

Leveraging Social Media to Enhance Historical Awareness: A Case Study of the Inspect History YouTube Channel

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Social Media;
Enhancements;
History Awareness

Article history:

Received 2023-03-16
Revised 2024-04-23
Accepted 2024-09-30

ABSTRACT

Limitations in educational curricula, ineffective teaching methods, and insufficient resources can hinder a nation's ability to foster historical awareness. However, advancements in information and communication technology (ICT) present opportunities to address these challenges. The rise of social media platforms, especially YouTube, has become a powerful tool in disseminating historical knowledge. This study employs a qualitative research design with a case study approach, focusing on the YouTube channel "Inspect History." Data were collected through observations of the channel's content, online interviews, and document analysis. The study specifically examines how this platform contributes to enhancing historical consciousness. The "Inspect History" YouTube channel, with 580 thousand subscribers and 257 videos as of July 20, 2022, demonstrates the effectiveness of animated videos in fostering historical awareness. Viewers reported increased engagement with and understanding of historical events through the platform's accessible content. The findings suggest that social media, particularly YouTube, can significantly enhance the public's understanding of history. The case of "Inspect History" illustrates how well-curated digital content can compensate for limitations in traditional educational settings, providing an engaging alternative for learning. This study highlights the potential of social media platforms to promote historical awareness. The success of "Inspect History" underscores the value of utilizing digital tools to overcome educational barriers and cultivate a deeper public understanding of history in the digital era.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The lack of public understanding of history presents a significant challenge in Indonesia, where historical education predominantly focuses on the memorization of facts and events rather than promoting critical engagement with historical narratives. This method of instruction reinforces the perception that history is merely a collection of disconnected dates and occurrences, devoid of contemporary relevance. However, historical knowledge is essential for shaping a nation's identity, as it

encapsulates the collective memory and heritage of its people (Anderson, 2006). A nation that values its history not only honors its past but also strengthens its cultural identity, fostering a sense of belonging and continuity that transcends generations (Lowenthal, 2015).

In Indonesia, this challenge is exacerbated by a broader societal preference for scientific disciplines, such as the natural sciences, over the humanities, including history. This trend reflects a global emphasis on fields perceived to have more immediate practical applications, contributing to the marginalization of historical education (Jumardi, 2015). The prioritization of these fields may lead to a diminished perception of the importance of historical understanding in shaping informed citizenship, social cohesion, and critical thinking (Seixas, 2006). The lack of emphasis on history contributes to a public that is less engaged with its national heritage, which is crucial for fostering a sense of shared identity and social responsibility.

The rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICT), particularly the rise of social media, presents both challenges and opportunities for enhancing historical awareness. On one hand, technological advancements have blurred the boundaries of time and space, allowing instantaneous access to information and reshaping how individuals perceive their national and cultural identities (Amboro, 2015). On the other hand, ICTs have democratized access to knowledge, enabling platforms such as YouTube to become powerful tools for disseminating historical content. In Indonesia, the popularity of YouTube, with its widespread reach and accessibility, highlights its potential to engage the public with historical narratives in ways that traditional educational methods cannot (Anam, 2022).

YouTube channels like Inspect History exemplify how digital platforms can transform historical education. By utilizing animated videos and interactive content, Inspect History makes historical narratives visually appealing and engaging, encouraging viewers to explore and reflect on the significance of historical events in relation to contemporary issues. This approach aligns with the concept of public history, which seeks to make historical insights accessible to the broader public outside academic circles (Nopriyasman, 2018). Digital history, in this context, not only fosters historical consciousness but also promotes critical thinking and dialogue about the complexities of history and its ongoing influence on collective identities (Munslow, 2020).

In conclusion, the evolution of ICTs, particularly through social media platforms like YouTube, presents unprecedented opportunities to enhance historical awareness in Indonesia. As the country navigates the challenges of globalization and technological advancement, innovative digital platforms provide an essential means for promoting historical education, preserving cultural identity, and fostering informed citizenship. Initiatives such as Inspect History demonstrate the potential of these platforms to make history more engaging and relevant, bridging the gap between the past and the present while cultivating a more historically conscious and critically informed society.

This study addresses the critical gap in historical education in Indonesia, where public understanding of history is often superficial, limited to rote memorization of facts and dates rather than engaging critically with historical narratives. The research highlights the growing marginalization of history within the education system, as greater emphasis is placed on scientific disciplines. This gap reflects a broader societal trend that diminishes the importance of historical knowledge in fostering national identity and informed citizenship. By focusing on the Inspect History YouTube channel, this study examines how digital platforms can bridge this gap by democratizing access to historical content and making it more engaging, relevant, and accessible to a wider audience. The novelty of this research lies in its exploration of how social media, particularly YouTube, can serve as a tool for fostering historical consciousness and critical thinking in contemporary society.

The objective of this research was to explore the potential of social media platforms to enhance public historical awareness, with a particular focus on the Inspect History YouTube channel. The study posed key research questions, including how digital platforms can transform historical education, and how these platforms encourage critical engagement with the past. The significance of this research is twofold: first, it underscores the role of digital media in making history more accessible and engaging,

thereby contributing to a broader public understanding of national heritage; second, it highlights the potential of ICTs and social media to promote a more informed and critical citizenry, which is essential for societal cohesion and cultural continuity in the digital age. By leveraging platforms like YouTube, Indonesia can address historical knowledge gaps and ensure that history remains a vital part of its national identity in the face of rapid technological change.

2. METHOD

In this study, a qualitative research method with a case study approach is employed. Qualitative research aims to explore the unique aspects of individuals, communities, or organizations through detailed, in-depth investigation, allowing for comprehensive understanding and scientifically valid conclusions (Sukidin in Siyoto & Sodik, 2015).

The case study approach focuses on understanding the dynamics of the Inspect History YouTube channel, a platform that fosters historical awareness. Data collection methods include observation, interviews, and documentation, providing a multifaceted view of the phenomenon. Observation allows for direct engagement with the platform's content, while interviews offer deeper insights. Interviews are conducted using a structured format, guided by a set of predetermined questions outlined in an interview guide sheet (Sugiyono, 2010). The primary informant is the founder of the Inspect History YouTube channel, providing firsthand knowledge about the channel's role in enhancing historical consciousness. Additionally, participants include a sample of subscribers, drawn from the channel's 580,000 followers as of July 20, 2022, who have engaged with its 257 videos.

Data analysis follows the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three stages: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions (Sugiyono, 2010). These phases ensure that the data are systematically processed, leading to valid and reliable conclusions about the role of social media in promoting historical awareness.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Background on the use of social media by Inspect History

Inspect History plays a crucial role in the field of historical education on social media by leveraging digital platforms to reach a wider audience. Established on July 22, 2018, Inspect History is an educational content creator that primarily uses animated videos to present historical topics. Despite the founders' lack of formal education in history, their shared passion for the subject has driven them to address the undervaluation of history in Indonesia. They aim to provide informative, factual, and objective content, particularly about war, to enrich students' literacy (Suhardin, Nurhayati, & Adawiyah, 2022). They also noted the scarcity of creators producing historical-themed animated videos in Indonesia, prompting them to fill this gap with original content.

Inspect History's YouTube channel, boasting 580,000 subscribers and 257 videos as of July 20, 2022, covers a wide range of historical themes. The straightforward narration in these animated videos makes complex historical concepts accessible and engaging, fostering interactive discussions in the comments section. This interaction not only enriches the content with diverse public perspectives but also helps to increase historical literacy among viewers. By making history engaging and interactive, Inspect History has successfully shown that historical content can be both educational and captivating, thus playing a significant role in enhancing public understanding of history.

The impact of Inspect History extends beyond mere viewership numbers. By encouraging active participation and dialogue through comments, the platform fosters a community of history enthusiasts who contribute to a richer understanding of historical events. The use of animated videos is particularly effective in capturing the attention of younger audiences, who may find traditional history lessons less engaging. This approach also allows for the presentation of history in a more

visually appealing and memorable way, which can aid in the retention and comprehension of historical facts and narratives.

Moreover, the founders' commitment to creating original content ensures that the material is both authentic and respectful of copyright laws, setting a positive example for other content creators. This dedication to originality not only enhances the credibility of Inspect History but also contributes to the preservation and dissemination of historical knowledge in an ethical manner. In summary, Inspect History exemplifies how modern technology and social media can be harnessed to promote historical education and literacy. Through its innovative use of animation and its focus on interactive engagement, the platform provides a valuable resource for students, educators, and history enthusiasts alike, ensuring that the lessons of the past remain relevant and accessible in the digital age.

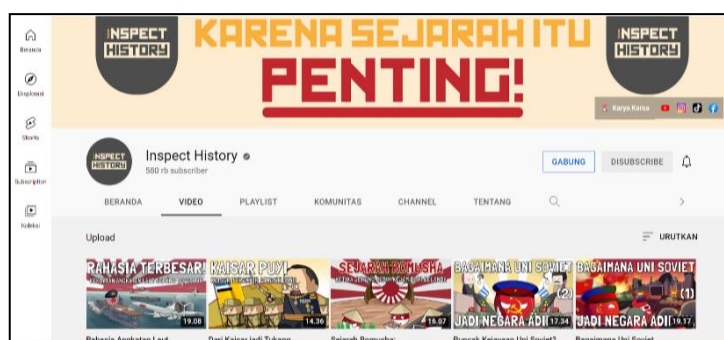


Figure 1. Inspect History YouTube account
(Source: <https://youtube.com/InspectHistory>)

The selection of the name "Inspect History" for the YouTube account is deliberate and meaningful, capturing the essence of the channel's mission. The word "Inspect" suggests a meticulous examination, reflecting a commitment to thoroughly exploring historical narratives. This implies an investigative approach, where each historical event or figure is scrutinized to reveal nuanced insights and lesser-known details. The term "History" naturally pertains to the past events and chronicles that shape our understanding of different epochs and cultures. Combined, "Inspect History" conveys an aspiration to delve deeply into historical accounts, with the anticipation of uncovering intriguing and enlightening perspectives that may resonate with contemporary life.

The name underscores the channel's objective to go beyond superficial retellings of history. Instead, it emphasizes a deeper, more analytical exploration of historical events, aiming to present content that is both educational and engaging. This approach aligns with the broader trend in digital education, where content creators seek to make learning interactive and dynamic. By selecting a name that reflects thoroughness and exploration, Inspect History sets the expectation that viewers will receive well-researched and thoughtfully presented historical content. The channel's focus on animated videos further enhances its ability to make history accessible and appealing to a wide audience. Animation allows for the visualization of historical events in a way that static images or text cannot. It brings stories to life, making it easier for viewers to connect with and understand complex historical narratives. This method of presentation is particularly effective in engaging younger audiences who may find traditional methods of learning history less captivating.

Moreover, the interactive aspect of social media platforms like YouTube allows for community engagement, where viewers can discuss, question, and add to the content presented. This creates a dynamic learning environment where history is not just passively consumed but actively discussed and debated. It encourages critical thinking and a deeper appreciation of historical context, as viewers are invited to inspect and interpret history for themselves. Inspect History's approach reflects a broader educational philosophy that values critical examination and interactive learning. By choosing

a name that emphasizes these principles, the channel not only attracts viewers interested in history but also fosters a community of learners who are encouraged to think critically about the past and its relevance to the present. This method of engaging with history aligns with contemporary educational practices that prioritize active learning and critical inquiry, making Inspect History a valuable resource for anyone looking to explore history in a meaningful and engaging way.

3.2 Analysis of Inspect History Animated Video Content on YouTube Social Media

The animated video titled "Knowing the Glory of the Majapahit Kingdom (Part 1)" is one of the most popular uploads by Inspect History, garnering significant attention with 1.5 million views, 12 thousand likes, and 1.4 thousand comments. This video exemplifies the channel's ability to captivate a large audience through its unique approach to historical storytelling. The video's success can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the Majapahit Kingdom holds a prominent place in Indonesian history, known for its vast empire and cultural achievements. By choosing such a significant and intriguing topic, Inspect History taps into a subject that resonates deeply with the Indonesian audience. The choice of topic not only appeals to history enthusiasts but also to the general public interested in the rich heritage of Indonesia. Secondly, the use of animation in presenting the history of the Majapahit Kingdom makes the content accessible and engaging. Animation allows for a visual representation of historical events, making it easier for viewers to grasp complex narratives. The visual appeal of animated characters and scenes can draw in younger viewers who might find traditional history presentations less interesting. This method also aids in illustrating historical concepts and events that might be challenging to convey through text alone.

The video's format, combining informative narration with engaging visuals, ensures that the content is both educational and entertaining. This dual approach helps in maintaining viewer interest throughout the video. The narration provides a coherent storyline, guiding viewers through the history of the Majapahit Kingdom, while the animation keeps the content visually stimulating. This balance is crucial in retaining the audience's attention and encouraging them to engage with the content actively. The high engagement level, as evidenced by the substantial number of likes and comments, indicates that the video has successfully fostered an interactive community. The comments section provides a space for viewers to share their thoughts, ask questions, and engage in discussions about the Majapahit Kingdom. This interaction not only enhances the learning experience but also builds a sense of community among viewers. It allows for diverse perspectives to be shared, enriching the overall content with collective knowledge and opinions.

Moreover, the video's success highlights the importance of creating original and high-quality content in the digital age. Inspect History's commitment to producing well-researched and thoughtfully crafted videos sets a standard for educational content on social media. The significant viewership and positive feedback reflect the audience's appreciation for content that is not only informative but also creatively presented. In conclusion, the animated video "Knowing the Glory of the Majapahit Kingdom (Part 1)" by Inspect History exemplifies the channel's effectiveness in making history accessible and engaging through animation. Its popularity underscores the potential of digital platforms to disseminate educational content widely and interactively. The video's success demonstrates how historical topics, when presented innovatively, can captivate a broad audience and foster a deeper appreciation for history.



Figure 2. Inspect History Animation Video Footage
(Source: <https://youtu.be/RtkkxKXjowI>)

The Majapahit Empire stands as a remarkable testament to the greatness of ancient empires in the archipelago, evident through its enduring legacies. The animated video commences with an overview of the Majapahit kingdom, renowned for its resilience against Dutch colonization, followed by narratives featuring prominent national founding figures like Syahrir and Moh. Yamin, who drew inspiration from Majapahit as a symbol of Indonesian unity. Subsequently, the video delves into the early history and notable rulers of the Majapahit kingdom, highlighting figures such as Gajah Mada, whose stature is likened to renowned global leaders like Otto Van Bismarck and Niccolò Machiavelli. This narrative underscores the significant contributions of Indonesian figures during the kingdom's heyday, fostering a sense of national pride and identity.

Additionally, another animated video showcases the story of a heroic woman from Minahasa, advocating for gender equality, released in commemoration of Mother's Day. This video has garnered 18 thousand views, 851 likes, and 99 comments, illustrating its impact and engagement with the audience. The video emphasizes the significant role of women in Indonesian history, presenting an empowering narrative that aligns with contemporary values of gender equality. By highlighting these diverse historical figures and themes, Inspect History not only educates its viewers about Indonesia's rich past but also connects historical narratives to current social issues, thereby making history relevant and engaging for modern audiences. The success and engagement metrics of these videos reflect the effectiveness of using animated storytelling to convey historical content in a compelling and accessible manner.



Figure 3. Inspect History Animation Video Footage
(Source: https://youtu.be/xioMlr_s65w)

While R.A. Kartini is often the first name that comes to mind when discussing female heroes in Indonesia, it's important to recognize the contributions of other significant figures, such as Maria Walanda Maramis. The video initiates with an inquiry into human equality across various facets like ethnicity, religion, and gender, prompting a historical exploration of equality issues. Through this lens, the creators aim to illustrate the societal conditions of the past and the struggles undertaken by notable individuals, which have paved the way for a better life today.

The narrative then delves into Maria Walanda Maramis's advocacy for women's equality, particularly in education, and her persistent efforts that eventually facilitated educational opportunities and improved job prospects for women, particularly in Minahasa, during the Dutch East Indies era. Inspect History's approach of utilizing social media to disseminate historical narratives through animated videos serves as an effective means of making history accessible to the public and facilitating historical learning.

However, a critical observation pertains to the accuracy of the animated depictions of historical figures presented in the videos. Ensuring that the animated portrayals align with the original characters is essential to prevent any discrepancies or misrepresentations. Therefore, it's imperative to fine-tune the graphics of historical figures in the animated content to maintain authenticity and fidelity to the original individuals.

In conclusion, while these animated videos have successfully captured the attention and engagement of viewers, there is a pressing need to enhance the quality of visual representation of historical figures. This ensures not only the engaging delivery of historical narratives but also the accuracy and reliability of the information conveyed. By improving visual aspects and maintaining historical integrity, Inspect History can continue to serve as a credible and engaging educational resource for the broader public..

3.3 Utilization of Social Media in Increasing Awareness of History

The feedback gathered from interviews with viewers of Inspect History's YouTube videos highlights several crucial aspects of their content's impact and effectiveness. Informant 1 emphasized the engaging nature of the animations and visuals used on social media platforms like YouTube. These elements are particularly appealing to both teenagers and adults, enhancing their understanding of historical events and broadening their insights. The visual appeal and ease of access provided by the animations make history more relatable and engaging, helping viewers connect with the content on a deeper level.

Informant 2 praised Inspect History's approach in raising historical awareness through the use of animations and simplified presentations. This method ensures that historical content is accessible to a broad audience, regardless of their prior knowledge of history. The simplification of complex historical narratives into easily digestible content helps demystify history and makes it more approachable for the general public.

Similarly, Informant 3 appreciated the unique use of animated videos on social media, particularly highlighting the accessibility of such content to a wider community. The ability to reach diverse audiences through social media platforms is a significant advantage, allowing historical narratives to be shared more widely and effectively.

Informant 4 underscored the vital role of content creators in transmitting knowledge, emphasizing the importance of adapting historical narratives to contemporary contexts. This adaptability ensures that historical content remains relevant and meaningful to modern audiences, helping them understand the implications of historical events in today's world.

These insights collectively underscore the necessity and effectiveness of utilizing social media to augment historical awareness. History narratives presented through engaging and accessible formats not only inform about the past but also serve to instill a deeper understanding of national identity and values. Moreover, studying the nation's history is deemed crucial for character development and fostering a sense of cultural identity.

Furthermore, historical awareness is seen as imperative for nurturing national culture and instilling cultural values. It goes beyond merely expanding historical knowledge; it encompasses developing an awareness of cultural heritage and values embedded within history. This comprehensive approach to history education helps individuals appreciate their cultural roots and understand the significance of historical events in shaping their present and future.

In conclusion, the feedback from these interviews highlights the positive impact of Inspect History's approach to history education. By leveraging the power of social media and animations, they successfully engage a broad audience, making history accessible, engaging, and relevant. This method not only enhances historical knowledge but also fosters a deeper connection to cultural identity and values, contributing to the overall development of individuals and society.

Discussion

Inspect History plays a pivotal role in addressing the challenges of historical education in Indonesia, where traditional methods often emphasize rote memorization over critical engagement. Through the use of social media platforms, particularly YouTube, Inspect History offers an innovative approach to making history accessible and engaging. Established in 2018, the channel leverages animated videos to present historical topics in a visually appealing and simplified format, which has garnered a significant following. As Suhardin, Nurhayati, and Adawiyah (2022) note, despite the founders' lack of formal historical education, their passion for the subject has led them to create content that fills a gap in the digital history space in Indonesia. The scarcity of historical-themed animated content in the country further highlights the significance of their contribution to public history education.

The use of animation and straightforward narration in Inspect History's videos has proven effective in simplifying complex historical narratives, making them more accessible to a broader audience. The popularity of the channel, evidenced by its 580,000 subscribers and millions of views on specific videos, underscores its role in enhancing historical literacy among Indonesian viewers. According to Suhardin et al. (2022), the interaction fostered through the comment sections of these videos also plays a crucial role in encouraging public dialogue and critical thinking about historical events. This participatory model of content creation reflects a growing trend in digital education, where audience engagement is central to the learning process (Jenkins, 2009). Inspect History's success in facilitating such discussions highlights the potential of digital platforms to democratize historical knowledge and foster a community of learners.

Moreover, Inspect History's focus on using animated videos has proven particularly effective in reaching younger audiences. As Rösen (2013) emphasizes, historical understanding involves more than just the acquisition of facts; it requires interpreting the past to make sense of the present and future. By combining visually engaging content with informative narratives, Inspect History helps bridge the gap between traditional history education and modern learning preferences, especially for younger generations who are accustomed to digital media. The success of videos like "Knowing the Glory of the Majapahit Kingdom (Part 1)"—with over 1.5 million views—demonstrates the effectiveness of animation in capturing attention and enhancing comprehension of complex historical themes. This method not only makes history more appealing but also aids in retention and understanding, as visual storytelling can enhance cognitive engagement with historical content (Mayer, 2009).

The originality and ethical responsibility demonstrated by the creators of Inspect History further contribute to the channel's credibility. By adhering to copyright laws and producing original content, the channel sets a standard for other educational content creators in Indonesia. This commitment to authenticity enhances the trustworthiness of the content and reinforces the educational value of the platform. As Nopriyasan (2018) points out, public history initiatives like Inspect History play a crucial role in making historical insights available and relevant to a non-academic audience. By

focusing on historically accurate yet engaging content, Inspect History not only educates its audience but also contributes to the broader goal of preserving cultural heritage in a digital age.

In conclusion, the impact of Inspect History in promoting historical awareness through social media cannot be overstated. By utilizing animated storytelling and fostering community interaction, the channel offers a model for how digital platforms can transform historical education. It makes history more accessible, engaging, and relevant to contemporary audiences, especially younger generations. The findings of this study highlight the importance of innovative approaches to history education that align with modern technological trends, ensuring that historical knowledge remains an integral part of national identity and cultural understanding.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, social media platforms like YouTube have made history more accessible and engaging, particularly for younger audiences. Accounts such as Inspect History creatively use animations to present historical events, helping to foster public awareness and revive overlooked narratives. However, this study is limited by its focus on a single platform (YouTube) and its reliance on qualitative data, which may not fully capture the broader impact of social media on historical education. Future research should explore other platforms and incorporate quantitative data to assess the long-term effects of digital media on historical knowledge and engagement more comprehensively. Additionally, studies could examine how social media influences different demographic groups' understanding of history and how these platforms can improve the accuracy and credibility of historical content.

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