

The Implementation of Cyber Public Relations for Optimizing Government Institutions' Websites

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Abstract: This research examines the implementation of Cyber Public Relations (Cyber PR) on the website of the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. The study focuses on the five basic elements of Cyber PR, namely Transparency, Information Leakage, Internet as an Agent, Content Wealth, and Reach. A qualitative approach with a descriptive method is employed to analyze the data, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The findings reveal that the Ministry of Social Affairs has effectively implemented Cyber PR on its website to fulfill the public's information needs. The website provides easy access to the public and offers diverse content such as institutional profiles, press releases, latest news, journals, and articles. The content publication process on the website is well-structured and systematic, featuring a variety of media formats including news articles, photos, videos, and infographics. However, it is worth noting that the website lacks features that enable visitors to provide feedback on the published content.

Keywords: Cyber PR, Website Management, Government Institutions.

Introduction

In this digital era, communication and information technology is advancing rapidly. Technology has become a fundamental aspect of life in the digital age. The development of technology has a significant influence on every aspect of human life. In general, people have adopted new lifestyles that are inseparable from electronic media. At present, various advanced technologies have emerged, and one of them is the Internet. The Internet is a medium that has reached billions of people worldwide.

The presence of the Internet makes it easier for humans to perform their tasks effectively, accurately, and efficiently. The Internet can be accessed anytime and anywhere, so it's no wonder that people heavily rely on it in their daily lives. According to *internetworldstats* data, there were 212.35 million internet users in Indonesia as of March 2021.

The development of communication and information technology has also had an impact on

the field of Public Relations, both as a discipline and a profession. In carrying out their work, PR practitioners cannot escape from communication and information dissemination activities, which inevitably involve the Internet. The use of the Internet is crucial to support the success of PR work in the digital age. The current technological advancements have also led to the emergence of diverse information and communication media.

All PR activities via the internet can be utilized to easily and quickly disseminate various information with unlimited content. Furthermore, the internet is useful for reaching a wider and more direct audience without the intervention of other parties, such as editors or journalists in mass media. Consequently, the public becomes highly dependent on PR as a source of various news and information not covered by newspapers and other mass media.

According to Sopian (2016) as cited in (Raditia Yudistira Sujanto, 2019), PR serves to strengthen relationships between internal and external publics

to maintain a conducive environment. PR also has an informative function, which involves conveying information that is important for the public to know. A PR professional should always be open to the general public's inquiries regarding aspects that are fit for public knowledge. Additionally, PR plays a role in responding to and bridging public interests, among other functions.

As information and communication technology through the internet continues to advance, Public Relations (PR) is expected to master and leverage internet technology in its practices. The rapid dissemination of information creates demands from the wider community for quick responses to various up-to-date information needs. This condition has given rise to a new perspective in the field of PR, known as Cyber Public Relations (Cyber PR), which means the study or PR activities in the cyber world (virtual world).

Definitively, Cyber PR is PR activities conducted through electronic internet media, encompassing activities like publication and more. Cyber PR practices that utilize the internet are considered highly effective compared to conventional PR in terms of communication, information dissemination, and image-building activities for an organization, all at a low cost and with rapid delivery to the public through internet-based media. Cyber PR itself can be carried out in a one-to-one interactive manner.

In the application of Cyber Public Relations, various cyber media can be utilized, such as websites, social media, email, internet forums (bulletin boards), and corporate blogging. According to Widodo (2009) as cited in (Nisrin Husna, 2018), one of the Cyber PR activities that can strengthen an organization's image is by creating its official website, allowing the public to access various information according to their needs.

One government institution that has leveraged websites in Cyber PR practices is the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Kementerian Sosial Republik Indonesia). The Ministry of Social Affairs has an official website, www.kemensos.go.id, which serves as a communication and information medium directly managed by the Public Relations Bureau, under the

Publication and Reporting Division. Currently, the website provides comprehensive information about the Ministry of Social Affairs, including the institution's profile, infographics, the latest news related to its activities and programs, press releases, various public services, downloadable documents, and much more.

In the initial observations, the researcher noted that in the management of the Ministry of Social Affairs (Kementerian Sosial) website, there is a requirement to have daily content. However, the researcher also noticed a lack of interactive space for Cyber PR, where website visitors can engage, such as the absence of a comment section for public use. Additionally, the website originally featured a contact form that visitors could fill out to request information, but it is no longer functional. As a result, there is a lack of public participation, and the communication remains one-way.

Based on this background, the researcher became interested in exploring further the implementation of Cyber PR on the Ministry of Social Affairs website in the Republic of Indonesia.

Materials and Methods

Materials

According to Syarah (2017), Public Relations (PR) is a management function aimed at building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between an organization or institution and its public, which can influence the success or failure of the respective organization or institution.

Astri Rumondang Banjarnahor and colleagues, as cited in Sudarso (2021), define PR as the practice of managing information between individuals or organizations and the public. This definition underscores the central role of PR in facilitating communication and information exchange between an entity, such as a company, government, or individual, and the public. PR professionals work to shape public perceptions, maintain positive relationships, and convey important messages on behalf of the organization they represent. In doing so, they help ensure that information is accurately and effectively disseminated to the public,

contributing to the organization's reputation and overall success.

Furthermore, Henny Kustini, Scott M. Cutlip, and Allen H. Center in their book titled "Communication Skill" (Kustini, 2017) define PR as a management function that assesses public attitudes, identifies policies and procedures of individuals or organizations for the public interest, and plans and carries out a program of action to earn public understanding, acceptance, and support. In summary, PR practice is a skill emphasized in the effort to build better human relationships and manage the dissemination of information between an organization or institution and its public.

Hidayat (2013:93) explains that the use of media is essential to facilitate the performance and tasks of public relations practitioners, enabling them to maximize their roles and functions. One of the approaches is by employing the internet as a tool in PR activities. This has given rise to the term electronic Public Relations, often abbreviated as e-PR. In Indonesia, it is more commonly known as Cyber Public Relations or Cyber PR.

According to Onggo (2004:7) in his book, Cyber PR is a Public Relations initiative that leverages the internet as a means of publicity. Additionally, Onggo (2004:8) elaborates that Cyber PR activities can yield three key outcomes for an organization or institution, referred to as the 3R: (1) Relations. This signifies the ability to interact with all target audiences to establish relationships and enhance the institution's image; (2) Reputation. Reputation is of paramount importance for any institution. Cyber PR is the art of continuously building an online reputation; and (3) Relevance. It involves ensuring that Cyber PR activities remain pertinent to the target public.

Methods

The research method employed by the author is qualitative research. According to Sugiyono (2009), qualitative research is a method used to study natural objects in which the researcher serves as the key instrument. Saryono (2010) suggests that qualitative research is conducted to investigate, discover, describe, and explain qualities, unique characteristics, and social influences that cannot be

elucidated, measured, or depicted through quantitative approaches.

The researcher utilized methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis to gather valid data needed for the research process. The key informant chosen by the author was a Junior PR Officer from the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, who possessed comprehensive knowledge about the research subject. Additionally, the primary informant selected by the researcher was the website coordinator.

Results and Discussion

The implementation of Cyber PR in the management of the Ministry of Social Affairs (Kemensos) website is of utmost importance. As a state institution, Kemensos is expected to meet the public's information needs. Furthermore, the use of a website is highly beneficial in supporting the tasks and functions of Cyber PR itself, as it can be easily accessed anytime and anywhere through the internet.

Phillips and Young, as cited in (Raditia Yudistira Sujanto, 2019), describe five fundamental elements of Cyber PR:

Transparency. Concerning information transparency on the Kemensos website, Cyber PR practitioners at Kemensos prioritize transparency when managing the website. The type of transparency present on the Kemensos website is Controlled Transparency, which is done in a controlled manner in the dissemination of information. Transparency in the information published through the Kemensos website is always controlled. This is because the Kemensos website has its own standard operating procedures (SOP), including administrators, editors, and writers. Additionally, transparency makes it easier for Cyber PR practitioners to meet the public's information needs. Any information that is important for the public to know will be published on the website. Disseminating information transparently enhances public trust in the institution.

Internet Porosity. Porosity, or information leakage, refers to the intentional or unintentional dissemination of information related to the institution to the public in a more transparent and informal manner. Information leakage occurs because nearly every institution now utilizes the internet in implementing Cyber PR, making information more easily accessible to the public. As of now, there has been no intentional or unintentional information leakage at Kemensos. This is due to the structured and systematic planning of Kemensos programs by Cyber PR. Additionally, before disseminating information, it is always ensured that the content is checked for accuracy, correctness, data precision, and image or video specifications.

The Internet as an Agent. In the context of agency, which refers to the process of message transformation where a message is passed from one person to another via the internet or online, thereby providing new context and understanding. Internet agency occurs when a message or story undergoes changes during the process through the virtual world. In the application of Cyber PR on the Kemensos website, content containing the latest news or press releases related to Kemensos programs or activities has been provided. However, it has yet to offer a new understanding to the public due to the slower updates of the latest news compared to other social media platforms.

Richness in Content. The element of richness in content pertains to the creation of rich content, including text, images, photos, videos, and other materials provided to the public. Based on the research findings, in the management of the Kemensos website, Cyber PR places significant emphasis on creating rich content. Content richness significantly influences the public's interest in visiting the Kemensos website. With rich content, it enhances the public's perception of the Kemensos website. Kemensos employs various methods to create rich content, such as in-depth information mining coordination with technical units related to the content to be presented, and regular benchmarking with the websites of other ministries and agencies.

Reach. In addition to the aforementioned elements, there is also the element of reach, which

involves creating public access to content through various means. An institution can employ several techniques to ensure that its website pages are easily discoverable and accessible to the public. On the Kemensos website, Cyber PR utilizes various methods to reach and attract the public to visit the website, including using features like the "swipe up" feature on Instagram social media.

Discussions

The analysis of the Kemensos website's implementation of Cyber PR reveals several key findings. In terms of transparency, the organization emphasizes controlled transparency, ensuring that all public information undergoes thorough scrutiny and approval by the head of the PR bureau. This commitment to controlled dissemination of information underscores the organization's dedication to maintaining transparency and public trust.

Furthermore, the website's implementation of Cyber PR has demonstrated strong data security practices. There have been no instances of information leakage through the Kemensos website, thanks to the adherence to standard operating procedures (SOP) and a structured program planning process. This reflects the organization's commitment to safeguarding information and protecting data.

While the Kemensos website offers content containing the latest news and press releases related to its programs and activities, it lags in providing new understandings to the public when compared to other social media platforms. This suggests the need for the website to enhance its ability to deliver fresh and insightful content to engage and inform the public effectively.

To address this, Kemensos employs various strategies to create rich content, including in-depth information coordination with technical units and benchmarking with other ministries and agencies. This approach ensures that the website offers diverse and informative content, which is vital for attracting and retaining the interest of the public.

Lastly, to maximize its impact, Cyber PR on the Kemensos website utilizes various techniques to enhance its reach and accessibility. This includes leveraging features like the "swipe up" feature on

Instagram, aiming to make the website easily accessible and engaging for the public.

In summary, the analysis of the Kemensos website's Cyber PR implementation highlights a commitment to transparency, strong data security, and the importance of delivering fresh and engaging content to the public. Additionally, the use of features to extend the website's reach underscores a proactive approach to maximize its impact and accessibility.

Conclusions

Based on the findings and analysis conducted by the researcher regarding the implementation of Cyber PR on the website of the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia using Phillips and Young's theory of the five basic elements of Cyber PR, namely Transparency, Internet Porosity, the Internet as an Agent, Richness in Content, and Reach, the following conclusions can be drawn:

In terms of transparency, the application of Cyber PR on the Kemensos website employs controlled transparency, also known as Controlled Transparency. Every piece of public information is ensured to be consistently disseminated to the public. The distribution of information must undergo screening and pre-approval by the head of the PR bureau.

Regarding internet porosity, there has been no information leakage through the Kemensos website during the application of Cyber PR. This is because the website has its own standard operating procedures (SOP), and the program planning is structured and systematic.

Concerning the internet as an agent, the Kemensos website provides content containing the latest news or press releases related to Kemensos

programs or activities. However, it has not been able to offer new understandings to the public because it lags in updating the latest news compared to other social media platforms.

In terms of richness in content, Kemensos employs various methods to create rich content. These include in-depth information mining coordination with technical units related to the content to be presented and regularly benchmarking with the websites of other ministries and agencies.

As for reach, Cyber PR on the Kemensos website employs various techniques to reach and attract the public to visit the site. One such technique includes utilizing features like the "swipe up" feature on Instagram social media.

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