

Debunking disinformation on YouTube: a fact check on the 2024 Indonesian election

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Abstract The increasing number of hoaxes circulating on digital platforms in Indonesia is concerning. Following the 2024 Indonesian presidential election, the spread of disinformation, specifically on YouTube, has intensified, posing significant risks to public trust and the electoral process. These hoaxes have the potential to destabilise societal harmony and influence voter perceptions. In response, fact-checker institutions have played a critical role in exposing disinformation. This article explores the mechanisms of assessing accuracy on YouTube during the 2024 election, focusing on how Indonesian fact-checking institutions operate. The research used a qualitative approach, with two data collection techniques- interviews with key stakeholders and field observations of fact-checking processes. This research revealed that fact-checking in Indonesia is falling behind the rapid disinformation production. Combating disinformation requires more than current efforts—it demands a coordinated, resource-intensive approach involving the executive, legislative, judiciary, and civil society's active engagement. Innovative policies, technological advancements, and well-trained human resources are imperative to ensure its effectiveness.

Keywords: disinformation; fact checking; presidential election; YouTube

INTRODUCTION

The use of mass communication is crucial to a democratic country where the presidential election is directly conducted by the public. As the use of social media continues to increase among individuals, it becomes an integral part of human's daily activities. Consequently, during significant events such as presidential campaigns, social media plays a substantial role in political dynamics, encompassing a multitude of visuals associated with the presidential campaign that shape voter interest and intentions (Liu, 2022). In Nigeria, effective use of media enhances political mobilisation and changes the attitude of young people in the electoral process drastically (Chukwuemeka et al, 2019).

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The use of social media in presidential elections has become a global phenomenon. It does not only occur in the United States but also in various parts of the world. The researchers have documented its use in countries like Malaysia (Gomez & Gomez, 2014), the United Kingdom (Nizzoli et al., 2020), Singapore (Soon et al., 2016), the Philippines (Sinpeng et al., 2020), Australia (Bruns et al., 2018), South Africa (Umoh, 2023), Nigeria (Ajakaiye & Ajakaiye, 2014), Mauritius (Kasenally et al., 2017), Indonesia (Fadillah et al., 2019), and many more.

In Indonesia, the first direct presidential election was held in 2004. At the time, the elected president was Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY). SBY managed to build popularity and a positive opinion through mass media during the campaign. Meanwhile, in the subsequent Indonesian presidential election in 2009, there was a significant change in the world of social media, especially in Indonesia. Several new social media platforms emerged. Facebook was launched in 2004, a year later in 2005 YouTube appeared, and a year later in 2006 Twitter emerged. These social media platforms have rapidly spread and become popular globally, including in Indonesia. Over time, these social media platforms gained many users from Indonesia. For instance, as of February 22, 2009, there were 1,333,649 Facebook users from Indonesia (Wahyono, 2010).

As time progresses, technological advancements create many options for mass communication. Besides radio and television, some social media platforms have emerged such as Facebook, Twitter (now X), Instagram, YouTube, among others. A significant milestone in the use of social media in presidential elections was when Bongbong Marcos, who was subsequently elected as President of the Philippines, used social media TikTok to aid his presidential campaign in 2022 (Mendoza, 2023). Despite the lack of extensive experience, Bongbong Marcos managed to influence voter perception and portray an idealised image of his father's presidency.

Social media functions as a complex tool that offers both benefits and challenges. It serves as a platform for positive engagement, information sharing, and connectivity, but it also presents significant challenges, such as the spread of misinformation, manipulation of public opinion, and potential harm to social cohesion. Evidently, social media has a dark side (Talwar et al., 2019). The researchers have also identified the negative impact of social media, such as on mental health (Yulieta et al., 2021), as a psychological stressor (Fox et al., 2015), lowering academic achievement (Raza et al., 2019), being a medium for criminal networks (Garcia & Garcia, 2020), spreading false information or hoaxes (Talwar et al., 2019), and even increasing the spread of disinformation (Kusumarani & Zo, 2018). On the contrary, social media is beneficial, for instance, by serving as a bridge for formal and informal education (Greenhow et al., 2016); helping to improve businesses (Kusumarani & Zo, 2018), or being a platform for the public to contribute and participate into policymaking (Driss et al., 2019).

Currently, the advancements of social media enables everyone to become their own content creator and publish it on their personal social media space or through comment sections on other people's accounts (Akbar & Wijaya, 2024). This is the era where journalism ceased to be solely monopolised by major media companies such as Kompas, Detik.com, Republika, etc., which are under the supervision of the press ethics council, have fact-checking divisions, and whose responsibility for misinformation is collectively organisational. Today, journalism content on personal social media is controlled by individuals, making supervision difficult. Consequently, the spread of disinformation has become more pervasive. Disinformation is false information deliberately disseminated maliciously (Council of Europe, 2024).

The phenomenon of the widespread disinformation content circulating in Indonesia is reflected in the report from the Ministry of Communication and Informatics on January 2, 2024, which stated that they had identified 12,547 hoax-related issues between August 2018 and 31 December 2023. According to the report, the most common hoax were health-related amounting to 2,357 issues, followed by fraud-related with 2,210 issues, government-related reaching 2,210 issues, issues related to politics with 1,628 cases, and other issues each numbering below 1,000 such as international issues, crime, disasters, defamation, religion, myths, trade, and education (see Figure 1). The high number of health-related hoaxes in the Ministry of Communication and Informatics report is due to the critical phase of the COVID-19 pandemic that occurred between 2019 and 2023.

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Hoaxes Figured Per Category
August 2018 – December 31, 2023
Total **12.547**

Health	Scam	Government	Politics	Others
2357	2210	2210	1628	1030
International	Crime	Disaster	Defamation	Religion
713	640	554	489	348
Myth	Trade	Education		
229	71	68		

□

Figure 1. Hoax Issues by the period of August to 31 December 2023.
Source: Data Processed by Author (2024)

Currently, it is necessary to be vigilant about the spread of disinformation related to political issues (Rahman RA, 2023). On 14 February 2024, Indonesia held a major event- the general election, which determined the president of Indonesia as well as the prospective legislative members of parliament. According to the Ministry of Communication and Informatics, during the 2019 presidential election, the spread of disinformation related to politics increased by 10% compared to the previous year. On 3 January 2024, the Ministry of Communication and Informatics (2024) released the latest press release specifically highlighting the spread of election-related hoax cases. By collecting data from January 2023 to 2 January 2024, there were 203 hoax cases related to the election, which encompassed a total of 2,882 contents. The majority came from Facebook, amounting to 1,325 contents, and the fewest from YouTube with a total of 34 contents (Rahman RA, 2023).

To handle the spread of disinformation, the Ministry of Communication and Informatics conducts fact-checking activities aimed at verifying the content of posts. They employ two approaches: the first involves actively monitoring and searching for negative content, and the second is to rely on reports from the public, submitted through the ministry's complaint channel at www.aduankonten.id, which are then followed up on (Rizkinaswara, 2019).

However, despite the Ministry of Communication and Informatics' efforts, the production and spread of disinformation content remains prevalent that raises the concern why this continues to occur. To understand the problem of disinformation and challenges of fact-checking activities, this paper attempts to address the issues in implementing fact-checking in Indonesia. To limit this study, the researchers focused on disseminating disinformation through YouTube. The researchers chose YouTube for two reasons- first, according to a Populix survey (CNN Indonesia, 2022), YouTube is the most accessed social media by Indonesians. According to the survey, respondents accessing social media in the past month accessed YouTube (94%), Instagram (93%), TikTok (63%), Facebook (59%), and Twitter (54%). And the second reason is that YouTube is less frequently studied. Most researchers have mostly focused on Twitter (now X). Therefore, this study aims to address how the fact-checking for video broadcasts on YouTube is being implemented by fact-checking institutions in Indonesia in the context of the 2024 Indonesian presidential election?

This study will provide the following benefits: first, it will help understand the problems that arise in fact-checking activities. This understanding is crucial to finding the most appropriate ways to address the issue of spreading hoaxes or disinformation. Second, social media researchers have focused more on X (formerly Twitter). Practically, when the platform was still called Twitter, researchers could easily access people's tweet data. However, since Twitter rebranded to X, retrieving data has become more difficult and expensive (Jingnan, 2023). Unlike Twitter, YouTube can be accessed for free, however, the process of retrieving YouTube data is more complicated and complex. This has hindered many researchers from conducting studies on YouTube. In contrast, this research on YouTube will be one of the few studies focusing on

YouTube content, especially regarding the fact-checking process. To provide the context, The researchers will discuss the short history of fact-checking activities.

9 December 2001, is regarded as the birth of the fact-checking initiative in the modern era (Graves, 2013). On that day, a blogger named Ken Layne posted a protest to Robert Fisk, a Middle East correspondent journalist working for the London-based independent newspaper. Ken Layne posted this:

"It's 2001, and we can Fact Check your ass. And you, like many in the Hate America movement, are no longer able to dress your wretched 'reporting' in fiction. We have computers. It is not difficult to Find You Out, dig?"

With the above statement Ken Layne was questioned about the truth of the news written by Robert Fisk. This statement later became known as "The Fact-Checking Explosion" (Graves, 2013). The activity of fact-checking originated from media activities. Fact-checking is an effort by the mass media to verify facts before a news article is printed in a newspaper. In the United States, fact-checking activities are highly valued, so much so that in 2009 an independent fact-checking organisation called PolitiFact received the Pulitzer Prize for its efforts in verifying news (Graves, 2013). Over time, fact-checking activities have been conducted in more than 100 countries and 69 languages (Stensel M et al., 2023). In December 2018, (Stancel M & Griffin R, 2018) reported there were 149 fact-checking initiatives worldwide. Four years later, in 2022, this number grew to 424 fact-checking initiatives (Stensel M et al., 2023). Here is the number of active fact-checking initiators each year and their numbers across various continents (See Figure 2 and Figure 3).

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, there are currently 11 (eleven) active fact-checking initiatives registered with the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN)- the AFP Fact Check Asia (Indonesia), Cekfakta, Hoaks Atau Fakta?, Kabar24 Cek Fakta, Liputan6 Cek Fakta, MAFINDO's TurnBackHoaks.ID, Medcom.id Cek Fakta, Suara.com Cek Fakta, 'Tempo's Fakta atau Hoaks' (Fact or Hoax), Times Indonesia Cek Fakta, and Tirto.id 'Periksa Fakta'. With 11 fact-checkers, Indonesia has the highest number in ASEAN, followed by the Philippines (9), Thailand (3), Malaysia (2), Singapore (2), Myanmar (2), and Cambodia (1) (IFCN, 2023). Meanwhile, other Southeast Asian countries such as Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Laos, and East Timor are not listed with the IFCN (IFCN, 2023).

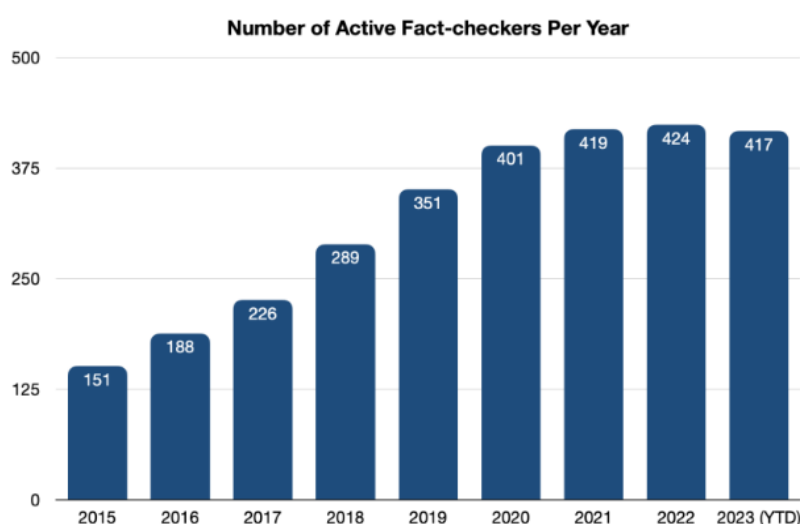


Figure 2. The number of active fact checks in each year
Source: Stensel M et al., 2023

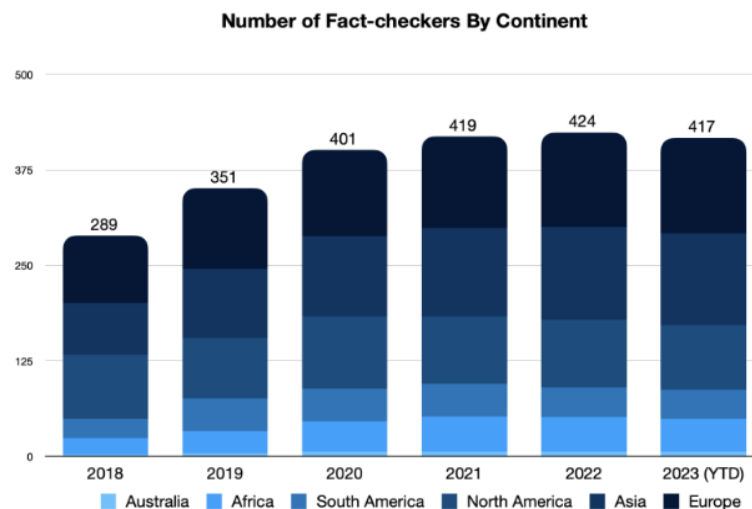


Figure 3. The number of active fact checks by continent
Source: Stensel M et al., 2023

Indonesian government has tried to debunk disinformation through various policies making the country with considerable progress on this matter. Indonesia has had legislation regulating disinformation since 2008, particularly Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE Law). The ITE Law has undergone two amendments. The first amendment was in 2016 (Law Number 19 of 2016), and the second amendment was in 2024 (Law Number 1 of 2024). In the new ITE Law, in addition to stipulating prohibitions for the public, the state is also given authority to regulate the dissemination of information.

Here, some examples of changes in the new ITE Law related to disinformation. Article 27 of the ITE Law has been widely protested by the public. The public refers to it as a “rubber article”. Meaning that the law can be used to punish many kinds of actions. The article 27 of the previous ITE Law, which regulated defamation, has been removed. In the revised ITE Law, Article 27 is divided into 2 sections: 27a and 27b. The Article 27a prohibits any person from intentionally attacking the honour or reputation of another person by publicly accusing them of something through electronic information and/or electronic documents conducted via electronic systems.

Meanwhile, Article 27b paragraphs (1) and (2) prohibit any person from intentionally and unlawfully distributing and/or transmitting electronic information and/or electronic documents with the intent to profit unlawfully, coerce someone with threats of violence or defamation, or with the threat of revealing secrets to force someone to give something that belongs to them or someone else; or to lend, acknowledge debt or write off debt.

Additionally, the Article 28 paragraph (2) regulates the prohibition for any person from intentionally and unlawfully distributing and/or transmitting electronic information and/or electronic documents that incite, invite, or influence others to create hatred or hostility towards individuals and/or certain community groups based on race, nationality, ethnicity, skin colour, religion, belief, gender, mental disability, or physical disability. Article 28 paragraph (3) also prohibits anyone from intentionally spreading electronic information and/or electronic documents that they know contain false information that causes public unrest.

While Articles 27 and 28 focus on prohibitions for the public, Article 40 provides authority for the state. Article 40A paragraph (2) authorises the government to order electronic system providers to adjust or take certain actions to promote a fair, accountable, safe, and innovative digital ecosystem. Article 45 paragraph (4) stipulates the threat of punishment for any person who intentionally attacks the honour or reputation of another person by accusing them of something in such a way that it becomes public knowledge in the form of electronic information and/or electronic documents conducted via electronic systems as referred to in Article 27A.

This research will investigate the gaps in the efforts to debunk misinformation in Indonesia. The researchers will discuss it from the perspective of technical issues, human resources, and policy. The researchers will also provide recommendations that the stakeholders can implement. This research contributes to Communication Studies by enhancing the

understanding of how disinformation circulates on digital platforms, especially on YouTube, during the 2024 Indonesian presidential election. This research evaluates the effectiveness of fact-checking mechanisms in Indonesia, providing practical insights for improving media literacy and disinformation countermeasures. By intersecting with political science and technology studies, the paper enriches interdisciplinary dialogue on digital media's role in democratic processes and contributes valuable knowledge on strategic communication efforts to mitigate the effects of disinformation.

METHODOLOGY

The research team conducted a qualitative study using interview and observation techniques. Interviews were conducted with five representatives from organisations related to digital research and/or combating the spread of disinformation, the Ministry of Communication and Informatics, the Indonesian Telematics Society (Masyarakat Telekomunikasi Indonesia/Mastel), the Indonesian Anti-Slander Society (Masyarakat Anti Fitnah Indonesia/Mafindo), Liputan6, and "Drone Emprit". The team also planned on interviewing Google Indonesia; however, communication with Google did not receive a response, so only five organizations were interviewed for this study.

Table 1. List of Informant

No	Name (Initials)	Organisation	Position
1	BS	Indonesian Anti-Slander Society (Mafindo)	Vice Chairman of Organisational Committee
2	RR	Ministry of Communication and Informatics	Social Media Analyst
3	TP	Indonesian Telecommunication Society (Mastel)	Head of Industry 4.0 Division
4	IM	Indonesian Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN)	Digital Sociology Researcher
5	IF	Drone Emprit	CEO

Source: Data Processed by Author (2024)

The reasons for selecting these five organisations are as follows: Ministry of Communication and Informatics was chosen because according to Law Number 19 of 2016 concerning State Ministries, the ministry is a government agency responsible for information and communication affairs. The Ministry of Communication and Informatics’ duties include managing government affairs in the field of communication and informatics to assist the President in administering state governance. Given this scope of duties, the Ministry of Communication and Informatics is the organisation responsible for managing the distribution of information, including addressing the spread of disinformation. The questions posed to the ministry focused on the steps they have taken to combat disinformation in Indonesia.

The team also interviewed elements participating in combating disinformation, the Indonesian Telematics Society (Mastel) and the Indonesian Anti-Slander Society (Mafindo). Indonesian Telecommunication Society is a non-profit organisation in Indonesia that serves as a platform for all stakeholders in the fields of information technology, communication, and broadcasting, including observers, practitioners, businesses, organisations, and associations. Indonesian Anti-Slander Society (Mafindo) is a community-based organisation that tries to contribute to combating disinformation in Indonesia. They have created a fact-checking website under the name “#turnbackhoax”.

The research team also interviewed a social media researcher from the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) to gain insights into several studies conducted by BRIN related to disinformation on social media platforms in Indonesia. Lastly, the team also interviewed PT Media Kernels Indonesia, popularly known as “Drone Emprit”. “Drone Emprit” is an organisation focused on utilising Natural Language Processing (NLP) technology. The interview with “Drone Emprit” aimed to gather impressions of disinformation occurring on social media in Indonesia, based on their extensive digital research experience. Information provided by the interviewees is important to understand the complexity of the issue.

In addition to interviews, the research team has also conducted observations to 14 fact-checking websites in Indonesia. This step is important because by directly observing these 14 fact-checkers, the research team will gather direct impressions from exploring these websites. The 14 fact-checking organisations are as follows at Table 2.

Table 2. 14 fact-checking websites in Indonesia (Processed by research team)

No	Name	Link	Administrator
1.	Cek Fakta	https://cekfakta.com/	Indonesian Anti-Slander Society (Mafindo) collaborates with several online media affiliated with Independent Journalist Alliance and Indonesian Cyber Media Association and is supported by the Google News Initiative.
2.	TurnBackHoax.ID	https://turnbackhoax.id/	Indonesian Anti-Slander Society
3.	Tirto.ID	https://tirto.id/	PT Tirta Adi Surya
4.	Cek Fakta Tempo.co	https://cekfakta.tempo.co/	PT Info Media Digital (Accredited International Fact-checking Network (IFCN))
5.	Jabar Saber Hoaks	https://saberhoaks.jabarprov.go.id/v2/home	Tim Jabar Saber Hoaks Provinsi Jawa Barat
6.	Cekhoax.id	https://cekhoax.id/	Working group of RCCE
7.	Hoax Buster	https://covid19.go.id/p/hoax-buster	The COVID-19 Handling Task Force.
8.	TrustPositif	https://trustpositif.kominfo.go.id/	The Directorate General of Informatics Applications, Ministry of Communication and Informatics.
9.	Cek Fakta Solopos.com	https://cekfakta.solopos.com/	PT. Aksara Solopos
10.	Jala Hoaks	https://jalahoaks.jakarta.go.id/	Public Information Division, Department of Communication, Informatics, and Statistics, DKI Jakarta Province.
11.	Cek Fakta - Kompas.com	https://www.kompas.com/cekfakta	Kompas.com. PT. Kompas Cyber Media (Kompas Gramedia Digital Group)
12.	Liputan 6 - Cek Fakta	https://www.liputan6.com/cek-fakta	PT Kapan Lagi Dot Com Networks
13.	StopHoax.id	https://stophoax.id/	StopHoax Media
14.	Google Fast Check Tools	https://toolbox.google.com/factcheck/explorer	Google in collaboration with datacommons.org

Source: Data Processed by Author (2024)

In this study, observations were conducted on videos on YouTube that had been reviewed and labelled as "false" by fact-checkers during the period from September 1 to November 11, 2023.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this research results section, the researchers presented their observations regarding the fact-checking reviews conducted by 14 (fourteen) fact-checking agencies in Indonesia according to our research criteria. Then, the team outlined the key points from interviews with 4 (four) fact-checking agencies. A reflection on our observations and interviews followed this.

General Description of Video Observation

The observations were conducted on YouTube videos that had been reviewed and labelled as "false" or hoax by fact-checkers from September 1, 2023 to November 11, 2023. The observed video content consisted of hoax or disinformation content related to the 2024 presidential candidates such as Anies Baswedan, Prabowo Subianto, and Ganjar Pranowo.

There were 24 YouTube channels that uploaded 79 videos related to the presidential candidates. Out of these 79 videos, 70 videos, or 88.61%, were still available on YouTube despite being labelled as "false" by fact-checkers. Only 9 videos, or 12.86%, had been removed from YouTube (see figure 4). The high percentage of these videos that still can be found on YouTube can be attributed to the manual or semi-automated process of identifying and removing hoax videos from the vast number of videos on the platform. This process may not always result in immediate detection, and it can sometimes take up to a month for a video to be flagged and removed. Additionally, YouTube relies on feedback from the community to help identify and report potentially false or misleading content, which can further contribute to the delay in removing such videos. This indicates that the majority of hoax or disinformation videos related to the 2024 presidential election are still widely circulating on YouTube.

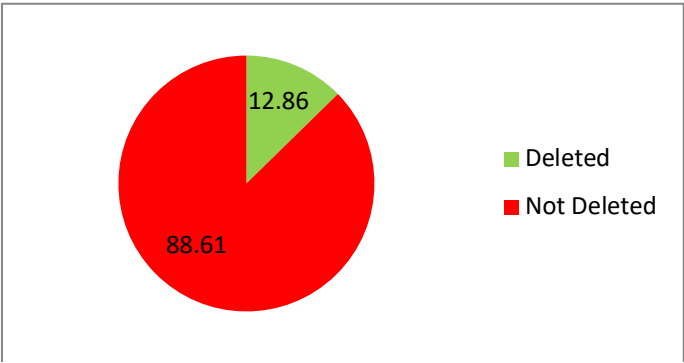


Figure 4. Proportion of Video labelled as “False” by Fact-checker in YouTube are not deleted
Source: Data Processed by Author (2024)

User Experience Navigating Fact-Checking

The research team initially planned to analyse videos on YouTube that had been identified as false news or hoaxes by the 14 fact-checking agencies mentioned above. However, out of the 14 fact-checkers observed, only 4 fact-checkers could be studied in greater depth. These four are TurnBackHoaks.ID, Cek Fakta, Cek Fakta Tempo.co, and Tirto.ID.

Table 3. 14 fact-checking identification features (Observed by research team)

Fact-Checker	Provides Detailed Information on Reviewed Hoaxes	Searchable by Keywords	Frequency of Fact-Checking	Contains YouTube Content on 2024 Election
TurnBackHoaks.ID	Yes	Yes	Regular	Yes
Cek Fakta	Yes	Yes	Regular	Yes
Cek Fakta Tempo.co	Yes	Yes	Regular	Yes
Tirto.ID	Yes	Yes	Regular	Yes
Jabar Saber Hoaks	No	No	Unknown	No
Cekhoax.id	Yes	Yes	Unknown	No
Hoax Buster	Yes	Yes	Unknown	No
TrustPositif	Yes	No	Daily (PDF reports)	No
Cek Fakta Solopos.com	Yes	No	Unknown	No
Jala Hoaks	Yes	Yes	Unknown	No
Cek Fakta - Kompas.com	Yes	No	Unknown	No
Liputan 6 - Cek Fakta	Yes	No	Unknown	No
StopHoax.id	Yes	No	Unknown	No
Google Fast Check Tools	Yes	Yes	Regular	Yes

Source: Data Processed by Author (2024)

This is because when the team searched fact-checking websites, it revealed that many of these fact-checking agencies did not provide detailed information about the videos they reviewed. For example, the team found that Jabar Saber Hoaks (<https://saberhoaks.jabarprov.go.id/v2/home>) did not provide unique information about the YouTube videos they reviewed as there were no links to the YouTube videos being reviewed, or the channel ID of those videos. This made it impossible for the research team to review the intended videos again. Furthermore, if the researchers attempted to search for the intended videos using keywords from the video titles as stated in the Jabar Saber Hoaks review, could only yield to potential video search errors. One of the key reasons other fact-checking websites were not included in this study is that out in the team’s search, it revealed that only 4 fact-checking websites with contents related to hoaxes about the 2024 Indonesian presidential election on YouTube. The limited availability of relevant fact-checked contents on this specific topic from other websites was a determining factor in their exclusion from the research.

Another observation experience was when checking the TrustPositif (<https://trustpositif.kominfo.go.id>) managed by the Director General of Informatics Applications. On the homepage of the website, there were explanations on how to search for information on the website, as follows:

"Enter the Domain/URL/Keyword you want to search in the input field below, just 1 part of the word, for example: 'Domain'. Then click 'SEARCH DATA' to perform the search. You do not need to include 'http://' at the beginning of the search term or trailing slash '/' at the end of the search term.

However, despite entering various keywords into the input field, the status result was always "Not found". The researchers then tried using several browsers including Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Opera, and all were unsuccessful. TrustPositif by the Ministry of Communication and Informatics essentially creates daily reports related to hoaxes in PDF format (see figure 5). These reports are sourced from other fact-checking websites as TrustPositif only compiles reviews made by other fact-checking sites. In the PDF file titled daily hoax issues, it contained between 3 or 4 reviews. The problem with how the reports are presented in TrustPositif is that when someone wants to search for an issue, the user must open each PDF file individually to find the issue they are looking for that is deemed highly ineffective and inefficient. Another issue that the researchers found is that TrustPositif does not provide links to the videos being reviewed; it only provides links to reviews from other fact-checking sites.

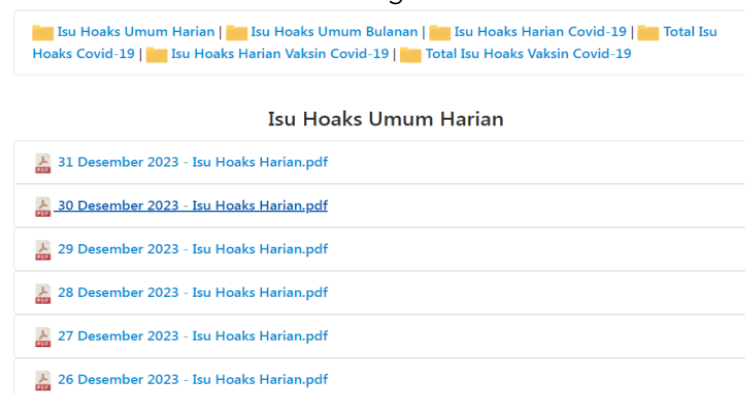


Figure 5. Display hoax news information on <https://trustpositif.kominfo.go.id/>
(Source: TrustPositif Webpage)

Research exploration concluded that user experience and fact-checking workflows need to adapt to the challenges of technological advancements. In terms of fact-checking workflows, the manual aspect needs assistance from artificial intelligence (AI). The volume of misinformation and disinformation entering is disproportionate to the number of officers available. While current AI technology is considered capable enough to analyse existing hoaxes both textually and visually (Nakov, et. al, 2021), it doesn't immediately replace the role of fact-checkers but rather exists as an assistant, alleviating the workload of each officer.

The user experience of fact-checking also needs to be reconsidered. The reporting patterns presented (as seen in Figure 5) are no longer relevant to the current visual style of the internet. Reports should be presented more akin to subordinate reports to superiors, rather than as interactive presentations created to inform the audience. The demands of information technology development require more engaging and user-friendly presentations. How can a topic be explored if it requires downloading and opening a pdf file first? The process tends to distance the audience from fact-checking sites.

Lastly, apart from Indonesian Anti-Slander Society or Ministry of Communication and Informatics, fact-checking provided by print media also tends to be non-standardized. The topics covered, discussed, and fact-checked seem to adapt to editorial preferences. In some media outlets, the frequency of fact-checking appears irregular. From a user experience perspective, searching and categorizing fact-checking material is challenging. Even though subdomains are separated, these still appear integrated with general article search engines, making fact-checking in mass media not easily accessible, in addition to being relatively insignificant in number.

Human Resources, Technology, and Mechanisms of Disinformation

Based on interviews, it is known that fact-checking websites have utilised technology tools in conducting their tasks. For example, the Ministry of Communication and Informatics utilises an automatic negative content scraping (crawling) engine. This engine was developed by the ministry with the assistance of a third party. However, the ministry has not disclosed the identity of this third party involved in the development of the content crawling engine. This engine is used to speed up identifying hoax or disinformation news. In addition, the ministry and some other fact-checking sites such as Liputan6 have also used chat-bots.

In terms of human resources, the Ministry of Communication and Informatics has been equipped with a considerable number of human resources for the implementation of fact-checking. The Ministry's fact-checking team consists of 106 contract employees who work around the clock in a 3-shift system. Meanwhile, Liputan6 has a team of 8 members, Suara.com has five members, KOMPAS.com has 19 members, and tempo.co has 4 members (Rahmawan et al., 2022). However, despite the increasing production of hoax content, especially during election periods, the fact that the number of personnel from each fact-checking agency is very limited indicates that the handling of disinformation in society is still far from optimal. Another fact is that many videos labelled as hoaxes, which should be taken down, still exist and circulate in today's society.

The fact-checking mechanism is as follows: if a video is identified as a hoax, the content considered a hoax will be analysed. In this case, the content is read thoroughly or watched to assess the extent of the negative content of hoax news. Then, a detailed report will be created and submitted to the platform owner. However, the Ministry of Communication and Informatics does not have sufficient power to force platform owners to take down videos that are considered a hoax. The idea of the ministry's authority must also be complemented by relevant regulations. The absence of specific regulations or laws is what causes the Ministry of Communication and Informatics to be unable to take action (take down) against videos that are identified as hoax. Currently, there are no legal provisions that explicitly grant the Ministry of Communication and Informatics the power to compel platform owners to remove contents deemed as hoaxes. This regulatory gap limits the ministry's ability to effectively combat the spread of misinformation on online platforms. The Ministry of Communication and Informatics hoax handling system will trace the extent to which the hoax or negative content spreads. The mechanisms are mostly carried out manually and based on reporting.

Gap Related to Policy

Indonesia already has regulations to combat disinformation. The Information and Electronic Transactions Law (UU ITE), which includes regulations on disinformation, has been amended twice, in 2016 and 2024. This law regulates what can and cannot be done on social media platforms. The penalties for disseminating disinformation are severe, with a maximum prison sentence of 2 (two) years and/or a fine of up to IDR 400,000,000 or equivalent to SGD 33276.32. The ITE Law Number 1 of 2024 also grants the state the authority to take down content from social media platforms. The Ministry of Communication and Informatics stated that as of January 2, 2024, they had taken down 1,399 hoax contents, or around 49% of the total submissions of 2,882 contents. This means that around 51% of the content is still circulating. This percentage indicates that the current fact-checking system is correct, but the speed of efforts to take down content cannot keep up with the speed of hoax content production. Despite various policy measures, many people still create hoax content, and much of it remains untaken down. This phenomenon can be seen in Figure 6. Users who see hoaxes become reporters on the fact-checking page, and after investigation, identification, and verification, the content is published as a hoax. However, this does not automatically result in the content being removed or labelled as a hoax on the original platform. Therefore, the audience may not realise the content is a hoax unless they check a fact-checking site first. The habit of accessing fact-checking sites is still not widely practised in Indonesia.

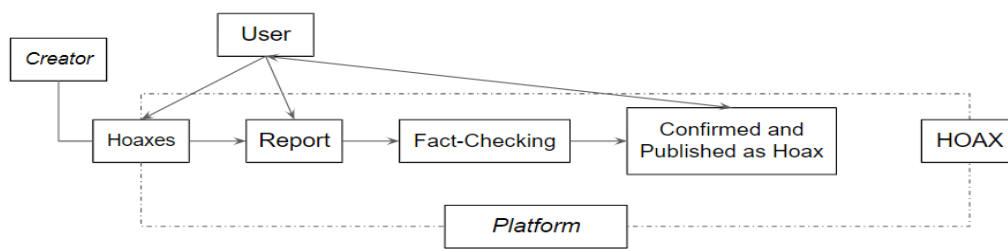


Figure 6. The fact check management gap in Indonesia is not yet connected to the platform
Source: Data Processed by Author (2024)

During a webinar on disinformation dissemination organised by the Independent Journalist Alliance and Google News Initiative on Friday, 19 January 2024, which brought together fact-checking practitioners, and researchers posed questions to 3 fact-checking experts from Liputan6.com, Tirto.Id, and AFP. They inquired why there are still many videos spreading misinformation on YouTube despite being labelled as "false" by fact-checking agencies, as seen in the image above. All three speakers agreed that efforts to take down videos from YouTube are more difficult as compared to other social media platforms.

This fact highlights a gap that the government, through the Ministry of Communication and Informatics, can address. One of the key issues is how to accelerate the process of taking down hoax video content from YouTube. Therefore, the country, through the ministry, needs to collaborate with YouTube to streamline the removal process of videos containing misinformation.

The theoretical implications of this research highlight the need for a more comprehensive and effective approach to combating disinformation on social media platforms, particularly on YouTube. Despite the existence of regulations such as the Information and Electronic Transactions Law (UU ITE) and the efforts of fact-checking agencies, the spread of hoax content remains a significant challenge. This research suggests that although the current fact-checking system is seemingly correct in its approach, it is still unable to keep pace with the rapid production of hoax content. This gap between the identification of hoaxes and their removal from the platform leaves a significant portion of misinformation circulating that potentially misleads the audience. The findings emphasise the importance of collaboration between the government, specifically the Ministry of Communication and Informatics and YouTube to streamline the removal process of videos containing misinformation. This theoretical implication underscores the need for a multi-stakeholder approach and the development of more efficient mechanisms to combat the spread of disinformation effectively.

CONCLUSIONS

The giant wave of disinformation on YouTube poses significant challenges to the integrity of democratic processes and public trust. There appears to be a critical gap in moderation and content removal. The findings of this study prove it firmly. Despite the efforts of fact-checking agencies, most videos labelled as fake are still available on the platform. This misinformation appended with the difficulty in accessing fact-checked information. There is an urgency to advance the culture of fact-checking, improve the user experience of each fact-checking website, and strengthen existing relationships and regulations. There is a critical need for a stronger and more efficient fact-checking mechanism.

A multi-stakeholder collaboration between government agencies, technology platforms, and civil society is fundamental to overcoming these challenges. The Indonesian government, particularly through the Ministry of Communication and Informatics, should strengthen its partnership with platforms like YouTube to accelerate the moderation of false content removal. In addition, innovative policies, technological advancements, and improved human resources are also crucial to increase the accessibility and effectiveness of fact-checking efforts. Only through a coordinated and resource-intensive strategy can Indonesia hope to effectively combat the spread of disinformation and maintain the integrity of the electoral process in the digital age.

This study strongly recommends a technical quick reaction unit within the ministry, empowered with legal authority to accelerate the removal of verified misinformation. This unit should work closely with major social media platforms that include YouTube, to develop and implement efficient patterns to remove false content quickly, especially during critical periods such as an election. The implementation of a national digital literacy program needs to be strengthened, both academically and operationally. The literacy programs need to focus on critical thinking and fact-checking skills. These should be integrated into the education system at all levels and extended to the public through community outreach initiatives. By improving people's ability to identify and critically evaluate online information, Indonesia can construct a more resilient society in the face of the spread of disinformation. This remains a gap, regardless of the existing related running programs.

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APPENDIX

available online: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c1yo0DXU7D6l1BZ5JATxZSYa-TLLm_SH/view?usp=share_link