



## **ISLAMIC WEBSITES: NARRATIVE CONTESTATION BETWEEN THE RADICAL AND THE MODERATE**

Pusat Studi Budaya dan Perubahan Sosial  
(PSBPS) Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta  
PPIM UIN Jakarta – UNDP Indonesia

CONVEY REPORT  
Vol. 1 | No. 3 | Year 2018

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## **PREFACE**

The phenomenon of radicalism on the Internet and social media is very interesting to be discussed. There has not been too much research related to radicalism on the Internet, especially in Indonesia. Sometimes the way to deal with this issue is very haphazard, for example, by closing access to radical sites without giving explanations and transparent ruling. This becomes problematic among campaigners of freedom of expression. On the other hand, the rules that regulates on radicalism and the internet has not been a serious concern of the government, either by Ministry of Information & Communication (Kemenkominfo) or BNPT.

Therefore, herein lies the importance of research conducted in cooperation by Center for Cultural Study and Social Change (PSBPS) University of Muhammadiyah Surakarta and Center for Islamic Study and Community (PPIM) UIN Jakarta. This Convey Report version is based on a shorter and more concise PSBPS research report. This version is made in such a way to encourage policy makers, such as Kemenkominfo and BNPT, to have a clear direction in making decisions on the topic researched herein. In this paper, we present field data, both surveys and interviews, on the parties concerned.

It is acknowledged that this work will not be accomplished without encouragement as well support data from the Center for Cultural Study and Social Change (PSBPS) UMS. We are grateful to Center for Islamic Study and Community (PPIM) UIN Jakarta and UNDP Convey (counter

violent extremist for youth) that has funded all research activities up to the publishing stage. We also thank Mr. Didin Syafruddin and Mr. Din Wahid who has read this manuscript and gave meaningful input, making the Convey Report easier to read and more assertive to encourage government's action. Also huge thanks to all senior researchers and Junior researchers who have contributed to the process of making narratives.

Finally, we hope that this Convey Report can be a reference for government or scholars to view the phenomenon of radicalism in the internet. Happy Reading!

Ciputat, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018

Dirga Maulana  
PPIM UIN Jakarta

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## SUMMARY AND RECCOMENDATIONS

The Ministry of Information and Communication (Kemkominfo), up until 2017, has blocked 27 thousand sites that are considered to spread radical and pornographic contents. National Agency for Counter-Terrorism (BNPT) also provides recommendations to the Ministry of Information and Communication in regards of Islamic sites that spread religious radicalism ideas. Some research sees the Internet and social media as a space for flourishing radical ideas (PPIM, 2017, Alvara Research Center, 2017).

For clarification, radicalism can be defined as an attitude and behavior of individuals or groups aimed at transforming the status quo in a radical way, sometimes justifying the use of violence. Likewise, extremism is an idea or belief that impose deviant and violent ideas, for example; establishing *Khilafah* (Islamic Empire), Sharia-Indonesia, all of which contains the call to establish an Islamic system in the current status quo. In addition, the phrase *kafir* (infidel), kill the infidel, kill the priest, invite persecution, they insult the cleric, call to persecute, Indonesia against Shia, Massacre the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party), and Buddhist Terrorist, explicitly incites the hatred to call for violence and intolerance.

This research provides an in-depth look at the popularity of the Islamic organization's website among Indonesian netizens, how Islamic organization's website responds to radicalism as well as revealing the background and the motivation behind the production and spread of



radical messages.

In this research, we review the sites owned by Islamic organizations in Indonesia. We divide it into three categories; (1) Mainstream Islamic organization sites, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah; (2) Contemporary Islamic organization sites, FUI and Hidayatullah; (3) Sites of non-affiliated Islamic organizations, eramuslim and portal islam.

The narratives produced by mainstream Islamic organization sites emphasize the importance of people's integration, enlightening message and bring upon a message that Islam will bring prosperity to all. Contemporary Islamic organization's sites focus only on the organization's issue and tends to be silent (not supportive nor against) the phenomenon of religious radicalism. Meanwhile, the non-affiliated Islamic organization website produces many narratives that support radical attitudes and actions.

In this research, we found that the websites of non-affiliated Islamic organizations are the most popular among Indonesian netizens. Visitors to these sites can amount up to millions, beating the sites developed by NU namely, NU Online.

Non-affiliated Islamic organizations often make their sites a tool for religious propaganda, spreading hatred, and bringing radical messages. For example, eramuslim made a headline "Infidel Media will Call Al-Mahdi: Terrorist", "Zionist Jews, Bringer of World Destruction." Meanwhile, VOA Islam often makes a radical exhortatory title, such as "Weak Muslims are Massacred in Rohingya, Will You Crusade?"

## **Recommendations:**

Based on this research,

1. Kemenkominfo needs to create digital interaction jurisdiction, by making a more detailed law against radicalism on the Internet
2. Websites and social media must provide news that is in accordance with the facts that can be accounted for and be prohibited from distributing hoaxes and hate speech that can incite violent acts. The regulation should also contain harsh sanctions for site makers who breach it.
3. The existing Electronic Transactions and Informations Law (UU ITE) does not specifically accommodates the reality of radicalism on the Internet
4. Government, in this case Kemenkominfo, should moralize digital space by creating digital communication ethics.
5. Government, in this case Kemenkominfo, should supervise the internet by putting censorship on contents that incite radical acts.
6. The Government (Kemenkominfo, BNPT etc.) should facilitate Islamic sites that produce tolerant, anti-discriminatory and non-violent Islamic contents by providing grants or training in news, opinion, and future writing.
7. The Government (Kemendikbud and Kemenag) should strengthen regulations that necessitates educational institutions to cultivate critical thinking, media literacy, tolerant Islam, emphasizes peace and love, and more open religious educational insights

## I. BACKGROUND

Today, the existence of internet changes the millennial generation's pattern of consumption of religious information, previously which can only be obtained from printed materials, such as books, magazines, journals, and from discussions with Islamic clerics or scholars. Currently, people can instantly obtain religious information from convergence media that often provides partial contents. The most recent example is via the Internet, especially social media that has become a sporadic search tool for religious information.

This phenomenon is, in fact, signifies a new pattern of social interaction and religious discussion through new channels, mass preaching, propaganda, as well as spreading radical ideas and religious extremism. The new space is not just a tool, but a necessity in conveying religious messages to millennial generations.

In the mid-1990s, there was a discussion among the intellectuals in regards of social conditions in spiritual practice (social-spiritual practices) that questions the internet and its potential impact to everyday religious activity. The widespread religious quotes and wisdom published on popular sites is of particular concern to that era (Campbell, 2011). It basically shows that the internet has already become a concern for scholars who seek to understand its social impacts. The impact of internet on religious activity is making it easier for people to access religious information, depending on the content they are consuming. For example, the content featured many textual and contextual religious interpretations. Moreover, the advancement of technology makes it possible for any holy book to be accessed online.

O'Leary and Brasher's article titled "The Unknown God of the Internet", is the foundation for studies on internet and religion in the online space (O'Leary & Brasher's, 1996). In another article, "Cyberspace as Sacred Space", O'Leary notes in detail the emergence of online religious phenomena and identifies cases of online rituals by Internet users to incorporate religious sensibility into online spaces (O'Leary, 1996). For example, this technology makes it possible for religious followers to communicate over the internet with other faiths and discussing religious issues through chat rooms. This cutting-edge technology allows believers to consciously upload their religious activities which can then be seen by anyone and giving off significant impacts.

There is also a study from Schroeder (1998) that takes a note on the case of Internet users praying together in virtual reality space.

Schroeder traces followers of religion who use video recorders and then upload the video to the site. It is apparently inevitable that religion online has become inseparable with the reality of life that must be given attention.

A national survey conducted by PPIM UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta found that students tend to obtain religious information via the internet and social media. In the survey, about 50.89% students reported to seek religious information via the internet or social media (PPIM, 2017). Meanwhile, the millennial generation is also highly dependent to the internet, as shown by the fact that 84.94% of students have internet access and about 96.20% of them access it using mobile phones while about 61.05% reported to make daily access to the internet in order to search religious information (PPIM, 2017). Other findings from UIN Yogya Graduate School shows that millennials often cite popular Islamic literatures as their reference (UIN Yogya Graduate School, 2017) while research from CSRC UIN Jakarta found that, in general, attitude and behavior of young Muslims can be categorized as moderate, yet at the same time the trend of conservatism with the scriptural plus communal trait is also strong (CSRC, 2017).

Virtual arena opens up opportunities for millennials to easily study religious matters and undermine social hierarchy. The presence of this communications technology has basically break the limitation of status quo.

The problem is that too few moderate narratives on the internet can be accessed by millennials. In contrast, there are way too many narratives that promote violent Islamic ideology that goes against the Islamic values of *rahmatan lil alamin* (Islam is a blessing and mercy to the entire universe). This contradiction is exacerbated by an intolerant attitude that ends in verbal violence in social media as well as physical violence by conducting persecution in the real life. This situation may weaken the foundations of our civilization that prides itself as a pluralistic nation.

In fact, social media has the potential to be a place to flourish radical idea. By 2016, Brooking Institute reports that more than 46,000 Twitter accounts support the ISIS movement by spreading videos of violence and materials for *jihad* (crusade) through social media. In fact, these videos of violence are sold and demanded throughout the world. The phenomenon illustrates to us that the internet has become a new force to introduce religious symbols and socially change the meaning of religion (Brooking Institute, 2016).

## **A. Context Analysis**

The issue of radicalism and violent extremism is often criticized both internally and externally. The problem is, Islam is always associated with violence and terrorism. The mass media also tends to be bias and prejudiced in reporting about Islam, for example, by only focusing on narrating the news on incidents and acts of violence in the Moslem world. In this research, we want to see and understand the role of social media and websites in producing and disseminating radical ideologies that support or reject radicalism and violent extremism.

Research on radicalism in websites and social media becomes significance and relevant as a way to see the complexity of problems that (supposedly) arise on behalf of religion, which has recently garnered attention in the internet. First, social media as a new communication channel. Secondly, the outreach of religious messages is vast and goes beyond the boundaries of state. Thirdly, it is capable to influence others in a very effective way.

Our research will significantly contribute to efforts in countering radicalism on websites and social media by accurately maps information regarding the motives behind the media users in uploading and distributing radical messages.

## **B. Research Objective**

The main purpose of this research is to understand the role of social media and websites in producing and disseminating radical ideologies that support or reject radicalism and extremist violence. This study focuses on (1) the popularity of Islamic organizations' websites among netizens; (2) Website's response to radicalism issues; (3) Social media's response to radical issues; (4) the background and motivation in producing and disseminating radical messages.

## **C. Research Methods**

The methods which will be used in this research is: (1) digital survey by using web-mining<sup>1</sup>/web-scraping<sup>2</sup> techniques on 14 Islamic

- 1 Web-mining is the extraction of important and useful patterns, hidden implicitly behind a relatively huge data in the world wide web (www) service. Web mining consists of three parts; (1) web content mining; (2) web structure mining; (3) web usage mining. This research will use web content mining technique which emphasizes an automatic process to find useful information from certain document or data. Basically, it means a technique to extract keywords contained within online documents.
- 2 Web scraping is the extraction of semi-structured document from the internet, mostly in the form of HTML or XHTML web pages and analyzing that documents to extract certain data from it.

organization’s website from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 to October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017; web-mining on social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) identified as a producer of radical messages; (3) interview with 10 out of 14 Islamic site’s editorial team; interview with 15 social media user divided based on the three platforms (5 each for Facebook, Instagram and Twitter); Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with stakeholders that consist of scholars, religious figures, government, online media administrator and Islamic organization.

Based on the five methods, we can see the characteristic of radical sites, its popularity and the contents it produced, and the social impact it may cause.

	Quantitative	Qualitative
Discourse/Speech/ Writing	Survey interviewing (offline and online)	In-depth individual and focus-group interviewing (offline and online)
Behavior/action	Experiment (e.g., web usability studies)	Participating observation (e.g., digital ethnographies)
Texts/documents/ artifacts	Content analysis (e.g., of political information resources and search engines as meta- information)	Discourse analysis; historical and aesthetic criticism (e.g., of “netspeak” and digital artworks)

In other words, we are using a mix of quantitative and qualitative method to study the phenomenon of netizens and religion.

## **II. MAPPING THE LANDSCAPE OF RADICALISM IN SOCIAL MEDIA**

The Internet has changed the way one gets religious knowledge. The Internet also fundamentally changes the perceptions and religious revelations that we obtain. The internet could possibly be the new arena for modern society to interact and connect with its virtual community. We cannot rule out the possibilities that internet could be one of the gateway for radicalism penetration among young children. Moreover, the presence of this new media provides a role model for the millennial community to find sources of religious information. In fact, by borrowing O’Leary’s words, the Internet has become a revolutionary space for improving religious understanding and a dissemination tool that defeats the textbook by a large margin (O’Leary, 1996).

This phenomenon has illustrated that the new media has garnered trust from the millenials who see it as an infinite space to connect and interact with each other without any burden and in an equal footing. Mark C. Taylor even mentions the Internet as a complex maze akin to the God’s shadow (Taylor, 2001).

Lorne Dawson and Douglas Cowan in their book, *Religion Online: Finding Faith on the Internet*, tried to explain the difference between “religion online” and “online religion”. According to them, religion online is meant as information related to the religion that is available on the internet, while online religion is the experience and religious practices that are found on the internet (Dawson and Cowan, 2004). It means that the virtual space has become an epicenter in modern human’s religious journey which then gives off impact on the rites of religion offline.

The increase in Internet users in Indonesia have an impact on their Islamic identity by making it easier for them to learn about religion. They asked “Kiai Google<sup>3</sup>” to find answers. Just by “clicking” on Google, users can find hundreds or even millions of words related to religious issues without having to wait long and without fear. The versatility of this technology helps individuals and communities to seek a form of meditation that influences their religious rites.

The spread of radical religious beliefs on the internet is easy to come by and has an effect on religious perceptions and behavior. Undeniably, people are interested in the idea of crusading to Syria and joining the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) after accessing the internet and read blogs related to *jihad*. They watch battle videos depicting Western intimidation and propaganda against Muslims and learning how to make bombs and assemble firearms. As a result, they were incited to commit suicide bombing and crusading to Syria. New media as one of the gateway for religious radicalism can influence one’s perception.

The sites studied for this research have characteristics that reflect the institutions it represents. For example, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) has now established social media division to deliver milder religious messages to the millennial generation. NU is more technologically adept, as shown by the NU Online website that displays attractive images and graphics without reducing the substance and messages it wants to convey to the audience.

<sup>3</sup> *TN: In Indonesia, Kiai is a title given to someone with credentials in Islamic study and thus has an authority to preach about Islam. As such, “Kiai Google” means that the search engine has been put in the same position as a Kiai which can be asked about anything Islam.*

Today, there are a lot of radical narratives in websites and social media that strengthen the spread of intolerance, hate speech, persecution and destructive solicitation. In fact, Internet-based media are the main source of information, communication and propaganda to engage with radical activists and violent extremists. These channels are also used as their tool for recruiting as many members as possible.

The popularity of the internet as one of the new media is utilized by almost every major group and actors, both state actors and non-state actors in the society. In fact, terrorist groups really take advantage of the Internet to expand their group's network and represent themselves online.

As for the political orientation embraced by terrorist groups: Islamist or Marxist, nationalist or separatist, fundamentalist or extremist, racist or anarchist, all agree that the internet has an extraordinary appeal to achieve their objective. In fact, the cutting-edge technology of the internet makes it easier for them to communicate, launch operating plans, spread propaganda, training and recruiting new members, and fundraising (Forest, 2006; Weimann, 1994).

In other words, the internet has become a space for the radicalism and terrorism-enthusiast to seek information or terrorist activities in order to be a terrorist. All kinds of relevant information are available and can be easily learned on the internet, such as bomb-making manuals, details on terrorist movements, or military tactics for act of terror.

The advantages of internet can be seen from its six characteristics; (1) easy-to-learn; (2) anonymous and lack of censorship; (3) speed and accuracy; (4) wide range of audiences; (5) interconnectivity and communication; (6) multimedia.

The internet has become a tool for terrorists to spread their religious ideas and propaganda. One example can be found in Aman Abdurrahman's blog, [millahibrahim.com](http://millahibrahim.com), which provides Islamic narratives that he wrote from his jail. Aman has many enthusiast followers who regularly read his blog posts and are inspired by his words.

A similar case is found in Iraq, in which a member of the Al-Qaeda network, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, is very adept at using the web by posting videos about bombs planted the roadside, beheading of a hostage, and the execution of Egyptian and Algerian diplomats after being kidnapped.



As a result, most of the radicalization process of young millennial in online networks is done through social media, which is very effective and fast in doing it. Charlie Winter mentions that social media is like a “radical mosque”, in which terrorists spread their narratives to search for sympathizers and recruit media users. They not only dominate the psychology of young generation, but also deepen the thinking of young people and produce narratives that can easily be attached and accepted by millennial youth (Winter, 2015).

In Indonesia, there are several Islamic sites that introduce the Islamic third way and Islam that adopts the fundamental Islamic Islamic view, as shown by Arab tradition. This is evident from the three categories of Islamic sites: (1) the mainstream who are represented by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Wathan (NW); (2) the contemporaries who are represented by Islamic groups such as Forum Umat Islam, Hidayatullah, Majelis Mujahidin, Dewan Dakwah Indonesia, Majelis Tafsir al-Quran, and (3) non-affiliates, which conveys Islam in a rigid way and without contextual interpretations such as Portal Islam, Era Muslim, VOA Islam, Arrahmah, Thariquna and Dakwatuna.

## **A. Mainstream Islamic Organizations**

### ***A.1. Nahdlatul Ulama Online***

NU Online (<http://www.nu.or.id/>) is the official website of Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama (PBNU). NU Online was first introduced on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2003 to provide information about NU and Islam which can be easily accessed by netizens who need it.

NU Online is built upon the idea of drastic societal change as a result of the internet. It focuses on conveying Islamic teachings that is relevant to the local people and culture. Another purpose of NU Online is to build an interfaith or interfaith understanding that upholds the values of humanity.

As the official website of PBNU, NU Online has a close relationship with the NU organization, as reflected through the content as well as its organizational structure. The content presented on this site is divided into several channels including: News (Regional, National, International and Editorial Excerpts), Anything Islam (Ubudiyah, Sharia, Bahtsul Masail), Preaching, Mentoring, Wisdom, Advices, Prayer, Religious Figures, Fragments, Pesantren (Islamic School), and Others (Opinion, Literary, Cultural Art, Humor, Islamic Education,

Islamic Quote, Religious Studies, and Anti Hoax). In addition to these content, NU Online also includes a number of advertisements.

By looking at the uploaded contents, we can infer that NU Online is oriented in producing information that is not only accurate, but also reconciling and enlightening. NU Online does not take the path of any other party who relies on provocative news to attract the visitors without considering about its impact to the public. NU Online strives to authenticate its news style in order to be different from other websites.



To attract readers, there are illustrations in NU Online in the form of photos of people, buildings, events and graphic images of people and others tailored to the narrative in the text. The selection and styling of the letters, along with their spreading arrangements in the available spaces is very impressive to the readers, making it very comfortable to be read. Lighting in the website looks quite harmonious, making it

easier for readers to read it, either quickly or slowly.

In addition to the above, the appeal of NU Online lies in a moderate religious stance in the midst of radical and extreme religious attitudes. This moderate religious stance is chosen since it is associated with NU's ideology of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. It is also chosen to represent three important roles of NU, which is: (1) enlightening Moslems and guiding non-Moslems; (2) providing up-to-date information on NU and debunking hoaxes about NU; and (3) providing accurate and trusted source of information for the sake of peace in Indonesia (Teddy Irawan, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 & Abdul Haq, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017).

### **A. 2 Suara Muhammadiyah**

Suara Muhammadiyah (<http://www.suaramuhammadiyah.id/>) is the digital version of Suara Muhammadiyah Magazine which is the official magazine of Muhammadiyah Central Leaders. Suara Muhammadiyah is a subdomain of Muhammadiyah's official site. Overall, Muhammadiyah has around 550 websites which is divided by two types of domain: main domain and subdomain.

The main domain is the website of Muhammadiyah Central Leaders ([www.muhammadiyah.or.id](http://www.muhammadiyah.or.id)) while the subdomain owned by Muhammadiyah includes: 8 subdomains of its Central Assembly, 7 subdomains of its Central Institutions, 10 subdomains related to special menu, 33 sub-domains of Pimpinan Wilayah Muhammadiyah (PWM) and 496 subdomains of Pimpinan Daerah Muhammadiyah (PDM) throughout Indonesia. In addition to the main domain and subdomains, Muhammadiyah also has a site that is not integrated into the main domain, which is the sites owned by various branches of Muhammadiyah (PCM).

This site is managed by Muhammadiyah youth cadres who are members of PT Syarikat Cahaya Media (a charity owned by Muhammadiyah Central Leaders) and acts as the main mouthpiece of Muhammadiyah Movement. The contents published in Suara Muhammadiyah site represent the values that Muhammadiyah consistently strives for. The contents are divided into these following channels: News, the Movement's Dynamics, *Khazanah* (Interpretations, Hadith, Faith, Virtues, Community, Halal/Haram, Stories, *Sirah*, *Ibrah*), Insights (Anything Muhammadiyah, Islamic Thinking, Opinion, Columns, Cultures, Oasis), Questions & Answers (Faith, Prayers, *Muamalah*, Family Issues), and Preaching.

For Muhammadiyah movement, the Muhammadiyah website

is utilized as: (1) a media to inform the profile, news, events, announcements, Islamic articles, hadith, decree (*fatwa*) and anything Muhammadiyah; (2) a preaching media to publish contents of: preaching and Islamic studies in the form of text, podcast and video, *tarjih* decree collection (HPT), Muhammadiyah's decree, and Q&A forum about Islam and anything Muhammadiyah; (3) a media to map the potential of Muhammadiyah's branches; (4) Muhammadiyah's data center; (5) a media for effective intra-organizational consolidation and integration; (6) a media to communicate between members by using forums; and (7) a media to build Muhammadiyah's image on national and international level.

Furthermore, the profile of Suara Muhammadiyah Online can be seen from its frequency in uploading contents. Based on our observation, we find that Suara Muhammadiyah Online, in average, uploads 4 contents per day.

According to Haedar Nashir, online media such as Suara Muhammadiyah exists as a response to the public's affinity with online media, "Speed, simplicity, convenience and low cost are among the reasons for people to switch to online media. At the same time, we never know when the printed version of Suara Muhammadiyah will stop being relevant for the people, especially in the midst of online media's huge popularity. This is why we choose to adapt with the trends and technologies in our movement."

## **B. Contemporary Islamic Organizations**

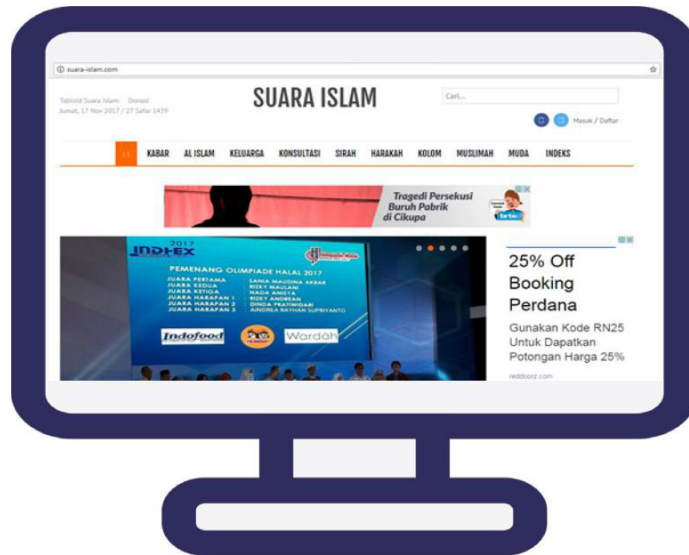
### ***B.1 Suara Islam***

Suara-islam.com that represents Forum Umat Islam was first introduced in 2013 to affirm their position online with tagline "Guarding Sharia-Indonesia." Based on that tagline, we can infer this site's desire to implement Islamic values in the state system and in our everyday lives. This is an evidence that shows suara-islam.com's position in upholding Sharia.

The site assumes that there is an imbalance in news reporting made by mainstream media which, in general, is managed by non-Muslims. As such, suara-islam exists to correct the imbalance perpetuated by secular media who are often discriminate Islam and Moslem community.

Looking at its display, it appears that almost all of the websites managed by contemporary Islamic organizations tend to be dominated

by the color of white along with a variety of secondary colors, such as green or black. According to semiotics, the color of white can be interpreted as peace, self-fulfillment and spirituality. As such, these sites are trying to give an impression of holiness in their objectives or visions. On the other hand, the color of white is often used to depict angels who are always obedient to the God. Other than white, suara-islam.com uses the color black as its font color. The color black being contrasted with white background symbolizes power and elegance.



There are 10 rubrics in this site which includes News, Al Islam, Family, Counseling, *Sirah*, *Harakah*, Column, Muslim Community, Youth and Index. Each of those rubrics provide news content or articles written by an individual writer. However, we did not see any dominant writers who are being employed. The text writing is divided evenly among each reporters and editors.

The number and variety of advertisements in suara-islam.com is quite amusing. Although this site is managed by an Islamic organization, the ads published in this site is not only about Islamic product but includes ads about: asiancancer.com, tirtio.id, blibli.com, berrybenka.com, lotte, kayak.com, Qantas, cekaja.com, shopee and elevania.com.

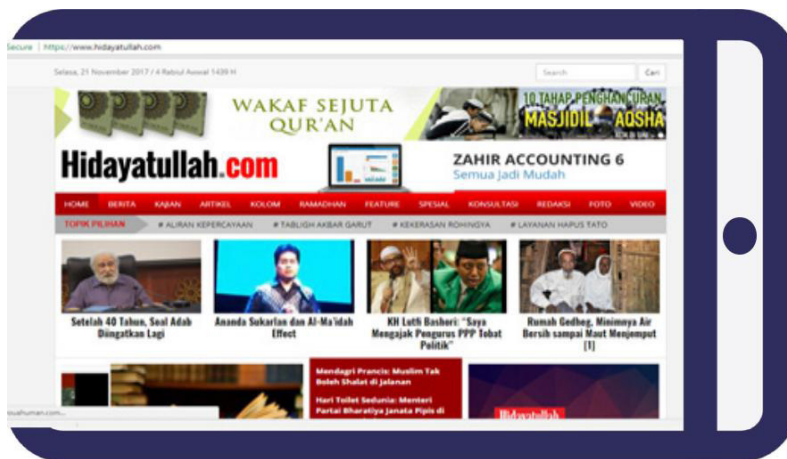
Many of the advertisements published in suara-islam.com are ads that promote online shopping. The existence of ads about online shopping seems to contradict this media's value. Suara-islam.com should have considered the sharia aspect on each ad published in its

website. The dominance of those advertisements is not in line with one of its mission to increase Moslem community's awareness to the reality of life and Islamic teaching as the solution for every problem in our life.

### B.2 Hidayatullah

Similar to suara-islam.com, hidayatullah.com is also dominated by the color of white with black being used for its font and red for the word ".com" and its tab banner.

Red is often associated with energy, war, danger, power, determination, desire and love. Red is a color with the strongest emotional aspect.



According to semiotics, the color of red is often associated with courage. Furthermore, the color of red makes an object more eye-catching. This is suitable to be used as a color for the banner 'Buy Now' and 'Click Here'. As such, we believe that the color choice employed by hidayatullah.com is meant to attract readers.

Aside from the existing banners, hidayatullah.com also used hashtag as a topic of choice, such as: #ALIRANKEPERCAYAAN; #TABLIGHAKBARGARUT, etc. The choice for topics are based on the trending phenomenon or events. As shown in the Graph 2 above, *aliran kepercayaan* (sect) is chosen as a topic based on Constitutional Court's decision that accepts the lawsuit against the Article 61 of Law No. 23/2006 and Article 64 of Law No. 24/2013 about the population administration that requires a religion column in Identity Card (KTP). As such, the government is obliged to provide a formal service in the form of administration, religious education, marriage, place of worship, etc.

In terms of rubric, there are 11 provided by hidayatullah.com to be

consumed by its readers. The eleven rubrics include: news, reviews, articles, columns, *Ramadhan*, features, specials, consultations, editorial, photos and videos. Each of the 11 rubrics has a more specific sub-section. For example, in the news section, there are sub-sections: national, international, halal, international, interview, Palestine today. In essence, the news section contains information about current events that are occurring especially related to the Islamic world. The selection of rubrics and sub-rubric there is certainly in order to target the audience or readers who come from Muslim circles in general and members of Hidayatullah in particular.

From the content production side, we see that no author is dominant in contributing writing. The article rubric which is consisted of sub-sections such as opinion, *tsaqofah*, *ghazwul fikr*, literary and preaching also have no dominant writer. We found something interesting in Column rubric which is consisted of various kinds of analysis. Of the eight sub-rubrics, there is one titled Greetings from Salim which contains writings from Salim Al Fillah, a young Islamic scholar from Yogyakarta. Even so, Salim Al Fillah's writings are adapted from Salim Al Fillah's social media, such as instagram, twitter and facebook. In addition, the website manager also provides a Wisdom Bubble column maintained by Abdullah Sholeh Hadrami and Marrying Heaven column which contains the writings of Muhammad Fauzil Adhim. Similar to Greetings from Salim's column, the writings in both columns are also adapted from social media.

The next aspect that we see is the presence of advertisements in hidayatullah.com. In our observation, the ads contained in hidayatullah.com are only products managed by Hidayatullah, such as Hidayatullah bazaar that sells Islamic books and clothing. However, there is one external product being advertised, namely Zahir, which is a financial software provider.

### B.3 Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia

In general, majelismujahidin.com is the extension of Majelis Mujahidin, a contemporary Islamic organization founded in August 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>, 2000 during First Mujahidin Congress in Yogyakarta whose purpose is enforcing Islamic sharia, not only in Indonesia, but in the whole world.



Compared to other contemporary Islamic organizations, the productivity of majelismujahidin.com pages are very low. Based on the data search within January 2016-October 2017, there are only 6 posts that can be read by the audience. In general, 83% of the posts are a position statement from the Majelis Mujahidin against some of the popular phenomenon, among others: the prohibition of voting for an infidel leader and position on the usage of pilgrimage fund by the government

Based on the explanation above, it can be inferred that Majelis Mujahidin does not use its site effectively in order to convey their ideas and positions towards the ongoing national phenomenon of the Moslem community. Whereas in fact, Majelis Mujahidin is often regarded as an organization that often uses violence in order to uphold their ideology.

The site display shows that majelismujahidin.com uses white as the dominant color with green and red as the secondary color. White color, like other sites, can be interpreted as peace, self-fulfillment and spirituality. This site is also complemented by the color of red which can be interpreted as the courage to fight. More than that, they use the color of green which is often associated with tranquility and also regarded as the color of Islam.

Content-wise, there are 8 rubrics observed: About us which contains history, characteristic and their recommendations for Sharia-Indonesia, Press-release which contains Majelis Mujahidin's position statement on a phenomena, Akhbar which is the same as press



release but with additional news, Articles which contains collection of writings by Majelis Mujahidin’s leaders, Media which has the sub-rubric of teachings and videos, Contact us, Donate to Our Cause which gives an opportunity for visitors to give donation through Majelis Mujahidin, and QTT which is an abbreviation of al-Qur’an Tarjamah Tafsiriyah, a *mushaf* published by Ma’had An Nabawy.

Majelismujahidin.com only advertises Qur’an Tarjamah Tafsiriyah which have been mentioned in the rubric explanation. The QTT itself is managed by Ahlu SHufah Foundation which also belongs to Majelis Mujahidin. As such, we believe that this site relies on donation which is presented in Donate to Our Cause page.

#### **B. 4 Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia**



The next Islamic organization that falls into the contemporary category is Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia. In general, there are no vision-mission statement that is written in regards of dewandakwah.or.id. However, we have observed and concluded that the vision and mission of Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia is to realize an Islamic societal order in Indonesia and an empowered and prosperous Indonesia.

The vision makes it clear that the orientation of this organization is not just the enforcement of Islamic Sharia, but also on to realize an Islamic society in Indonesia. Therefore, the internalization of Islamic values in life takes precedence over the formalities of legislation.

Based on our observation, the productivity of dewan-dakwah.or.id is, in average, 15 times per month. Our identification during July-September 2017 shows that there are 29 news uploaded from July

to September, 16 news that inform about the activities organized by Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia, such community service, fundraising for Al Aqsa and Rohingya, as well as halal bi halal activities. In general, there are 55% of news about the organization and the rest of 45% contains trending phenomenon, especially related to Moslem community.

Visual-wise, dewandakwah.or.id is almost similar to the website managed by other Islamic organizations with dominant white color and coupled with green. The rubric provided in this site is Home, Profile, Program, Articles, News, Video, Download, Contact and Donate. Overall, the rubrics are rather homogeneous compared to other contemporary Islamic organizations. Even on the Article rubric, the published articles are from the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia itself.

Unlike other sites, the dewandakwah.or.id manager provides statistical information on the content of the page as shown in the left-hand side of the following picture:



### ***B.5 Majelis Tafsir Al-Qur'an***



Compared to other contemporary organizations, Majelis Tafsir Al-Quran (MTA) is probably the most unique. MTA is headquartered in Solo and has experienced a significant development in the recent decade through the leadership of Ahmad Sukino who began to distribute preaching through radio and TV. The [mta.ac.id](http://mta.ac.id) was built in 2012 with its main objective to prepare people in facing globalization. MTA realizes that communication and information are the focal point of modern life. Through this site, MTA hopes that its preaching can extend to reach all of the regions in Indonesia and even in the overseas.

Our search results, from July to September 2017, found 58 texts produced by [mta.ac.id](http://mta.ac.id) which includes 53 news articles and 5 preaching. Of the total text produced, the news is 100% about the internal activities of MTA, such as Eid al-Adha prayer, national MTA gathering, blood donation and other internal activities. Based on our interview with the website manager, the editor only uploaded information from the MTA itself and did not open an opportunity to contributors or other media. This policy is made as a way to filter the information that will be presented to the reader. Consequently, [mta.ac.id](http://mta.ac.id) is usually only visited by members of MTA.

Visually speaking, [mta.or.id](http://mta.or.id) is dominated with white coupled by green and yellow. In regards of rubric, [mta.or.id](http://mta.or.id) facilitates site visitors with several rubrics such as Home, News, Preaching, Our Office, MTA Brochure and Guest Book.

## **C. Non-Affiliate Islamic Organizations**

### ***C.1. Portal Islam***

It should be noted that we were not able to find the owner or the actors who manage [portal-islam.id](http://portal-islam.id). On the main page, it displays a slogan "Voicing the Truth."

A media that can be used as a reference by the reader should include vision, mission, purpose, editorial team and editorial address. After searching carefully, [portal-islam.id](http://portal-islam.id) does not even have all of those basic requirements. Thus, if it publishes problematic news, then it cannot be contacted for clarification, because there is no contact address and phone provided. The only way to contact the site manager is through their email: [portalislam@yahoo.com](mailto:portalislam@yahoo.com).

The lack of information about themselves means that we cannot consider [portal-islam.id](http://portal-islam.id) as a responsible Islamic website that can be accountable for the news articles that they published. This page is

connected to a social media account that they have, such as a Facebook account under the name of Portal Islam; a Twitter account under the ID of @ portal\_islam that has joined since October 2014; and also, a Google Plus account under the name of Portal Islam, with more than 10 thousand followers.

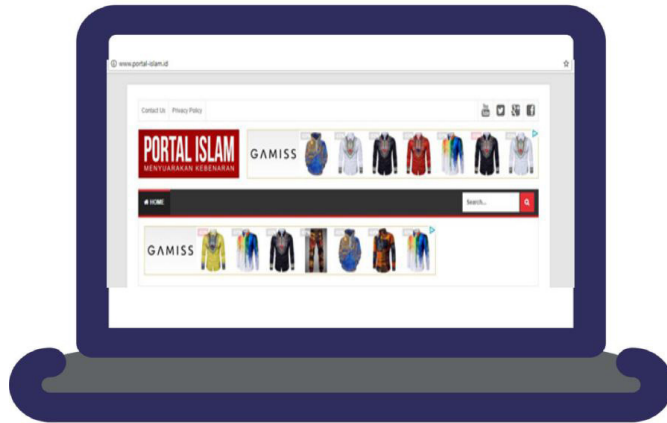
Every day, this page can upload 5-6 news that contains about social, political, and actual events that are trending. Their news section is divided into six rubrics: Anies-Sandi, Notes, Community's News, International, Islamic World and Variety. The thing that interests us here is the rubric that clearly mentions the name of the governor and deputy governor of DKI Jakarta, Anies-Sandi.



As a popular website among many netizens, this website is actually quite engaging, even when viewed from gadget. This website also pays attention to color composition with white being the dominant color and red and black as its complementary. The color of red can be interpreted as energetic, powerful, and can even makes pictures and texts appear bigger and closer than it supposed to be. The color of black can be interpreted as the color of protection and formality. Meanwhile, the interface of this website is divided into two parts. The left -hand side contains main information with its big headline and the right-hand side contains advertisements with variety of colors. As for the typography, they use Arial (body) as the font of choice. Some news that appears as a flash are news about domestic politics.

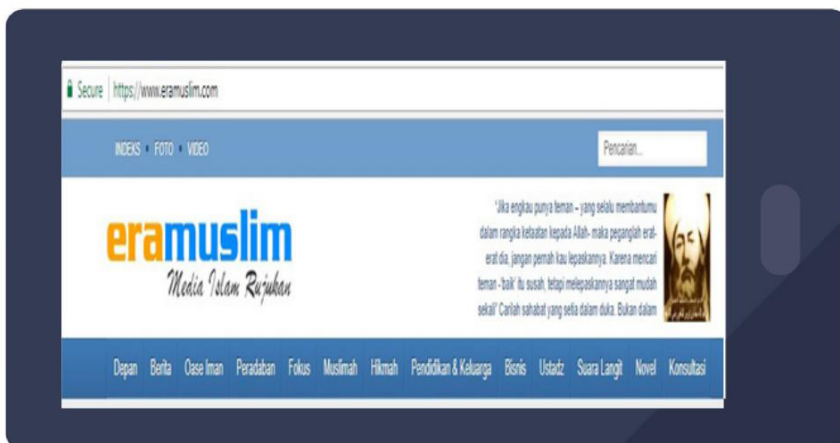
The space for advertisements in this website is in the right-hand side and in the rubric section, which contains ads about fashion products, hotel booking, political figure's profile, etc. The ads in this page is so general, without limiting it to only Islamic-related products. In fact,

ads about online shopping is more dominant. Those products are, among others, chocolate (<http://forever-chocolate.barry-callebaut.com/>) and gamis clothing (<http://www.gamiss.com/>). It seems that any advertisers can be the sponsor of portal-islam.id as shown in the picture below:



## C.2 Era Muslim

The second website is eramuslim.com. This site is dominated by the color of white as its main background, coupled with blue as the heading for the heading of News, Opinion and other information. This color is probably chosen since the eramuslim logo is started with orange yellow for the word 'era' and blue for the word 'muslim'. The color of yellow is often associated as the color of wealth, while blue is often associated with protection and calmness. The combination between white dominant and blue makes it comfortable for the eyes to see it.



It has a good color composition that can attract readers, even if the website is being accessed from gadgets like smartphone, iPad and tablets, makes it easy to read without straining the eyes.

Eramuslim.com has a tagline of: "The Referred Islamic Media." The tagline is reinforced in its stated vision of "Becoming the referred Islamic media and advocating for Islamic opinion." To realize that vision, eramuslim.com establishes its mission "to give unbiased information about Islamic world and benefit for Moslem communities, to provide a tool for Islamic preaching activities, to advocate the opinion of Islamic crusade, to build and solidify the unity of Moslem community and provide a place to learn about Islamic values."

Eramuslim.com seems to assume that very few Islamic media can be used as a reference in Indonesia, so they try to be one instead. This is meant to: "Spread Islamic values even if only in the form of information, Islamic articles or by providing Indonesian Muslim community with solutions to their problems."

As a media that attempts to be the role model for Muslims in Indonesia, eramuslim.com is quite consistent in presenting news to its audience, which can be seen from the intensity of its content production. Every day, they can produce more than 20 contents with a relatively short time span. This means that they can provide information to their audience almost every hour a day through the many rubrics that they have.

At least they give 13 choices to the audience to determine which rubric they want to consume, from the national issues, femininity (Muslimah), education and family, business, novels, even consultation forums. Each rubric also has its own sub-rubrics which means that there are many choices that the audience can take

The writing for news, opinions, and other rubrics are mostly done by the editorial team, which consists of Zahid Mangkualam, Dede Z. and Herry K, Kusuma H. As for the ustadz (Islamic cleric) rubric, it contains sub-rubric which allows visitor to ask anything to ustadz Sigit Pranowo LC, an alumnus from al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt. For most Indonesian Moslems, Al-Azhar graduates are always considered to be more Islamic than graduates from other countries. Al-Azhar Cairo is an integral part of Islamic Civilization history as a campus established during the Caliphate of Bani Abbasiyah around the 11th century AD which still operates up to this day.

As for the advertisement in eramuslim.com, we observed that the ads published in eramuslim.com are not only promoting the

organization's products, which includes self-published books and plaza. [eramuslim.com](http://eramuslim.com), but can also promote any kind of products.

### **C.3 VOA Islam**

The next non-affiliate Islamic website is [voa-islam.com](http://voa-islam.com). VOA-Islam dot com was established in Bekasi, West Java, on April 2009 and officially launched on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009. The website was blocked along with 22 other Islamic websites on March 2015 by Kemkominfo (Minister of Information and Communication) on the request of BNPT (National Council to Combat Terrorism) who received complaints from the people. Kemkominfo asked the internet service provider (ISP) to block the 22 websites in accordance with BNPT's reports due the site being indicated as the provocateur for radicalism.

Voa-islam.com's vision is: "1. Becoming a trusted media that upholds truth and justice in a professional way; 2. Realizing a Muslim society that is aware with its grandeur and its role and responsibility in ensuring a dignified civilization."

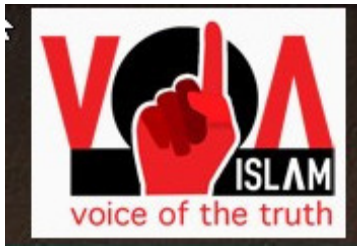
As for the mission of the website, it is summarized in six items: "1. Preaching about Al Haq wherever, whenever and through any media possible; 2. Increasing the Moslem community's human resource quality and capability in information and communication technology; 3. Building an online preaching medium to advocate for Southeast Asian Islam community; 4. Ensuring the integrity of Islamic preaching, sunnah, and struggle; 5. Becoming the referred online Islamic media in Indonesia and Southeast Asia; 6. Providing unbiased information on the existence and problem of Islam community in Southeast Asia and in the world.

It appears that [voa-islam](http://voa-islam.com) is not only concerned with Indonesia, since its stated mission mentioned Southeast Asia three times. Aside from being used to spread Islamic value, [voa-islam](http://voa-islam.com) is also used to advocate for Muslim community in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. With an outreach that goes beyond Moslem community in Indonesia, [voa-islam](http://voa-islam.com) has used English to label its rubric. However, the contents inside of that rubric are not written in English at all.



As a cyber-media that has operated for nine years, voa-islam has a slogan of: "Voice of Truth," which obviously refers to the truth as they see fit. The tagline is posted very clearly under their logo, which is a pointer finger pointing up.





The intensity of voa-islam.com’s content production is considerably high. This is shown by the many rubrics that they have, in which there are ten: Indonesiana, Worlds, Islamia, CounterFaith, Tekno+Mil, Muslimah, SmartTeen, ShareVoices, SyariahBiz and IDC (Infaq Dakwah Center).

The rubric is written in English which is in accordance with their mission to spread their influence to Moslem Community in Southeast Asia.

The site’s display is dominated with black and red, with blue for tagline and light brown for the background. Headline news is given the biggest space in the middle, with ‘IDC’ and ‘Hot Topics’ in the left-hand side. The right-hand-side displays ‘Indonesiana’ and ‘advertisement’. There is a gap in the bottom part which is filled by VIVO (VOA Islam Video Online) and then the rest of the rubrics, as seen in the picture below.



Content-wise, there is a sub-rubric called ‘JihadNews,’ which shows their perverted perspective on the meaning of jihad (*crusade*). This can be seen from the usage of red color in the word ‘jihad’ and then pictures of militiamen holding firearms in a chaotic situation of battleground. This is perverted because the most noble of jihad is to suppress our lust while battle in Arabic is more associated with *qital* (war) then jihad.

The voa-islam.com has several advertisements, such as ads from mukenariri.com, batamode.com, Pikul Bareng, VOA Islam Shop. In order to attract advertisers, voa-islam.com claims to be visited by more than 2.000.000 visitor/month, with pageviews more than 6 million a month. It also claims to be visited by Moslem from many part of Indonesia and also the whole world. They provide a special space for ad banner or text ad, with prices mentioned in the advertisement menu in the bottom part of the page.

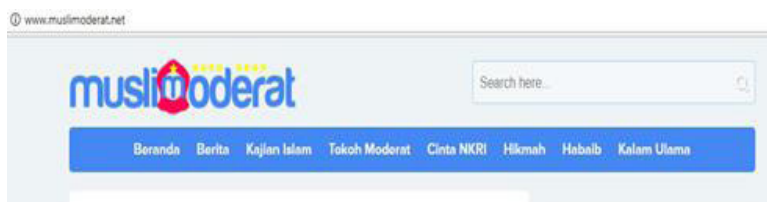
As a press institution, voa-islam.com is belong to PT. Visi Media Veteran, founded by Sabrun Jamil. It also explains its editorial team, head editor, reporter and its address in Veteran Street 48A, Bekasi City, West Java, Post Code: 17141, email: redaksi@voa-islam.com

#### **C.4. Muslim Moderat**

The next page is muslimoderat.net. In general, no vision-mission is specifically written on this page. They only listed themselves as a site or online media that is engaged in news, Islamic preaching and Islamic studies by promoting a moderate attitude (*tawasuth*). This page also claims to be a non-commercial page.

The productivity of muslimoderat.net is rather low. There are only 3-4 posts published in its homepage and most of it is not even new information. The information they publish is mostly about the socio-political phenomena that occurred in Indonesia. In July 2017, for example, there was information about why Kemkominfo blocked telegram applications, which are considered to be a means of communication used by terrorist network. Another example is an information about the police who found a HTI flag in the home of a suspect in the case of insult to the First Lady (muslimoderat.net, 13/09/2017), the arrest of Alfian Tanjung, a producer for hoax about the rise of Indonesian Communist Party (muslimoderat.net, 12/09/2017), and several other information.

Visually speaking, muslimoderat.net is quite similar with other Islamic websites with white as the dominant color in the background and blue for the heading.



The rubrics provided in this site are Home, News, Islamic Studies, Moderate Figure, Love Indonesia, Wisdom, Habaib, Clerics. Overall, there are nine rubrics.

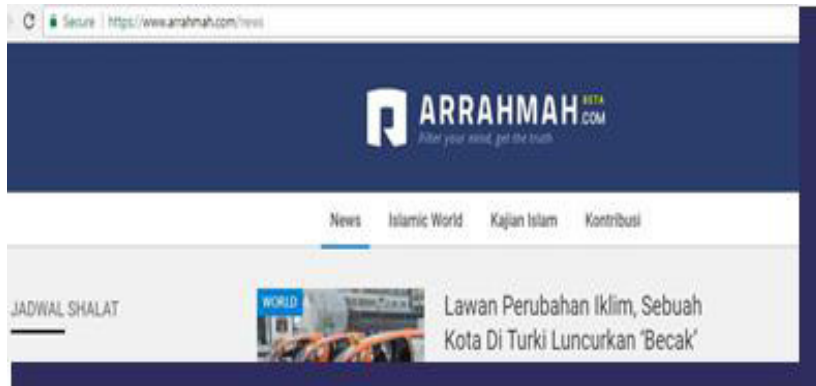
As for the advertisement, no ads were found on muslimmoderat.net. This seems to be because muslimlimodersat.net declares itself as a non-commercial site thus it cannot put ads on their pages.

Unfortunately, this site who claimed to represent Moderate Islam does not include the real address and phone number, so it cannot be visited directly. Although they include their email: berbagimuslim@gmail.com.

### ***C.5 Arrahmah***

The site Arrahmah.com was founded by Muhammad Jibril, son of ustadz Abu Jibril, in 2005. It is an Islamic media site that has been around for a long time, long before the proliferation of today's Islamic media. According to Muhammad Jibril, Arrahmah.com was established as a propaganda media and also a media for Islamic struggle. Some other Islamic media that are often associated with radicalism are supported by Arrahmah.com in terms of IT provision. Arrahmah.com is a company that has several businesses, among others: film publishing, book printing, magazine publishing (Jihad Magz). The magazine 'Jihad Magz' was made in order to call for jihad among Muslims. For Muhammad Jibril, Arrahmah.com was made because the Islamic media is always getting marginalized. Only few see Islamic media as a source of information. Meanwhile, the mainstream media that most people used for their source of information are, according to Muhammad Jibril, a secular media that discriminates Moslem community.

Arrahmah.com that we accessed on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018 is a new look, because at the time we did the interview on October 15, 2017, the site was under reconstruction. Before the reconstruction, there was a rubric named 'jihad zone', but it is no longer available. Here's a post-reconstruction arrahmah.com's display, with four main sections: News, Islamic World, Islamic Studies, and Contributions.



The 'news' rubric is mostly international news rather than domestic. The 'Islamic World' rubric informs about events in many Islamic countries or Muslim-majority countries, such as Syria, Palestine, Algeria, Turkey and Yemen. The 'Islamic Study' rubric contains the biography of Prophet Muhammad PBUH's friends, and Islam's arguments on the prohibiting or suggesting something based on arrahmah.com's discretion, as can be seen in the picture below:



Finally, the 'contribution' rubric contains: reader's story, reader's voice, citizen journalism and event, as can be seen in the picture below:



As for the display, arrahmah.com uses dark blue for the headline, while the rubric and pages use white with black font. This choice was made to provide comfort for readers who access the site through gadgets or laptop/notebook or desk computer.

In order to get the news to be published, arrahmah.com has a number of recommended field journalists. There is no 'official' journalist recruitment. Their roles are rather similar to a contributor. Institutionally, arrahmah.com is not a member of the Dewan Pers, which is the official press agency acknowledged by the Government of Indonesia. Arrahmah.com does not want to be under a press council or any other institution. They are also not very active in Islamic media's journalist associations, such as *Jurnal Islam Bersatu (JITU)* and *Moslem Journalists Forum (Forjim)*, although Muhammad Jibril is one of the founders of JITU.

In terms of advertisement, currently arrahmah.com does not display ads in their page. They believe that by receiving money from AdSense, it means they have accepted and tolerated the fact that the Islamic media is controlled by other people or institutions. We were not able to get more information from Muhammad Jibril about the site's expenditure, which is up to 50 million rupiah, nor how it is spent to pay for journalists or maintenance. When we asked more about it, he only said that the money comes from his personal pocket. Muhammad Jibril also has a fashion boutique in Jakarta.

### **C.6. Thoriquna**

Thoriquna.id is a page that belongs to the organs of LPPDI Thoriquna. The page does not mention its purpose, vision and mission of thoriquna.id. The 'about' section, which usually includes an organization profile, is used to publish an opinion entitled: "The Jihad of Our Way (Definition of Jihad, Purpose, and Law)," which says that "the noblest form of jihad is bringing arms for a fight in the name of Allah." (<http://www.thoriquna./2017/01/blog-post.html>, accessed on October 16, 2017).

This page also persuades the reader for the definition of jihad, by quoting the Qur'anic verse, "Strive in the cause of Allah with the utmost jihad" (Al-Hajj 78), without an *asbabun nuzul* (cause and effect) explanation, which should be explained to the reader. *Asbabun Nuzul* in studying the Al-Qur'an verses is very important to avoid false interpretation or even literal interpretation.



This thoriquna.id page uses black as the dominant color by scribbling its headline in deep black, accompanied by a white background. Other colors are very rarely encountered, except for the illustration of the picture, which mostly uses burning red color, as in angry conditions, and reinforced by the many mention of the word 'war'. This also appears in the 'Virtue' section, as seen in the following picture:



Akhlaq or virtue in the teachings of Islam is actually a representation of Moslem behavior in everyday life, such as the way a Moslem treats their neighbor, their natural surroundings, how they receive guests and how they treat others. But in thoriquna.id, virtue is instead associated with war. When opening the 'home' section, there is no explanation about thoriquna.id. The only thing in that page is an international call for jihad on the United States. The page also says that, in this time and age, we can no longer use pen to jihad and: "Prepare for when

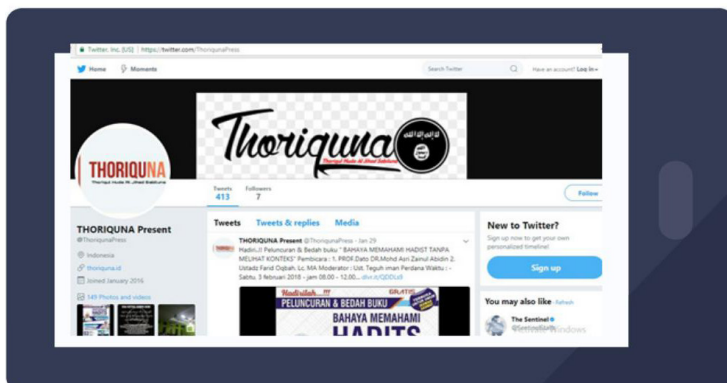
the time when we are called to jihad...,” a very provocative statement to incite its readers.



Thoriquna.id seems to rarely being updated. The information is not posted daily, but rather weeks. As a media, this is obviously far from being ideal and could bore their readers. This seems ironic when we see the fact that thoriquna.id has 11 rubrics to post their content: home, aqidah, virtue, manhaj, fiqih, sirah, hadith, khazanah, national, international, about.

There is no advertisement found on this website, probably because they rarely update their content, which is a bad way to attract advertisers. The writers on this page are mostly represented by thoriquna itself. There is no mention of the journalist name or the name of opinion writer. The only name that we found is the editor's: Abu Fayruza.

Thoriquna.id is also linked with its social media: Twitter, Instagram and Google Plus. Their Twitter account actually published ISIS' flag, as shown in the picture below:



The Twitter's background only uses black and white. In terms of semiotic, thoriquna.id appears to have similar vision and mission with terrorist organization such as ISIS. If it is true, then their existence can no longer be tolerated, regardless of freedom of expression. Terrorism is a prohibited act based on the official law of this country.

### **C.7. Dakwatuna**

The site dakwatuna.com was founded by Samin Barkah, an alumnus of leadership training at the National Resilience Institute (Lemhanas). Dakwatuna.com has a vision to "Become the largest and most trusted online Islamic media," while the missions are: "1). Providing useful and educational content; 2). Delivering reliable information; 3). Providing a reliable space for aspiration; 4). Providing an effective consulting services; and 5). Providing profitable advertising services".

Dakwatuna.com is managed by Dakwatuna Foundation and has operated since November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006. It was first launched in Hamka Hall, Al-Azhar Mosque Jakarta, on 1 Muharram 1428 which coincides with January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007, at 10:00 am. The launching event was attended by Hidayat Nur Wahid, Chairman of the Indonesia's Parliament (2004-2009 period) and Dr. Amir Faishol Fath, Head of LKD (Lembaga Kajian Dakwatuna).

For the first three years, dakwatuna.com featured Islamic articles only. It was only since the 2010 that news articles being featured on the site. The materials were obtained by journalists in their networks, which it calls as an open journalism method. Dakwatuna.com itself does not have a permanent journalist.

The open journalism system is similar to how contributor works, which mostly comes from the network of Forum Lingkar Pena (FLP). In its purpose, it is mentioned that dakwatuna.com wishes to "present the tragedies and crises that engulf the people from various part of the world and the accomplishments that should be celebrated by Muslim community as a whole." This purpose departs from one of the prophetic traditions which declare that the Muslim community is akin to a body. If one part of the body feel pain, then the whole body will also feel the same.

As an online media that uses Islamic identity, dakwatuna.com completely displays its entire institutional structure with details. Starting from the presence of the general chairman, the editorial board, the managing editor, the editor and the contributor, all of which having their name displayed clearly. Similarly, the editor address is



listed in Epiwalk Office Suites A529, Rasuna Epicentrum. Hj. Rangkayo Street, Rasuna Said, Karet Kuningan-Setiabudi, South Jakarta. Phone: +6281399022427 with email address dakwatuna@gmail.com.

In terms of updating the information, this page is quite active in providing information, news and opinions to the readers, although not all rubrics are updated every day. As for its visual appearance, this page chose blue as the color of its heading in accordance with the logo of dakwatuna.com itself. Meanwhile, the topics are given a red nuance as a way to show that this site is very energetic in publishing its content. It also has a flash which features information considered important in national and international level, as well as things related to religion.

The manager of dakwatuna.com mentions that it at least requires an expenditure amounted to 25 million each month for site maintenance and to update existing rubrics as well as provide monthly salary to eight people. To get an income, they run ads such as: Almasah (Hijab Advertisement), Air Asia, FBS ads and Tirto.id. app. We believe that this is their method of fundraising to sustain their page.



As an online media that has been around for more than a decade, dakwatuna.com has its share of experience in being blocked for 10 days by Kemkominfo in 2015, due to being suspected of publishing radical contents with relation to ISIS and endangering the public. However, recently they have included confirmation on which kind of rubric or content that the government prohibits. Dakwatuna.com was blocked based on National Council to Combat Terrorism (BNPT)'s request to Kemkominfo. However, the investigation made after that did not find any evidence on BNPT's claim about radicalism content in dakwatuna.com. As such, the block was lifted and the site was allowed to re-operate.

### Islamic Website in Indonesia

Group	Name of Islamic Site	URL Site Location
Nahdlatul Ulama	NU Online	<a href="http://nu.or.id">http://nu.or.id</a>
Muhammadiyah	Suara Muhammadiyah	<a href="http://suaramuhammadiyah.id">http://suaramuhammadiyah.id</a>
Nahdlatul Wathan	Nahdlatul Wathan	<a href="http://nw.or.id">http://nw.or.id</a>
Forum Persatuan Umat Islam	Suara Islam	<a href="http://www.suara-islam.com/">http://www.suara-islam.com/</a>
Hidayatullah	Hidayatullah	<a href="https://www.hidayatullah.com/">https://www.hidayatullah.com/</a>
Dewan Dakwah	Dewan Dakwah	<a href="http://dewandakwah.or.id/">http://dewandakwah.or.id/</a>
Majlis Tafsir Al-Qur'an	Majlis Tafsir Al-Qur'an	<a href="https://mta.or.id/">https://mta.or.id/</a>
Portal Islam	Portal Islam	<a href="http://www.portal-islam.id/">http://www.portal-islam.id/</a>
Era Muslim	Era Muslim	<a href="https://www.eramuslim.com/">https://www.eramuslim.com/</a>
VOA Islam	VOA Islam	<a href="https://www.voa-islam.com/">https://www.voa-islam.com/</a>
Muslim Moderat	Muslim Moderat	<a href="http://www.muslimmoderat.net/">http://www.muslimmoderat.net/</a>
Arrahmah	Arrahmah	<a href="http://www.arahmah.com/">http://www.arahmah.com/</a>
Thoriquna	Thoriquna	<a href="http://www.thoriquna.id/">http://www.thoriquna.id/</a>
Dakwatuna	Dakwatuna.com	<a href="http://www.dakwatuna.com/">http://www.dakwatuna.com/</a>

### III. RELIGION AND THE INTERNET: NEW INTERACTION IN THE NEW SPACE

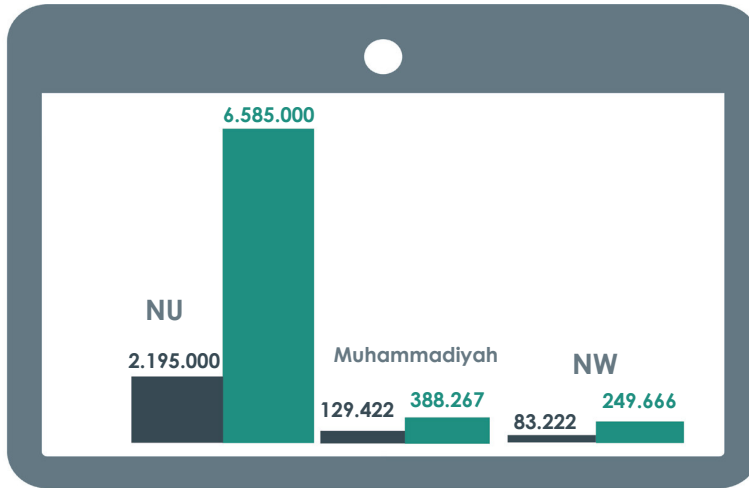
The interaction in this new space is an interesting phenomenon to be seen as a whole, especially because the Internet has become an extension of radicalism ideas that can lead to acts of terrorism. Islamic site made as a means for preaching are sometimes ambiguous to the plurality in Indonesia. Sites like [eramuslim.com](https://www.eramuslim.com), [VOA-Islam](https://www.voa-islam.com), [arahmah.com](http://www.arahmah.com) and [thoriquna.com](http://www.thoriquna.com) often emphasize the narratives that depicts Islam as a hardline religion in its preaching.

The most prominent thing during DKI Jakarta gubernatorial race, between Basuki Tjahaja Purnama and Anies Baswedan is the rise of identity politics. Anies was seen as utilizing his identity as a Moslem and perverting Qur'anic verses to fight the incumbent. The development of social media is not followed with a tolerant religious consciousness. This causes conflict and fake news. Social media, in turn, brought us to the era of "post-truth." The appearance of fake news, hate speech and persecution in the name of religion is the logical consequences of the weak interfaith tolerance.

Our survey on the popularity of Islamic sites shown that NU Online was visited by around 6,585,000 visitors during July-September 2017 period, while Suara Muhammadiyah was visited by around 388,267 visitors on the same period, followed by Nahdlatul Wathan which was visited by 249,666 visitors. It can be seen that NU Online has the biggest visitors among mainstream websites such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Wathan. The difference is very significant with six million

visitors compared to three hundred thousand visitors. We believe that this is due to NU Online has a more attractive content and layout compared to Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Wathan.

Number of Visit to Mainstream  
Islamic Organization  
July-September 2017



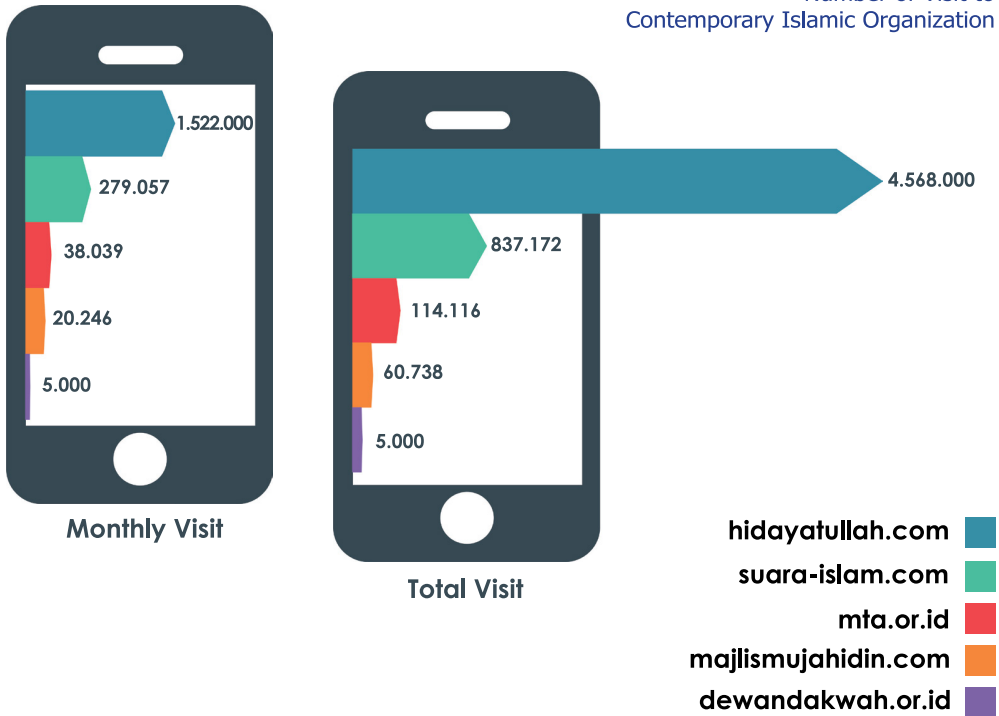
Monthly Visit  
 Total Visit

As for the contemporary websites, hidayatullah.com has the most visitors. Around 4,568,000 visitors visit the site on July-September 2017 period, followed by suara-islam.com with 837,172 visitors, mta.or.id with 114,116 visitors, majelismujahidin.com with 60,738 visitors and dewandakwah.or.id with 5,000 visitors.

The number of visitors to hidayatullah.com is almost similar to NU online, beating the likes of Suara Muhammadiyah. Hidayatullah.com is also one of the site that has been blocked by Kemkominfo due to having news that contains hardline religious propaganda.

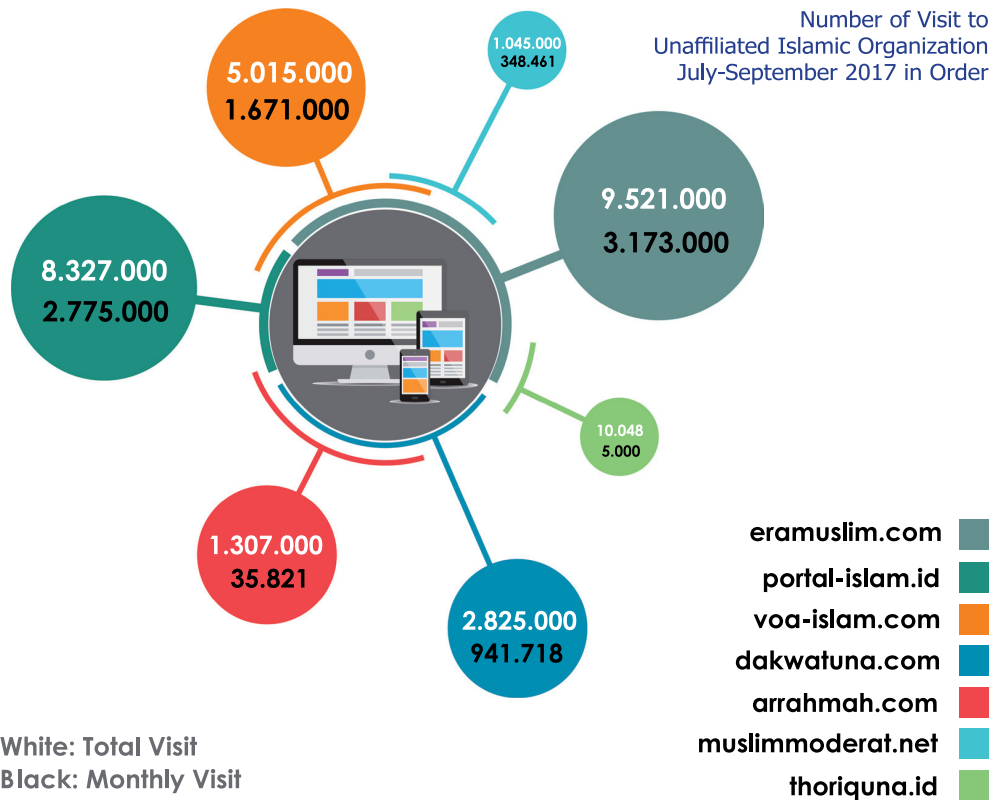
Suara-islam.com, which is affiliated with Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), also have more visitors than Suara Muhammadiyah. Suara-islam.com is filled to the brim with narratives about Islamic Empire but currently they are on bad terms with HTI which causes them to publish more Sharia-Indonesia narratives.

Number of Visit to  
Contemporary Islamic Organization



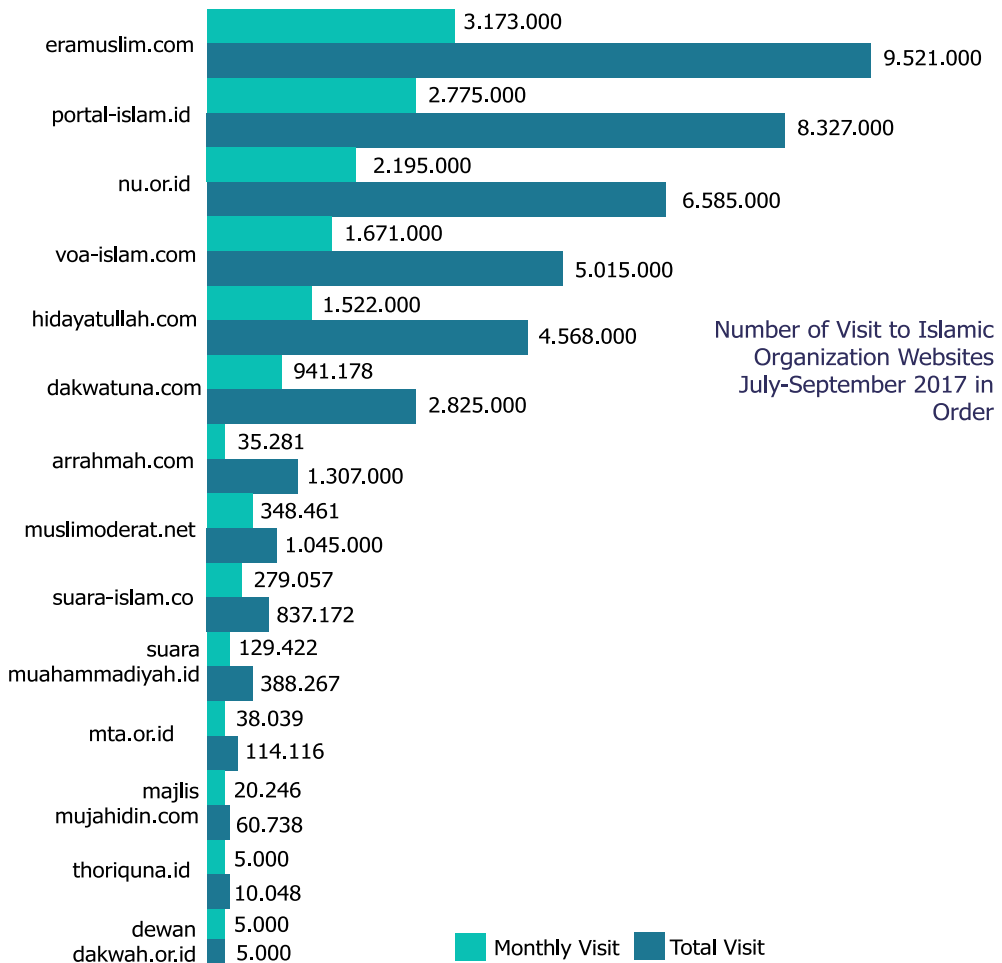
As for the non-affiliate websites, eramuslim.com has the highest visitor count during the July-September 2017 period with 9,521,000 visitors, followed by portal-islam.id with 8,327,000 visitors, VOA-islam.com with 5,015,000 visitors, dakwatuna.com with 2,825,000 visitors, arrahmah.com with 1,307,000 visitors, muslimmoderat.net with 1,045,000 visitors and Thoriquna.id with 10,048 visitors.

The non-affiliate websites are the most popular among Indonesian netizens when it comes to source of religious information. This can be seen from the total visitor count of eramuslim.com in July-September 2017 period which beats NU Online. These sites are viewed and accessed by millions of Indonesian netizens. We also see the low popularity of Thoriquna.id that promotes a way too extreme religious narrative. This means that Indonesian netizens do not really enjoy hardline Islamic narratives.



Based on the overall graphic above, we can see that the most popular Islamic website in Indonesia, in order of visitor count, is eramuslim.com, portal-islam.id, nu.or.id, voa-islam.com, hidayatullah.com, dakwatuna.com, arrahmah.com, muslimmoderat.net, suara-islam.co, nw.or.id, suaramuhammadiyah.id, mta.or.id, majelismujahidin.com, thoriquna.id and dewandakwah.or.id.

Most of the Islamic website visited by netizens during the July-September 2017 period is the non-affiliate sites. According to Alexa, Islamic website with the highest national rating per October 29<sup>th</sup> 2017 is Portal Islam. Meanwhile, SimilarWeb ranks Eramuslim as the highest among all of Islamic websites with rank 489 nationally and rank 22,825 globally. It means, according to Alexa or Similarweb, the national and global rank of websites such as NU Online is still below eramuslim.com and portal-islam.id.



Based on our research, there are two Islamic websites that reject radicalism, that is NU Online and Suara Muhammadiyah. This can be seen from the official statement by Pengurus Pusat Muhammadiyah who are clearly against the discourse of Absolute Islamic empire in Indonesia. They reject the idea that Indonesia is an infidel country and are against those who desires to replace the current political system in Indonesia.

The same is also true for NU Online which stated that the concept of Islamic state was never exist to begin with. Islam only provides virtues that can be implemented in doing politics, economics, cultures, art etc. NU also rejects the concept of Islamic Empire. They believe that the concept has three fatal flaws, that is: its normative construct, its socio-cultural system and its socio-historical background.

NU Online also rejects intolerance by publishing a writing that explains the two ways to deal with systematically organized extreme

jihadist movement, that is: (1) building alliance between all of the nation's element; (2) building a narrative for Indonesian Islam and socializes it to the people. They also said that intolerant groups are endangering the nation as they wish to destroy and replace the status quo. These groups are capable of creating chaos in the society.

Suara Muhammadiyah also rejects intolerance by stating that dealing with radical movement must be done in a wise and moderate way. Political, racial and religious conflict in a nation must be dealt by integrating the identity of Muslim communities in order to be rational against radical and extremist groups

The two sites are bringing an important and meaningful agenda for Indonesian Moslem, that is the moderate (*wasathiyah*) or third way Islam. However, NU Online and Suara Muhammadiyah have a differing concern. Suara Muhammadiyah interprets moderate Islam as a way to reach progress, while NU Online interprets Moderate Islam as a way to preserve traditional Indonesian Islam.

The two sites are rejecting radicalism and providing peaceful narratives to its reader in order to ensure a secure, peaceful and harmonious life in this country. During the July-September 2017 period, Suara Muhammadiyah has published peaceful message for 21 times while NU Online managed to publish 64 texts that reject radicalism.

#### **IV. The User and The Message: A Dynamic Turbulence**

Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat (PPIM) has released an opinion, based on their survey findings, about the radical attitude among students. The survey shows that 59.5% students who have access to internet has a pretty high radical opinion. Meanwhile, 59.7% students who use social media such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram, are very radical.

This illustrates how users of internet and social media are deeply entrenched to the message that they consume which makes them to take it for granted. In this case, the stimuli-response theory can explain that relation. This theory explains that effect is a reaction to certain stimuli. This explains the relation between media messages and audience' reaction (McQuail, 1994). Dennis McQuaill describes that the main elements of this theory consist of message (stimuli), receiver (organism) and effect (response).

This stimulus-response principle is made based on hypodermic needle theory, which explains the how media can be highly influential.

This hypodermic needle theory sees media as a drug injected into the audience's blood vessels, which causes them to react.

The radical sites work like hypodermic needles, they prepare hate narratives, conducting propaganda and telling about the existence of Muslims who are discriminated by the West. Then, they associate jihad with war and make a rough and literal interpretation of Qur'anic verses.

The Internet is considered as an information system that has an important role in the process of maintenance, change, and conflict on the level of society, groups or individuals in social activities. The information society becomes highly dependent on the internet as a source of their knowledge and their orientation which helps them to describe what is happening in the society.

## A. Hate Narratives

The non-affiliate sites who like to spread hate narratives has been the most referred and consumed media by Indonesian netizens who seek for religious informations. The sites often inform about the war that occurs in Palestine, Syria, Iraq and Muslim-majority countries. However, the angle of its writing makes people believe that the West is the main perpetrator for war against Muslims.

The call for jihad to help the people in warring states is very explicit in their contents. Discussion on *aqidah* and *muamalah* is also based on a very literal interpretation of al-Quran and Hadith. They often wrote the word infidel and put it like a label on people who are against their world view.

Below are the examples of narratives developed in non-affiliate sites:

### Hate Narratives in Non-Affiliate Websites

**Infidel Media will Call Al-Mahdi: Terrorist  
Indonesia Needs a Devout Dictator  
Sanbenito, an Infidel Hat used to  
Celebrate the New Year  
The Jew's Lizard Hole and Zionist  
Christian Jew, the Bringer of Destruction  
in the World**

Eramuslim.com



VOA Islam.com

**Al-Qaeda leader urges Egyptian citizen to overthrow their Government**  
**Islamic State Affiliation Calls to Attack Egypt Election Next Month**  
**Weak Moslems are Being Massacred in Rohingya, Will You Jihad?**  
**Annoying & Intimidating the Enemy of Islam is a Prayer and Good Deed**  
**Rush Money is Part of Jihad and Good Deed, How Come?**  
**The Obligation to Prepare Physical Capabilities to Go for Jihad**  
**Seeking for a Highway to Jihad Ground**  
**Knowing the Importance of Jihad & Martyrdom, Pati Wants to Live in Jihad Ground**  
**You Got an Invitation for Christmas: This Is Syaikh Utsaimin's Answer**

**On Immorality and Intimidation Politics from International Community to Contemporary Moslem**  
**Cursing Terrorism and Distorting Islamic Empire Teachings**  
**Ahok Effect, Jokowi is the Next Victim**  
**State Terrorism**  
**The Danger of Electing an Infidel Leader**  
**The Law of Electing an Infidel Leader**  
**When Islamic Studies are Considered More Dangerous than Infidelity**

Arrahmah.com

**It Began from Badar, War = Solution for the Parasite in Muslim Community: The Mentality of Democracy Salesperson = Infidel System**  
**Thoriquna Founder: Islamophobia is- Our Way of Jihad**

Thoriquna.id

Those narratives are highly influential in making readers justify the idea of extremism or terrorism. Based on the data collected by the National Council to Combat Terrorism (BNPT), there are many cases which show the relation between internet media and radical thinking that leads someone to the act of terrorism.

01

**Agust Anton Figian aka Tariq aka Abu Zulfikar**

Becomes part of Abu Hasmy (Abu Hanifah)'s group. He plans to bomb Freeport and US Embassy in Surabaya. He claims to be influenced by reading news and studies made by arrahmah.com. Agus Anton also learned to make bombs from other radical internet media.

02

**Five Students from SMK Klaten**

learns how to make bomb from al-busyro forum.

03

**Ahmad Taufiq aka Ofi**

He was the Suspect in Myanmar bombing after being absent from his religious discussion groups for a long time. He claims to download a religious podcast in MP3 format from a radical site.

04

**Ahmad Azhar Basyir**

He claims to search for internet articles about how to make a detonator, until he found a Facebook account about salafi jihadi that discussed about it.

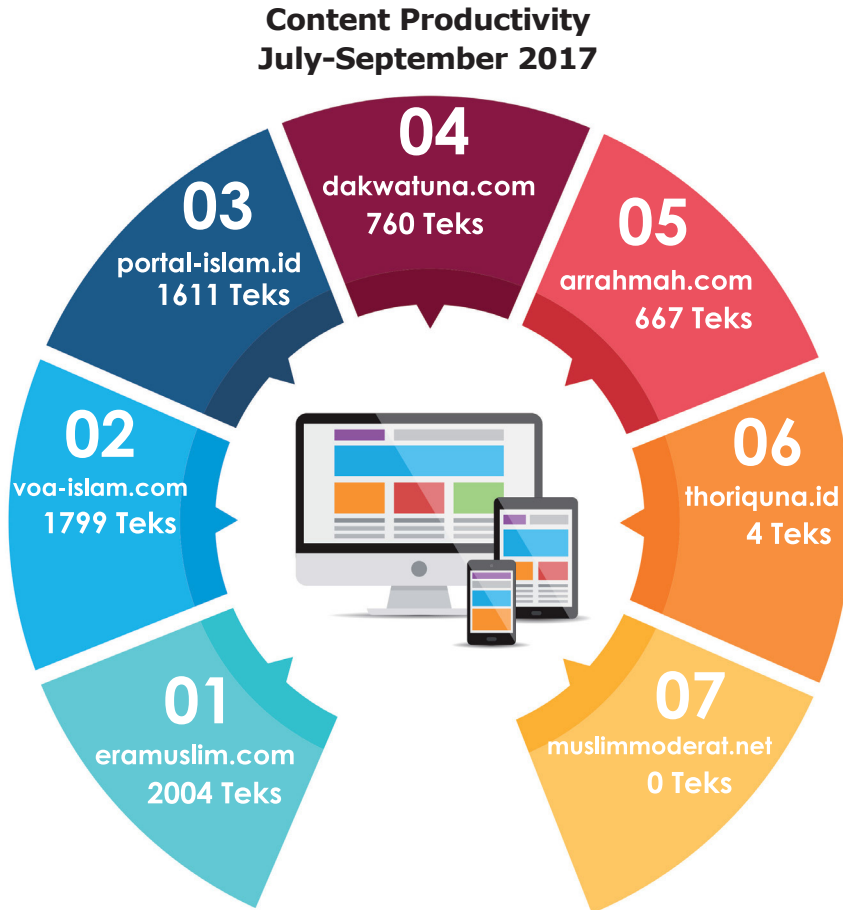
05

**Muhammad Alfian Nurzi and Asyahnaz**

Alfian came from Kalimantan and Asyahnaz from bandung. Before going to Syria, the two used online media, especially social media, to communicate with the ISIS.

Source: BNPT, 2016

Based on our data search from July to September 2017, the frequency of non-affiliate Islamic websites in updating its radical contents can be seen in the table below:



Based on the table above, it can be seen how serious the non-affiliate sites in delivering ideological messages to their reader.

## **B. Intolerant Acts of Persecution**

The DKI Jakarta gubernatorial race which was held in 2017 became a launching point for organizations like FPI to find its momentum in executing the act of persecution. Ahok's slip of tongue was considered to be an insult to the Muslim community and triggered a huge demonstration to reject a non-Muslim leader. The demonstration, known as "Fight for Islam" was joined by many Islamic organizations that wish for Ahok to be imprisoned.

The demonstration then created an organization with the name of Gerakan Nasional Pengawal Fatwa MUI (GNPF) which was led by Bachtiar Nasir. Vedi Hadiz, in his article "Islamic Populism in Indonesia and the Middle East," says that the rise of primordial sentiment is the rise of Islamic populism (Hadiz, 2016).

Thus, the case of blasphemy with the defendant Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), becomes the gateway for cases of online persecution. The Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFENET) notes that there have been 47 persecutions against social media accounts accused of insulting religion or clerics in social media. These cases are widespread throughout Indonesia and it target people from diverse backgrounds.

In the area of West Sumatra, there was a doctor named Fiera Lovita who suffered persecution. Usually this act of persecution is done by a group of people who are instructed to hunt for targets whose identities, photographs, and office or home address are known, in order to be visited by a group of people, or commonly referred as raiding the victims to be brought to the police.

In addition to Fiera, another viral case involved Raka Fadil Sulyanto in Malang after imitating the video of ustadz Arifin Ilham with his two wives. His personal data was then spread on the site muslimcyber.net and on facebook account named Abd Rachim. There is also a Facebook page titled Moslem Community's Manhunt Database containing data of accounts that has been identified for insulting clerics or the religion. They provoke people in every area to pursue or prosecute those who are identified for an act of insulting the clerics, Rasulullah and religion. A football journalist, Zulfikar Akbar from the daily Tops Score, lost his job as a result of his tweets on Twitter which is considered to be an insult for the clerics.

The phenomenon of persecution in Indonesia is an unfortunate portrait of the success of hate speech-generators to engage in the engineering of religious interference that could be fatal to Indonesia's democracy and pluralism. The act of persecution is an attitude of intolerance that must be treated as a serious problem by central and local governments. The police officers should be able to conduct surveillance and preventive action to detect the hate facilitators in the social media.

## **V. BUILDING AN ALTERNATIVE: THE MODERATE ISLAM NARRATIVES**

Islam is basically an open humanity religion that upholds human values. Unlike Islam in Arab, Islam in Indonesia is the least civilized Islam, because it is located in far from the Arab Islamic center and has its own culture that is different from Arab culture (Madjid, 2002).

Indonesian Islam comes with unique characteristics and faces that can blend with local traditions. Anthropologists who researched Indonesian Islam since the days of Thomas Raffles, Snouck Hurgronje, Clifford Geertz, Mark Woodward, Robert Hefner and others have acknowledged the peaceful and unified characteristics of Indonesian Islam (Hidayat & Gaus, 2006).

The idea of indigenous Islam has also been stated by Abdurrahman Wahid. The indigenous Islam is defined as a way to adapt the concepts of the universal teachings of Islam and the values of local culture that grow in society. The legal decision-making in Islam must always consider the needs and the local context of the community (Wahid, 2001). Basically, indigenous Islam is an Islam that integrates with local wisdom and elevates the dignity of humanity.

Indigenous Islam strongly rejects the process of Arabization or the process of identifying with Middle Eastern cultures. Therefore, such arabization is not only a potential cause for destruction of local culture, but also at the same time completely eliminates the identity of a society. People are forced to replace their identity. Arabization also contains a triumphalistic spirit that must be rejected. It is as if Islam can only be defined as an Arab culture. This kind of view is only simplifying the understanding of Islam, causing it to be a banality (Ghazali & Rashad, 2006).

Moderate Islamic narratives on website as well as on social media is the logical consequence to build a healthy Islamic discourse, that is an Islam that affirms faith and devotion which can become the social power to build a civilized nation. It does not only respect people of different religions, beliefs and ideologies but hold them together and consciously build a peaceful and just nation-state. Indonesian Islam is a friendly Islamic style that puts a smile and peace among people, as well as maintaining a sound mind.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

In the end, we can conclude that internet and social media has become the most powerful medium in spreading radicalism and extremism. The cutting-edge technology forms new spaces to interact and communicate in an effective way to accommodate their strengths.

The data described above can be seen as an entry point in viewing radical group movements who use internet and social media:

First, most of the sites of popular Islamic organizations in Internet are websites of non-affiliated Islamic organizations with era-muslim.com being the most popular among netizens. Meanwhile, NU Online is the mainstream Islamic organizations website that has the most visitors and hidayatullah.com is the most visited contemporary Islamic organization website.

Secondly, in responding to the phenomenon of radicalism in society, NU Online and Suara Muhammadiyah firmly reject the radicalism narrative, while the contemporary Islamic organization's website tends to be ambiguous with the phenomenon of radicalism and the website of non-affiliated organizations is very supportive and facilitative in spreading narratives of radicalism in the society.

Third, social media users who produce and distribute radical or extremist messages are mostly anonymous or using an undetected group.

Fourth, the motivation of social media users in producing, distributing, and consuming radical messages are: (1) they want to turn their social media accounts into a media to criticize the government; (2) they want to turn their social media accounts into a medium to stop hoax or unconfirmed news; (3) they want to turn their social media account into a media to spread preaching.

### Writer's Profile

**Dirga Maulana** is a young researcher at Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat (PPIM) UIN Jakarta. He has joined the PPIM since 2014 with main interests in media, democracy, internet and religion. His writing scan be seen in many media, such as Kompas, Koran Tempo, Majalah Tempo, Seputar Indonesia and local news outlet such as Tangerang News, Tangsel Pos and Banten News. He has joined Universitas Indonesia's Political Psychology Laboratory and National Council to Combat Terrorism (BNPT) to interview terrorists. Dirga has participated in many writing trainings such as one from Tempo Institute and a writing scholarship from Megawati Institute. He can

be contacted via his Facebook account Dirga Maulana or in his Twitter account @dirgamaulana.

## **About Pusat Studi Budaya dan Perubahan Sosial UMS**

Pusat Studi Budaya dan Perubahan Sosial (PSBPS) Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta is an institution with main concern in cultural issues, especially cultural diversities and social change, which is shown by conducting education, research or action. PSBPS UMS' program is based on Islamic value and universal human rights with emphasize on the relevance and contextualizing those values into the contemporary era as well as giving direction for social change.

## **About “Radicalism in Website and Social Media” Research**

Pusat Studi Budaya dan Perubahan Sosial Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta has conducted a research under Convey Indonesia program entitled: Radicalism in the Website and Social Media. This research identifies three categories of Islamic preaching websites that is: mainstream Islamic organization's site, contemporary Islamic organization's site and non-affiliate Islamic organization's site. The observation on these sites was made from January 2016 to October 2017. 437 social media accounts were surveyed, which consists of 80 Facebook accounts, 200 Instagram accounts and 57 Twitter accounts.



## Enhancing the Role of Religious Education in Countering Violent Extremism in Indonesia

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