

**THE HADITH DIGITIZATION IN MILLENNIAL ERA:**  
A Study At Center For Hadith Studies, Indonesia

**Istianah**

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kudus  
[istianah@iainkudus.ac.id](mailto:istianah@iainkudus.ac.id)

**Sri Wahyuningsih**

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kudus  
[wahyuningsih@iainkudus.ac.id](mailto:wahyuningsih@iainkudus.ac.id)

**Abstract**

*The millennial era has been initially marked by the development of information technology. This article mainly explores the opportunities and challenges of digitizing hadith in the millennial era. This study belongs to a descriptive qualitative method. In-depth interviews with the Programmers of the Center for Hadith Studies in Jakarta, observation and documentation were conducted to gather data. The result reveals that digitizing the books of hadith provides an opportunity for everyone to access the books of hadith by downloading the hadith digitization application freely. Therefore, people can access the hadith books in both PDF and digital formats. On the contrary, it may lead to academic anxiety or challenges. This is because the hadith books in both PDF and digital formats can be deliberately changed by irresponsible people so that the authenticity of the information and the accuracy of the data will be questionable. Further, this tendency could be misused by certain people, by changing its contents and then disseminating it for the certain purposes. Regarding this, one of the ways to overcome this is by maintaining its authenticity, updating the content, and adding*

*the copyright to the data source reference using the source check method.*

**Keywords:** *Hadith Studies, Hadith Digitization, Millennial Era*

## **A. Introduction**

In millennial era, people nowadays can easily access information through digital means. In addition, the information is merely accessible through the internet. Regarding it, the development of technology may become one of the factors causing the spread of information rapidly. This is in accordance with Khan & Alginahi, (2014, p. 156) emphasizing that the development of technology has spread around the world rapidly. This rapid use of the internet is proved by the data of the Internet World Statistics describing that the total of internet users as of June 2018 exceeded 4 billion meaning that approximately 55, 1 % of the world population accesses the internet (Internet World Statistics, 2018). Surprisingly, the growth of the world internet users from 2000 to 2018 has achieved 1, 066 %. In this case, the number of the internet users in Asia as of June 2018 exceeded 2 billion and it becomes the largest of the world internets users.

In conjunction with the internet users in Indonesia, the number of the Indonesian internet users in 2000 is 2 million and it has the rapid growth as of June 2018 exceeded 100 million (Internet World Statistics, 2018). The rapid growth of internet usage in Indonesia proves that the majority of Indonesian people including Muslims have already accessed kinds of digital information through the internet. One of the general impacts of the rise of technology is a new lifestyle of people that cannot be separated from electronic devices. Indeed, technology has a role as a tool that enables to help human's needs. Furthermore, the role of technology has brought human civilization in the digital era which may result both positive and negative various

changes. Thus, this becomes a new challenge in all areas of human life (Setiawan, 2017, p. 1).

In the millennial era, technological developments enable to change the order of social, cultural and political life. In addition, the presence of technology also makes generations in the millennial era rely more on social media as a tool to get information. It can be shown by the ease of information accessed by people in their activities such as in the midst of heavy traffic jams, in long queues at the bank, in airplane boarding calls, and other places. Further, various applications are used including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp groups and so forth (Khozin, 2018, p. 76).

All applications above have roles as new media in preaching. Interestingly, social media is considered as an efficient means of da'wah by conducting live broadcasting so that it can be accessed and watched by millions of people. Various facilities of the digitization era certainly have negative effects. In this matter, people cannot longer filter and select the truly *Ustadz* or Islamic teacher, because everyone can suddenly become a religious teacher. In addition, Qualifications and scientific hierarchies may become collapse. Tragically, social media is used as a means to disseminate inhospitable and worse Islamic studies in which the authenticity and validity of the information content is needed to be taken into account (Hosen, 2017, p. V). Referring to this description, it seems that social media have the positive and negative impact in human's life. It can be used as a means of da'wah. On the contrary, it is also used as a means to spread hoax news.

In conjunction with the positive impacts, technological developments also influence the study of hadith. The history of the development of hadith studies from time to time has become interesting to discuss considering the role of hadith as the second source of Islamic law after the Qur'an which is very central to Muslims. In classical era, people should have many collections of printed books of hadith. As a result, it may hinder the ease

of accessibility in which they should bring the books of hadith everywhere. In addition, the number of hadith books from the codification of classical scholars certainly is very limited, and not everyone can have them.

Different from the classical era, in the millennial era, academicians can easily access books of hadith through the digital forms such as PDF so that they are able to access various references from the books of hadith easily by downloading the application provided by the internet. In this case, digitization has been able to provide products or services into digital variants. It is strengthened by Parviainen, Tihinen, Kääriäinen, & Teppola (2017, p. 64) reporting that digitization refers to the ability to change existing products or services into digital variants and give benefits of tangible product.

The studies related to digitization and technologies have been previously undertaken by some researchers. Ahmad, Basri, Rahman, & Masrup (2018, p. 9) have developed mobile fatwa application to facilitate any kind of information of fatwa to Malaysian people. The increase use of the internet and mobile phones in Malaysia has enhanced them to develop the application of fatwa. Indeed, mobile phones currently have played crucial role in the society especially as a means of building communication and have been able to attract all levels of people. Further, Lindh & Nordman (2018, p. 109) have investigated the effect of personal interaction and integration of IT through service development and digitization in term of the relationship of customer of service firms. In addition, digitization is used in educational contexts. Regarding it, this digitization has altered the teaching and learning practices meaning that teachers have the main role in enhancing digital technologies (Fransson, Holmberg, Lindberg, & Olofsson, 2019, p. 102). In the context of library, digitization has main purposes to enhance and maintain preservation of library collections meaning that digitization has changed documents and art works into digital

forms in order to provide online services (Fabunmi, Paris, & Fabunmi, 2006, p. 23).

In term of Islamic context, the use of technology including digitization not only makes Islamic literature spread out globally, but also plays an important role in spreading Islam around the world (Hosseini & Ramchahi, 2014, p. 135). Moreover, the impact of online media has enabled the increase of digitization of manuscripts resulting effective digital publications such as the Holy Quran digitization. Different from the previous studies describing the use of digitization in the context of firms, education, and da'wah, this article mainly focuses on the need of digitization of hadith in Indonesian context particularly in Center for Hadith Studies, Jakarta, Indonesia. Specifically, this paper would like to explore the challenges and opportunities of the digitization of hadith in millennial era.

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research. Data were gathered through an in-depth interview to programmers of the hadith digitization in the Center for Hadith Studies located in Jakarta, Indonesia. Besides, observation and documentation were undertaken to get data more detail. Regarding it, the Center for Hadith studies plays a main role as a media to study and disseminate the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad. Furthermore, it was established in order to maintain the purity of Islamic teachings, especially the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad. The development of technology has pursued the Center for Hadith Studies to create digitization of hadith. With regard to this, there are both challenges in the process of the hadith digitization and its benefits or opportunities for hadith dissemination and development.

## **B. An Overview of the Hadith Development**

During the time of the companions of the prophet Muhammad, the companions and *tabi'ah* should do *rihlah*. The distance they took was very far and also took a long time. In addition,

they should travel from one country to another in order to listen to one hadith, or want to meet with friends and learn from them. One example is the history carried out by a companion narrated by 'Atba 'bin Abi Rabah, he said that Abu Ayyub al-Ansari came out to meet 'Uqbah bin Amir to ask the hadith he heard from the Messenger of Allah since someone hearing the hadith is "Uqbah. Then, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari met 'Uqbah to ask the hadith about closing the shame of a believer. Then "Uqbah confirmed that he had heard the Prophet said:

من ستر مؤمنا في الدنيا علي خزية ستر الله يوم القيامة

*Meaning: One who covers a believer in the world for a disgrace, then Allah will cover it later on the Day of Judgment.*

After Ayyub met "Uqbah bin Amir and he confirmed it. Then Abu Ayyub al-Ansari returned to Medina. Such activities are carried out by the companions, tabi'in and the next generation. They were very enthusiastic about studying and doing scientific research in order to get a hadith (Al-Khatib, 1998, pp. 120–121). Then, after the hadith was codified precisely at the time of the Caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz (99-101 H), the scientific development still continued. The ulama do their work from one area to another in order to find knowledge and disseminate it. They meet each other and accept each other's hadith narration. Then, the hadith they received was confirmed to competent scholars (Abu Zahwu, 1987, p. 423).

The Hadith studies entered the peak of popularity when the codification period, namely in the second century hijriah which was initiated by the Caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz who was the originator of codified hadith (Maulana, 2016, p. 112). After the hadith was codified, the number of the books of hadith compiled at that time has increased. These cover *Shahih Bukhari* of Imam al-Bukhari, *Shahih Muslim* of Imam Muslim, *Sunan Abu Daud* of Abu Daud al-Sijistani, *Sunan al-Tirmidzi* of Imam al-Tirmidzi, *Sunan al-Nasa'i* of Imam al-Nasa' i, *Sunan Ibn Maajah* of Imam Ibn Majah, *Sunan al-*

*Darimi* of Imam al-Darimi and others (Indri, 2017, p. 48). At that time, the *ulama* 'seriously conducted the screening of the hadith they received by separating the saheeh, hasan and dha'if hadiths. Further, the *ulama* also did the screening of the hadith of marfu ; mauquf and maqthu'.

Then, in the next generation, the scientific movement has well continued. The scholars have travelled from one region to the other in order to find and spread the knowledge they have by visiting the narrators of hadith. Thus, this is the efforts of the scholars in searching for hadith, by checking or listening to a hadith from the teachers. Indeed, they did a trip to various countries in a long time.

In the classical era, hadith as a reference in carrying out worship has actually been found in the results of codification of *ulama* of the 3rd century and the next century. The books that are recorded from time to time continue to develop along with the times. Viewed from the historical classification of the development of hadith, the period of development of hadith reached its climax in the 7th century, which is marked by the emergence of hadith books created by scholars by combining scholars of previous centuries (Maulana, 2016). The hadith books from the codification of classical scholars certainly are very limited in number, and not everyone can have them.

The study of hadith in universities has developed since 1980. In order to answer the challenges of the times, the hadith discourse is now being developed to be more specific and marketable. Therefore, in higher education, students are introduced the Course of Thought of Hadith in Indonesia, Study of Contemporary Hadith, Living Hadith, Hadith and Information Technology (Digitization, Software, Comics, and Animation of Hadith).

Different from the classical era in which the *ulama*' do *rihlah* from one area to others in order to get the hadith, in the era of millennial, in order to get references in the field of hadith

is considerably easy. In addition, there are now many hadith references in the form of applications and PDF format so that it is easier for people and academicians to find references in the hadith field, namely through applications and software such as *Al-Maktabah Asy-Syamilah*, a software tool that is based on Microsoft Windows in the form of electronic books and digital libraries, *Al-Maktabah al-Waqfiah*, an offline software that contains scans of books in PDF format that store more than 2000 volumes and the application of *Mausu'ah Hadith As-Syarif* (Encyclopaedia of Hadith Sharif) which is often used to search for texts of the hadith and Digital Islamic Library published by the Center for Hadith Studies.

Along with the development of technology, the process of disseminating information has evolved and changed from analog format to digital one making it easier for people to access information. The existence of technology and information development can change the pattern of free communication without being limited by space and time. The digital world that happened since a decade is like wading through a new literacy. The growth of communication devices is increasingly sophisticated which can exchange data and send written messages in a very large number. The era of multimedia makes information spread out very quickly, and the process Submission of information can be handled in minutes and seconds (Hariyanto, 2014, p. 170).

The technology also influences the development of information related to the books of hadith, for instance the digitization of the books of hadith. References related to the hadith books are widely available both in PDF and digital formats. Thus, people are easy to access. In this case, digitization is a process to convert various information and news from an analog format into a digital one so that it is easier to produce, store, manage and distribute. The digitized information can be presented in the form of text, numbers, audio, visual, which contains ideology, social, health and business. Meanwhile, digitizing the hadith is an activity



in order to make it easier for those who want to study hadith in the practice of using it in digital form.

In connection with the development of technology, hadith as the second source of Islamic law after the Qur'an nowadays are presented in PDF and digital formats making it easier for people to access them. Indeed, the development of hadith in the classical era may seem different from the millennial era. In the millennial era, many hadith books are presented in digital form, and then we are required to be able to use technology in the study of hadith. Considering the development of the hadith which has been presented in digital form, people and academicians should know how to use it appropriately.

### **C. The Hadith Digitization in Center for Hadith Studies**

The institution of the Center for Hadith Studies was established by Dr. Lutfi Fathullah, MA., the alumni of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Ponorogo. The establishment of the Center for Hadith Studies on May 17, 2008 gets a positive response from the community as well as a pioneer to answer the challenges of the millennial era. The activities of the Center for Hadith Studies including discussing the Book of *Riyadhus Shalihin* and the book of *Bulughul Maram* every Sunday. In addition, this center also discusses the books of hadith on a weekly basis. Further, it also provides training in digitizing hadiths. The participants are students from various universities in Indonesia including State Islamic University of Yogyakarta, State Islamic University of Bandung, State Islamic Institute of Banten, State Islamic Institute of Salatiga, and State Islamic Institute of Kudus. The presence of the Center for Hadith Studies helps people access the books of hadith through digital libraries having collections about 5000 books of hadith. This is in line with Mahadji, the Programmer of the Hadith Studies Center.

“The establishment of the Center for Hadith Studies in Jakarta gets positive responses from the society. There are a number of students coming here to study about hadith. These include UIN Yogyakarta, UIN Bandung, IAIN Banten, IAIN Salatiga and IAIN Kudus. They learnt something new related to hadith studies including the process of the hadith digitization, discussing several books such as *Riyadhus Shalihin* and *Bulughul Maram* and others” (Mahadji, The Programmer of the Center for Hadith Studies, November 17, 2018).

In order to respond to the development of technology, the Center for Hadith Studies has initiated to digitize books of hadith so that it can be easily accessed by people around the world. This is compatible with Daly & Organ (2014, p. 220) asserting that the open access portal has allowed an institute or organization to make digitized collections, a better engagement and development with wider audiences. Nonetheless, it took a long time and several steps in the process of digitization. In addition, there are thousands of books of hadith that are digitized including book of *Shahih Bukhari*. The process of digitizing the book of *Shahih Bukhari* took approximately two years.

Indeed, the Center for Hadith Studies gives beneficial contributions for Islamic development particularly the development of hadith in digital era. People nowadays are easily accessing various forms of digitized hadith that can be used as references in studying hadith, especially for the Academic Community. It is in accordance with the vision of Center for Hadith Studies, becoming an information center and center for the study of hadith with the aim of Islamic interests through the study of Hadith.

In conjunction with the accessibility, the media used to access digital information include computer, mobile phones, and so forth. Interestingly, mobile phones can receive and deliver various digital information such as text messages, voice messages, videos, photos and electronic mail. Besides, mobile phones can also digitize

information in the form of photos, videos and voice messages. The following documentations are the proofs of digitization of hadith books created by the team of the Center for Hadith Studies.



Figure 1: Digitization of Book of Hadith “*Sahih Al- Bukhari*”

The figure 1 above shows that the team of the Center for Hadith Studies has well digitized the book of hadith “*Sahih Al- Bukhari*” to meet the need of Islamic community particularly in Indonesia. Furthermore, people around the world can easily access this book as a reference of studying the hadith. Thus, this is in accordance with the work program conducted by the Center for Hadith Studies that is to digitize the books of the hadith based on computers, websites and android.



Figure 2: Digitization of methods of hadith studies

The figure 2 above indicates that the team of the Center for Hadith Studies also has program regarding the publication of books of hadith studies in order to respond the need of community. This is in line with one of the work programs of the Center for Hadith Studies dealing with the research development division that is to publish the digital books of hadith based on computers, websites and android.



Figure 3: The digital Islamic library of the Center for Hadith Studies

Along with the work programs designed by the team of the Center for Hadith Studies, library becomes a main and crucial aspect in literacy education. Considering this, the digital Islamic library has been established by the team of the Center for Hadith Studies in order to serve religious books related to the Qur'an and Hadith for the community. In addition, other work programs conducted by the team of the Center for Hadith Studies include digitizing the books of *ulama* in all religious disciplines both classical and contemporary books, digitizing the Qur'an and thematic hadith according to the needs of the community, carrying out the study of hadith in Indonesian Universities, carrying out the study of hadith in various

events for the community, serving religious consultations for people, organizing trainings related to practical skills in the religious field, launching a website for religious studies and Islamic consultations, establishing the hadith Islamic Boarding School, establishing the *Lajnah* of multi-language hadith translation, organizing *musabaqah* related to the Qur'an and hadith at the international level. This is in accordance with Fillah, T., the team of the Center for Hadith Studies.

"We have so many work programs in the Center for Hadith Studies. In addition, there are several divisions of work programs including research development division, human resources development division, Private and Foreign Division, and Facilities and infrastructure division. Along with it, the programs include establishing a Hadith Islamic Boarding School, digitizing the study of the Qur'an and multi-language hadith, establishing the *Lajnah* of multi-language hadith translation, organizing *musabaqah* related to the Qur'an and hadith at the international level, organizing seminars in the field of international level hadith, conducting comparative study with international level hadith science development institutions, creating international level hadith experts, improving diplomatic relations with international level religious institutions, publishing the real work at the international level, completing the facilities of Islamic Boarding School Hadith, completing the means of *Lajnah* Translation of Hadith, completing the facilities of the Hadith Library, developing website optimization in foreign language" (Fillah, T., November, 2018).

#### **D. Challenges and Opportunities of the Hadith Digitization in Millennial Era**

The activities of digitizing the hadith have taken a long time. In addition, there are both challenges and opportunities of the hadith digitization in the millennial era. The process of digitization also has challenges. It is in accordance with Mahadji advocating that when digitizing the first version of *Shahih Bukhari* application in which using Flash technology that had not been supported Arabic

Language so that the process of processing the data takes a very long time. There are at least three stages in processing data when using the Flash version technology. First, the original manuscript should be typed. Second, Raw data should be converted into images. Third, the image then should be imported into flash for tendering. Furthermore, the process of digitizing the books of hadith should also be done by people who are experts in their fields. When opening the manuscript, for instance, people should be careful and need to be accompanied by a team of experts who usually open the manuscript.

Using Flash technology also has disadvantages. When we find errors in the writing process, the three stages above must be repeated correctly. On the contrary, by using the latest system of Web Version technology, or known as the Web Application, data can be directly inputted into the system effectively. In addition, the most difficult process in digitizing the hadith is doing quality control. It is in line with Mahadji's report.

“In the process of digitizing hadith, the most difficult process is to do Quality Control after the data are complete and the application will be published. With regard to this, Quality Control is the activity of re-reading the theme, hadith and *takhrij* by doing crosschecking random sampling of 70% to ensure that the published data is in a good quality control” (Mahadji, K., the Programmer of the Center for Hadith Studies, November 5, 2018).

Based on the interview, it can be seen clearly that the process of doing quality control is not really easy. Indeed, it is the activity of re-reading the theme, hadith and *takhrij* conducted by doing crosschecking to ensure that the data are in a good quality control before being published. Thus, the process of the application of digitization of the hadith which can be considerably complicated. Further, it requires a very long time. Nonetheless, the result of digitization of the hadith is very beneficial for people and it can be accessed by downloading it freely.

The presence of the digital era is not a matter of being ready or not, but it is a consequence that must be addressed wisely. The multimedia era makes information spread out very quickly, and the process of delivering information is immediately acceptable. Technology is a human product and the presence of technology has changed the culture and lifestyle. The digital revolution is marked by technological fusion making the boundaries between physical, digital and biological things (Djamil, 2018).

The digitization of information into books and supported by the development of online library networks can store more e-books. If the community is able to use them properly, it can be an alternative in order to develop and support the quality of education. Mass media with technological equipment makes it easier for people to convey and receive information. People nowadays can convey information and broadcast live through Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and others. Thus, this is in line with Allen-Robertson (2018, p. 1738) explores that digitization projects offer people with a comparative description of the ways in which the material form might impact on the range of interpretative affordances, not necessarily as a 'loss' but a shift in the interpretative possibility afforded.

The digitization of information offers people more creative in communicating by producing various unique and interesting information, such as making editing videos or photos using certain software digitally, both through mobile phones and computers. Despite the popularity and sophistication, digital technology also has negative impacts that can harm humans. The ease of all works with a variety of applications and technology actually makes people move less so that physical activities decrease. Technology can be addictive so that it can lead to nomophobia, the fear that digital devices such as mobile phones will be left. Furthermore, people always check the mobile phones at any time and feel scared and stressed when the battery and the signal are not optimal (Setiawan, 2017, p. 3).

Briefly speaking, the digitization of the hadith in the millennial has certainly many opportunities and advantages. Firstly, In the past time, the books of hadith were very difficult to reach in which only certain people having a collection of books of hadith. Along with the rapid development of technology, nowadays the books of hadith are often found in PDF and digital formats. The presence of hadith books in PDF and digital form certainly facilitates the community, especially for academicians in finding references to the books of hadith which can be done by downloading them. Digitizing the hadith is also presented not only in Arabic, but also in Indonesian so that it is easy for all people to access it. It is in line with Mahadji that the digitization of hadith is very crucial to respond the need of Moslem.

The hadith digitization makes people easy to access. They can freely download the application. The *Sahih Bukhari* book, for instance, is very limited in number. In the millennial era with the digitization of the books of hadith, people can easily see and learn the book of hadith every time and everywhere (Mahadji, K., November, 2018).

Secondly, In the Millennial era, digitization of hadith can be a media and learning sources for students and academicians. As a source of learning from digital forms, users should also be careful in quoting and adapting it by considering the validity of the source. Likewise, those who produce hadith books in digital format should ensure the validity. The existence of digital libraries has been appreciated by all people, especially for academicians, because it is very helpful in finding materials related to the hadith that are needed. Through digital libraries where storage does not require extensive spaces, it is considerably very practical and effective.

Apart from the advantages and a variety of convenience, the digitization of the hadith also has challenges. First, the digitization of the books of the hadith both in PDF and digital form will lead to the academic anxiety related to the validity of digital data



which can be deliberately made by certain people who are not responsible. The digital information is easily updated leading to the editing process for several times. Thus the originality and accuracy of information is somehow questionable. This tendency may be misused by irresponsible people. In this matter, they can change the contents and spread it for the sake of certain purposes. It has been clearly asserted by the Programmer of the Center for Hadith Studies, Fillah, T.

“The application should be maintained the validity, content and authenticity. It is to protect it from irresponsible people. In addition, it is also recommended to add copyright to the data source references and use the method of source checking. Indeed, the digitization of the hadith should be well maintained” (Fillah, T, November 2018)

Second, Learning from the digital sources and learning from the teachers in the class will automatically be different in which when we will learn the hadith directly from the teachers and learn about the courtesy that will not be obtained from the digital learning. Third, the existence of a digital library may have an effect on the decrease of purchasing interest of the books of hadith, especially for students and academicians. Furthermore, they tend to prefer books in digital form because they can be easily and economically accessible. In addition, they do not need to buy the books that are needed. Besides, students will be less motivated to visit the library to read books.

## **E. Conclusion**

The rapid development of technology makes people easy to get references of the hadith books both in PDF and digital form. The digitization of hadith can be one of the media and learning sources for students and academicians. As a source of learning, the users should be careful in quoting it by considering the validity and the authenticity of the source. Digital information that is

freely distributed and easily accessed by anyone and at any time makes people easy to access and obtain the needed information. Therefore, people should be careful and able to process information properly. In addition, there are both advantages and challenges of the digitization of the hadith. The presence of hadith books in PDF and digital form certainly facilitates the community, especially for academicians in finding references to the books of hadith which can be done by downloading them. On the contrary, the digitization of the books of hadith may lead to the academic anxiety related to the validity of digital data which can be deliberately made by certain irresponsible people. In addition, the existence of a digital library may have an effect on the decrease of purchasing interest of the books of hadith, especially for students and academicians. This study recommends that future researchers conduct studies of digitization in other fields. By conducting such research, we would possibly get meaningful insights on how the digitization of hadith gives both benefits for people in accessing the book of hadith and also become challenges in the millennial era.

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