheduled for a maximum duration of two weeks. This phase

began with the submission of the new domain name proposal (kedungdowo-arjasa.desa.id), followed by the restructuring of the village website with a focus on enhancing features related to public services and the promotion of local potential, particularly MSMEs in Kedungdowo Village.

Figure 1. Documentation of the Activities

Source: Author's Work, 2025.

Discussion

The digital transformation of Kedungdowo Village through the implementation of a village website marks a significant step toward achieving broader rural development goals in the era of regional autonomy. Villages today are no longer seen as mere administrative units but as strategic agents capable of driving localized development initiatives (Nugroho & Dahuri, 2012). By adopting digital platforms such as OpenSID, village governance can foster closer engagement with citizens, promoting transparency, improving access to public information, and encouraging active participation in development programs. This proximity to residents allows for more responsive, bottom-up planning that reflects the community's actual needs.

Despite the adoption of OpenSID in 2023, Kedungdowo Village had yet to fully harness the platform's capabilities. Village staff and stakeholders, including MSME actors, required targeted training to optimize the website's features for public service delivery and business promotion. As Susanto (2020) highlights, village websites play a crucial role in enabling real-time, efficient, and widespread dissemination of information. Moreover, transitioning from conventional systems to digital records helps mitigate risks associated with natural disasters or pests, as emphasized by Rozi and Tomi (2017). This shift not only secures data but also modernizes the village's approach to information management.

The digitalization effort also aligns with Salim's (2013) perspective on the importance of communication in shaping public perception and enhancing a village's external representation. A well-managed website can serve as a digital showcase for Kedungdowo's identity, achievements, and economic potential, especially in promoting local MSMEs. By integrating promotional content, service updates, and community news, the website becomes a dynamic tool for both internal governance and external outreach. This dual function strengthens the village's visibility and credibility, attracting potential partners and investors.

The assistance phase following the initial socialization session played a pivotal role in building capacity among village apparatus and residents. Through practical skill development and real-time mentoring, the initiative emphasized sustainable digital adoption rather than one-off interventions. This approach ensured that participants could not only understand the technical aspects of the website but also apply them effectively in their daily roles. As Behl and Manju (2014) argue, transforming raw data into actionable information is essential for informed decision-making and efficient governance, a principle that guided the mentoring process.

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Ultimately, the participatory design of Kedungdowo's digital transformation program—incorporating training, mentoring, and community feedback—offers a replicable model for other villages seeking to integrate digital tools into their development strategies. By focusing on inclusive engagement and practical outcomes, the initiative supports rural entrepreneurship and strengthens local governance. The experience of Kedungdowo Village demonstrates that with the right support and vision, digital platforms can become powerful enablers of community-driven progress.

Conclusion

The digital transformation initiative in Kedungdowo Village, through the optimization of the OpenSID-based village website, represents a strategic response to the evolving demands of public service, transparency, and local economic development. The socialization and assistance activities effectively built awareness and improved the digital competencies of village officials, MSME actors, and the broader community. The agreed-upon domain change to kedungdowo-arjasa.desa.id and the focus on features that promote local potential, particularly MSMEs, reflect a concrete step toward more inclusive and participatory village governance. Moreover, the integration of community feedback and hands-on mentoring ensured that the digital tools introduced were not only understood but also adopted in practice. This model of participatory digital capacity building can serve as a reference for other villages aiming to strengthen public services and local branding through information technology.

Acknowledgements

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