

New digital media plays a crucial part of the Indonesian general elections



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Digital art and social networks have played a key part in publicity and youth-mobilisation in the Indonesian general elections. Social media platforms, notably Twitter, have been crucial in appealing to voters under the age of 30. Last week an avatar campaign featuring a photo with a cut out photo frame and a cardboard cut-out of one of the presidential candidates, **Widodo**, went viral. The idea was such a hit on Twitter that another presidential candidate, **Subianto**, released his own avatar version to appeal to public support through the same social network. But perhaps one of the most unexpected uses of new digital media in this election campaign has been the creation of a series of game Apps, which can be downloaded on smartphones. One game, named **Flap Man Jokowi**, features the candidate, Widodo, as a superhero soaring through the sky in a bid to fight corruption. Candidate Sobianto's app allows users to think through some of Indonesia's key issues, such as the need to be self-sufficient in food supply. The game, entitled **Our Six Actions**, lets smartphone users plant rice. There is also one part of the game in which users can catch criminals with bags of money in their hands. Both political groups have also had digital illustrations created and printed onto t-shirts to promote their respective campaigns, as well as the production of music videos to support their bids to become the next Indonesian president.

Video of Jokowi Go game on Youtube



The wide focus by both candidates on using new digital media and popular culture, (which in itself has become increasingly dominated by digital platforms and applications), demonstrate the multi-faceted use of new technology in all disciplines. The emergence of social media teams as a necessary part of many companies and organisations is evidence of the growing importance of maintaining a strong online presence, especially when hoping to appeal to younger generations. Digital art and design is even moving into the realm of political institutions as politicians try desperately to gain an advantage over their opponents by appealing to younger age groups through social media and apps.

More information: <http://blogs.wsj.com/searealtime/2014/07/02/4-things-helping-color-indonesias-election-campaign/>

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