

The Presence of New Media in the Development of Independent Movies in Indonesia (Study of Kineforum Jakarta)*

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Abstract – The history of film notes that the major Hollywood studios today was originally born out of several small studio (independent). Technological developments in the film industry, directly stimulate the development of independent movies in America to this day and Sundance Film Festival to be one barometer for the development of independent movies in the world, especially America. In Indonesia, the emergence of independent movie began in the seventies when the establishment of the Jakarta Arts Council and the first film school in Indonesia. Continued in the early eighties, through independent movies forum and driven by college students. The independent movies is currently experiencing a very dynamic development and unique. This can be seen from the many independent movie festivals that are held and one of the factors driving force is the use of new media to support the promotional activities of the films. This paper describes the use of new media in the dynamic development of independent movie in Indonesia. In addition to aspects of the use of new media, this paper also discusses the various debates in the discussion of the concept of independent movie. In Indonesia, there are several opinions about the concept of independent movie and will be described further to obtain a clear limitation of the concept.

Keywords - film industry, independent movie, new media

*This Paper has been presented in 20th AMIC Annual Conference which held at Taj Krishna Hotel, Hyderabad, India 24-27 June 2011

I. INTRODUCTION

These days, the development of media industry triggers the presence of other parties which have different vision, mission and purpose from the media industry itself. Television and radio industry already have their media community which is more specific, non-profit oriented and contains idealism through their programs. For movie industry, the appearance of the independent movie communities enriches the movie themes itself; even it should be different from the mainstream. Lots of Hollywood movie studios begin their journey from the small independent studios. A part that has a role in the development of American independent movie is the presence of *Sundance Film Festival* which was comes from an event in 1978: The Utah/US Film Festival. The purpose of the event is to show many kind of American movie, especially for the independent films. The event also contains discussions and achievement for the film practitioners outside the Hollywood movie industry (<http://www.sundance.org/festival/>).

The development of Indonesian independent movie industry was characterized by the presence of institutions and organizations which has their own unique backgrounds. Gatot Prakosa (2001) said that the beginning of Indonesian independent movie started at 70's when Jakarta Arts Council established. The event which usually called *Lomba Film Mini* (The Short Movie Festival) accommodates the amateur films maker to create their own independent movies. The event also triggers the Indonesian youth to establish an organization which named *Sinema Delapan* (Eight

Cinema) that produces films using the 8mm camera, which is different from the mainstream movie production (the average of the mainstream movie production in that era were about 125 films each year).

Furthermore, there is *Forum Film Pendek* (Short Movie Forum) which is successfully enlisting the Indonesian short movies in 80's. The beginning of their era characterized by the movie exhibition to several regions in Indonesia and to participate in the international film festivals. In the middle of 90's, there is *Sinema Gerilya* (Guerilla Cinema), an organization which pioneered by Seno Gumira Adjidharma, a man of letters and film observer who cares about the lack of Indonesian movie production.

II. INDEPENDENT MOVIE : A DEFINITION

“So, what is the definition of independent movie?” Many terms related to above subject. In several discussions, the *independent film* usually identical with the *short film*. In the other hand, they also categorized the *independent film* as the low production cost film, even the cost itself comes from the mainstream practitioners. People could also categorize the independent film due to its content and the way to make it, even the producers has no background in film industry. Susan Hayward made definition and use the word ‘cinema’ in term independent cinema. Independent cinema (see also *avant-garde*, *counter-cinema*, *underground film*). This term refers to films made by film-makers independently of the dominant, established film industry. Because they are made outside mainstream cinema practices they tend to be *avant-garde* and *counter-cinematic*, and, even if not experimental, they all tend to give an alternative voice to dominant ideology. They are mostly low-budget films either privately financed or subsidized by government (Hayward, 2000:200-201).

In the independent cinema bulletin ‘Montase’ 7th edition, stated that the *independent* could refer to technical and non-technical issue. There are no final definitions about the term, because it is depending on individual interpretation. For example, from technical issue, the film which financed by the mainstream producer (the one who has big film studio) still categorized as independent film, if the funding is not more than 50%. Of course there are many independent movie practitioners which are not agree with it because they still

believe that the pure independent should be “free” from the intervention of the mainstream itself.

Meanwhile, for the non-technical issue, the bulletin states that the limit of the independent film could be wider. It should emphasize in the artistic vision of the film maker, without any intervention from the others such as studio or producer. It is different from the mainstream, which tend to “playing safely” and do not want to take any risk both for moral and financial matter on their arts. The bulletin also states that the term could be different in several countries. In Indonesia, the independent films more to define as local film productions which are not distributed in the mainstream theatre network.

III. KINEFORUM : A SPACE FOR INDEPENDENT

The development of the Indonesian independent movie is inseparable from the role of Kineforum, the first theatre in Jakarta which offers the alternative kind of movies for the public since year 2005. It provides vary options both for classic or contemporary Indonesian and World Cinema. The Kineforum establishment was to response the absence of non-profit theatre in Jakarta, and also function as a place for socio cultural exchange through the film content. The location of Kineforum which took place in Jakarta, the capitol of Indonesia, could be functioned as the appreciation centre both for local and international independent film makers which are free from the mainstream influence; this could be proven by the Kineforum consistencies which play their independent films as their daily programs. The Kineforum also provide a space to held discussions and presentation for the independent film makers. Kineforum is a non-profit exhibition form. They try to show their “independent” spirit by not depending on the huge capital, the one that characterize the mainstream movie; even they often working together with the *21 studio* as the exhibition icon for the mainstream films. As the appreciation for the national films, Kineforum held yearly event named ‘Sejarah adalah Sekarang’ (History is Now) which held in March, which is the month of the Indonesian national film. The event consists of both classical and contemporary Indonesian films for a month. The purpose of the event is to introduce people to the Indonesian cinema and its history. Furthermore, Kineforum also has the “First Timers” program, an event to give opportunity for

the youth film makers to show their first debut to trigger the others to show-off their creativity in making a film.

Furthermore for the World Cinema, the Kineforum also has the “World Cinema Feature” and “World Documentary” programs. The cinema consists of any films, both feature and documenter, which came from other countries such as USA, France, Germany, Japan, South East and Malaysia; and special for the classic films, there is “Memory of The World” program. The Kineforum also has the “Body of Works” program to appreciate the film practitioners whom their arts already inspired the Indonesian movie practitioners and the world. In this program, the Kineforum will play the films which are made by them one by one according to the schedule. As example, the Kineforum already play the “Body of Works Djajakusuma” and “Body of Works Ratana Pestonji”.

Besides being active in independent films and its discussions, the Kineforum also has other activities named “Menolak Hilang Ingatan” (To Refuse the Lost of Memory) which take form as the fund raising activity for the maintenance of Sinematek Indonesia. In this program, the Kineforum will sell their merchandise, where the nominal results will be used to fund the maintenance of the Indonesian films in Sinematek Indonesia. Beside Kineforum, there are more communities which take places in Jakarta and other regions in Indonesia. From the obtain data, there are 49 film communities which spread in all regions in Indonesia, but in real, the number could be larger than it should (<http://www.perfilmanindonesia.or.id/direktori-perfilman/komunitas-film>). Refer to the ‘kineklubindonesia’ website, Akhlis Suryapati, who is an artist and senior journalist, says that the film communities was born together with the presence of *kine klub* communities in campus, such as *Liga Film Mahasiswa Universitas Indonesia* (University of Indonesia Film League) in 50’s and *Liga Film Mahasiswa ITB* (ITB Film League). After it, there are more *kine club* which consists not only for the university student, but also for the junior and high school student.

To hold their activities, both the communities and organizations need channels to interact with other parties; and this will be our main concern in this paper. This topic could be interesting to study because the development of independent movie these days already show the significant growth. The practitioners of independent movie already have

wider space to be interacted each other and to interact to other parties; and those interactions stimulated by the presence of the new media. This paper will focus on the case of the presence of independent movie communities such as Kineforum, especially on the uses of new media. The paper will describe on the development of the independent movie through the activities of movie communities and the independent movie forum. The data obtained directly from the Kineforum.

IV. HOW THEY SURVIVE : THE PRESENCE OF NEW MEDIA

These days, the development of independent movie stimulate by the presence of new media. The kind of media such as internet could strengthen the mass media position as the agent of social changes in society. The new media is the answer of the society demand for the effective ways to access information and communication easier than before. Until this time, the new media still considered as the most powerful mass media. The new media characterize by its interactivity and digitalize, which make it different from the old media. Besides, the new media could provide the storage, publish and to distribute information digitalize. In the communication process, the online media is more effective than the print and electronic media (Dwedney&Ride, 2006:4).

Refer to Dennis McQuail (2005:143), there are several medium characteristic of the new media:

- 1) *Interactivity*: as indicated by the ratio of response or initiative on the part of the user to the ‘offer’ of the source.
- 2) *Social presence* (or sociability): experienced by the user, meaning the sense of personal contact with the others that can be engendered by using a medium (Short et al., 1976; Rice, 1993).
- 3) *Media richness*: the extent to which media can bridge different frames of reference, reduce ambiguity, provide more cues. Involve more senses and be more personal.
- 4) *Autonomy*: the degree to which a user feels in control of content and use, independent of source.
- 5) *Playfulness*: uses for entertainment and enjoyment, as against utility and instrumentality.
- 6) *Privacy*: associated with the use of medium and/or its typical or chosen content.
- 7) *Personalization*: the degree to which content and uses are personalized and unique.

The new media provide the freedom of interactions, creations and other benefits. These days, the internet usage for any importance matter becomes the common things, such as to search information about data, entertainment, socialization, education, etc. Refer to the World Bank data from 2001-2009, the internet user in Indonesia growth significantly. We can see it on below table which describing that in 2001, there are about 4 million internet users in Indonesia which growth significantly, became 20 million users in 2009; and the number will be increased at this time.

Another data states that the Indonesian internet users for year 2000 – 2010 growth 4 times with penetration about 12,3% from the population. For the Asia region, percentage of the internet users in Indonesia is about 3,6% and take the 5 biggest internet users in Asia. For the social media application such as facebook, twitter, etc., the Indonesian rank is high enough for the world scale. Based on data per-May 2011 (<http://www.checkfacebook.com/>) it shows about 36.613.820 facebook users in Indonesia, and those numbers take place in the second rank after the USA.

From tables description, we can see that the new media is very potential to use as the medium of communication, both for the independent movie practitioners or to the other parties. Beside it, the medium of publication could be open widely for the independent movie; this is so different from the old time. Before the presence of new media, the medium of publication is a serious constraint to be solved, because the spread of independent movie in that era do not use the commercial line just like the ordinary movie. The Kineforum already pay much attention on the important of the publication aspect.

As the exhibition medium for the independent movie, publication must be the central for the development and successfully parameter of Kineforum as an organization to survive and consistent in facilitating the independent movie practitioners in Indonesia.

Based on the viewers data, since 2010 Kineforum visited by about 500 audience each month, and the number increase 2 times higher when the yearly program such as *Bulan Film Nasional "Sejarah Adalah Sekarang"* which visited by 9.623 audience (include the other event which involve music performance, art exhibition, discussions, etc.). Now the question is how come Kineforum could survive with its non-profit orientation on its vision? It is because they use the social media technology as their medium.

They often use:

- 1) yahoogroups mailing list: kineforum@yahoo.com
- 2) Web Blog : www.kineforum.com
- 3) Website : <http://www.dkj.or.id>
- 4) Facebook : Kineforum Dewan Kesenian Jakarta
- 5) Twitter : @Kineforum
- 6) Media Partner : www.urbanesia.com.

Massively, they use 2 social networking which are popular in Indonesia: facebook and twitter as their publication medium. We could see it from the number of followers on their twitter account which about 3,349 (the last data obtained at Mei 2011) and their total friends in facebook account which is about 4,996 people. They uses both of 2 social networking accounts to publish their movie schedule complete with the information which related to the film, such as synopsis, cast, award, etc.

Table 1. Internet User (Indonesia in million)

Country Name	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Indonesia	4,2	4,5	5,1	5,6	7,9	10,6	13	18	20

<http://search.worldbank.org/data?qterm=indonesia+internet+user&language=EN&format=html>. Access data on May 10, 2011.

Table 2. Indonesia Internet Usage and Population

Country Name	Population (2010 Est.)	Internet Users, (Year 2000)	Internet Users, Latest Data	Penetration (%Population)	User Growth (2000-2010)	Users (%) in Asia
Indonesia	242,968,342	2,000,000	30,000,000	12.3 %	1,400.0 %	3.6 %

http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm#asia. Access data on May 10, 2011

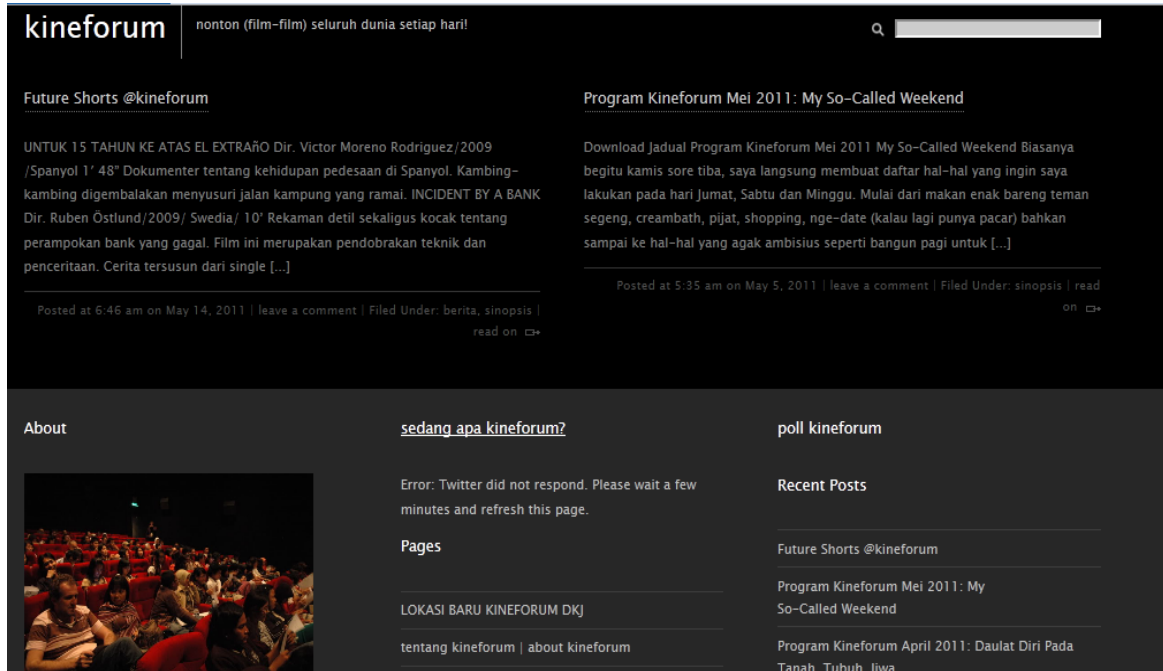


Figure 1. Blog



Figure 2. Website



Figure 3. Twitter



Figure 4. Facebook

The content inside their blog consist of their schedule, discussion, programs and its links. There are several addresses and phone numbers which related to the Kineforum itself; and for its website, the Kineforum working together with the Jakarta Arts Council to publish their activities. The content of their twitter and facebook accounts often about the Kineforum's movie schedule. They could also reply questions from the audience fast and accurate through these accounts. We can see that the good maintenance needed for several medium which used by the Kineforum, because, if we talk about the new media, then we must talk about fast response from the management, and we must talk about the interactive displays for audience; because the dull display in your website could decrease the public interest to view it.

Due to several samples above, we can see there are relations from the communities and the other parties, and it should be held anywhere and anytime; especially for these days, people could access the internet easily through their mobile phone. So, for those who want to watch the films outside the mainstream, they could see the agenda and schedule about the films, or to held discussion about anything related to the films easier using the internet access.

The use of new media in the independent movie still needs good strategy to gain the optimum result. It means, the content of any medium should be well prepared. The display should be interesting, informative, and up-to-date.

V. CONCLUSION

Several discussions about the term of independent movie are not limited. People could interpret it from different perspectives both for its content, technical or distribution side. Those things will depend on people's individual understanding about the term. It is more important to discuss about the development of Indonesian independent movie to a better way.

We can see that the development of independent movie in Indonesia is increasing. It is shown by the increasing numbers of the observers and the producers of the independent movie, include the public attention on it. Especially with the presence of new media which open the new chance to get better interaction for the society. The presence of new media makes the development of independent

movie in Indonesia being much different from the past periods. In the past, the independent film makers should find much ways to introduce and publish their films to the audience. Different from today, they could make it through the website, web-blog, social networking, etc. We should admit that the knowledge about promotion, marketing and other related field should be owned by the independent film makers.

This situation will trigger the appearance of other independent movie communities, and those clubs intended for those who interested with the independent movie. Overall, kind like this condition still need more attention from the government, both local and regional, because the independent movie already spread in all over Indonesia.

The other thing that need attention from the presence of the new media in the development of the independent movies is the ethics and law which related to the film and the new media itself. In case there are several parties which misuse the democratized which contains in the new media, then we need the urgent policy which regulate it. Besides it, the most important thing is to obtain the capable human resources in the independent movie industry and how to increase their skills to create better artworks which over the mainstream and still consistence in their independent way.

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