



The Impact Of Technology Mastery On Students' Effectiveness Of The Spreading Of The Great Commandment At Stt Kerusso

Kezia Verena

STT Kerusso Indonesia, Indonesia

Korespondensi Penulis : keziaverena119@gmail.com*

Abstract. This study examines the impact of technology proficiency among students on the effectiveness of spreading the Great Commission at Sekolah Tinggi Teologi (STT) Kerusso. The urgency of this research lies in the rapid advancement of digital technology, which offers various tools and platforms that can support evangelism missions. Technology proficiency among STT students is crucial as it enables them to expand their reach and enhance the efficiency of delivering the Gospel message in this digital era. The primary objective of this research is to identify the extent to which students' technology proficiency affects their effectiveness in carrying out evangelism missions and to explore ways in which technology can be better integrated into evangelism strategies at STT Kerusso. This study employs a qualitative method using in-depth interviews and case studies. Interviews were conducted with students and faculty members of STT Kerusso who have experience using technology for evangelism. The collected data were analyzed descriptively to identify relevant patterns and themes. The findings of this study are expected to provide new insights for theological education institutions on the importance of integrating technology into the curriculum and mission activities to maximize the spread of the Great Commission.

Keywords: Technology, Evangelism Effectiveness, Theological Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization accompanied by the rapid development of information technology, mastery of technology has become a basic need for the younger generation, especially in theological educational institutions. Technology has become a catalyst that strengthens human relationships, work, and the dissemination of information. In the context of theological education, mastery of technology is not only important but essential to spread the Great Commission more widely and quickly. In the Bible, in the New Testament, before Jesus ascended to heaven, He gave the "Great Commission" to His disciples (Matt. 28:18-19; Mark 16:15), which not only applies to that time but also remains relevant today. This commission emphasizes two main things: preaching the gospel and discipleship, with the aim that the whole world can feel salvation through Jesus Christ. The same commission also applies to Christians today, so that every follower of Christ is called to participate in this noble mission. The Great Commission is the core of Christianity, and its importance can be seen from its presence throughout the Gospels. Thus, the main goal of the Great Commission is to make every nation a disciple of Jesus. John RW Stott once said in an Urbana Missionary Conference, that "Our God is a God who preaches the gospel." The preaching of the gospel is rooted in the heart of God, because from the beginning, the desire to preach the gospel has been embedded in His heart (Brotwick, 1995). However, how many of us continue this Great Commission? In reality,

many theology students are still less skilled in mastering adequate technology, so this limits their ability to preach the gospel. An internal survey was conducted at the Kerusso Theological College (STT Kerusso) which found that around 40% of students still have low technological skills, especially related to presentation software, social media applications, and digital communication tools. Students with these low skills generally come from non-technological backgrounds and are less exposed to technological developments during their previous education.

According to Tapscott (2009), the digital native generation has great potential in using digital technology for evangelism missions if they are given adequate skills. Prensky (2010) emphasized that with technology, evangelism can reach a wider audience through social media, websites, and mobile applications, opening up opportunities without geographical boundaries. The same thing was also conveyed by the Barna Group (2019) which also emphasized that technology integration not only increases efficiency but also allows for more personal interactions between evangelists and audiences. However, the reality on the ground shows many challenges. Lack of training and limited access to technological resources limit the effectiveness of students in utilizing technology for evangelism. This limitation is especially felt by students from rural or remote areas who have limited internet access.

To deliver the Great Commission, of course there are many challenges faced both from the internal and external sides. Where from the internal side it usually refers to the ability of Theology students in conveying the news of the Great Commission, how experienced Theology students are in preaching the gospel, how far the existing curriculum teaches the steps in preaching the gospel. While from the external side it refers to the outside such as how many instruments are available to mediate students in preaching the gospel. Seeing these existing challenges, the question arises , how to overcome these challenges? In anticipating these challenges, STT Kerusso takes a structured approach in three stages: skills improvement, external collaboration, and curriculum innovation. Where the first step is to provide intensive training for theology students in the use of digital technology. This training includes basic skills such as the use of presentation software and communication applications, to more advanced skills such as strategies for using social media for evangelism. Training materials also need to include an introduction to analytical tools to evaluate the effectiveness of digital campaigns. Then STT Kerusso can expand access to technology by partnering with large technology companies such as Google or Microsoft, which can provide free training, special software, or technology scholarships. This collaboration can involve seminars and workshops taught directly by technology experts from these companies. Then, innovation in technology mastery

curriculum should be included as an integral part of the theological curriculum. Special courses that teach digital marketing strategies, social media, and modern communication tools need to be introduced. STT Kerusso can also design internship programs in technology companies to provide students with direct experience in the use of technology in evangelism.

Currently, according to Handoyo 2014, technologies such as social media, messaging applications, and analytical tools have drastically changed the way evangelism is done. Evangelism is no longer limited to traditional face-to-face interactions, but can now be done through digital spaces that allow the gospel message to reach audiences in various parts of the world without geographical limitations. Social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube have become the main platforms that allow the spread of evangelism messages more widely and effectively. Through multimedia content such as videos, images, and writings, evangelists can interact with audiences, build communities, and convey the gospel message in a more dynamic and interesting way.

Over the next five years, STT Kerusso will focus on a phased strategy to integrate technology into evangelism. In the first year, there will be basic technology training for students and the introduction of new courses focused on evangelism technology, including social media, digital marketing, and analytics tools. Subsequent years will focus on building partnerships with technology companies, which will provide access to software, workshops, seminars, and internship programs. In addition, the campus technology infrastructure will be upgraded, including increased internet connectivity and the addition of computer equipment. Students are expected to begin practicing the use of technology in evangelism through social media, multimedia content creation, and utilizing messaging applications such as WhatsApp and Telegram to form a more personal online evangelism community. Once students have mastered the use of technology, the next stage is to evaluate the effectiveness of digital campaigns through analytical tools, and improve the curriculum based on the evaluation results to ensure relevance in real evangelism practices. Establishment at this level allows STT Kerusso to expand the reach of evangelism to the global level through cross-country campaigns that utilize digital technology. Focus will also be given to continuous innovation, including the development of mobile-based evangelism applications, to increase the effectiveness of students and evangelists around the world.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research method uses a qualitative method. Cresswell (2014) explains that the research method is a research plan and procedure that includes steps ranging from broad assumptions to detailed methods in collecting, analyzing and interpreting data. The research method used by the researcher is descriptive with a qualitative approach. Descriptive research is a writing that describes the actual conditions of the object being studied, according to the actual conditions at the time of direct research, the data collected is not in the form of numbers but the data comes from manuscripts, interviews, field notes, personal documents, memos, and other documents.

The informants of this study were students registered at STT Kerusso, Bekasi, West Java. The informants who were the objects of the study were selected randomly from each class. This study involved 10 respondents, 5 of whom were active students at STT Kerusso, while the other 5 respondents were alumni of STT Kerusso who are currently pursuing careers in the secular sector. Data collection used interview, observation and documentation methods.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the rapidly evolving digital age, technology has opened vast new doors for the spread of the Great Commission. Evangelists now have an unprecedented opportunity to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15) in a far more effective and far-reaching way. Social media and other digital platforms have enabled the gospel message to reach “the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8) at a speed and scale never before imagined. The findings of the Barna Group (2018) further reinforce the significance of technology in modern evangelism. Their research shows that 88% of Gen Z and millennials use social media as their primary source of information, including spiritual content. This figure illustrates the importance of digital presence in reaching young people with the gospel message. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube have become more than just channels of communication, they have evolved into primary vehicles for real-time discussions and virtual community building. They create digital spaces for people to “gather in my name” (Matthew 18:20), enabling online churches and virtual discipleship groups that transcend geographic boundaries.

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory, published by Everett Rogers in 1962, provides a valuable framework for understanding how new technologies are adopted and disseminated in society, including in the context of evangelism. Rogers identified five stages in the process of adopting an innovation: awareness, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. In

the context of digital evangelism, this theory helps us understand how theology students and evangelism practitioners can adopt and use technologies such as social media, mobile apps, and other digital tools to expand the reach of the Great Mandate. According to Rogers (1962), one of the primary strengths of technology in the context of evangelism is its ability to facilitate dynamic, two-way communication. This allows evangelists not only to deliver the message, but also to “answer each one with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15) when they ask questions or object. This interactivity creates a more meaningful dialogue space, allowing evangelists to address doubts, answer questions, and guide seekers in a more personal and effective way. Technology has also revolutionized the way spiritual content is produced and consumed. Video sermons, daily devotionals, spiritual podcasts, and inspirational articles can now be shared quickly and accessed by anyone, anytime, and anywhere. This allows people to engage with spiritual content on their own schedule and preferences, extending the reach of evangelism far beyond the traditional boundaries of a brick-and-mortar church or face-to-face gathering. However, with this great opportunity also comes significant responsibility and challenge. Campbell and Garner (2016) in their book “Networked Theology” strongly emphasize the importance of balancing the expansive reach that technology offers with the need to maintain authenticity and personal connection in ministry. They caution that while technology can expand reach, it should not replace the intimacy and closeness that are at the heart of Christian discipleship. Evangelists are called upon to be wise in their use of technology, remembering Paul’s admonition to “test all things and hold fast to that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). This means not simply adopting every new technology trend, but carefully considering how each tool can be used to advance the Kingdom of God while remaining true to the core values of the gospel.

However, the adoption of technology for evangelism is not without challenges. Liu (2017) in “Challenges of Digital Evangelism” identified one of the main obstacles as the lack of digital skills among theology students who are not yet familiar with using advanced technology. This indicates the need for more intensive training and education in the use of digital technology for prospective evangelists. According to Liu (2017), the main challenges in using technology for evangelism include several aspects. First, there is a gap in technical knowledge and skills among evangelists. Many ministers, especially from the older generation, feel overwhelmed by the rapid development of technology and feel unprepared to use it effectively in their ministry. Second, limited access to digital devices and stable internet connections, especially in remote, outermost, and disadvantaged areas, creates a “digital divide” that can limit the effectiveness of technology-based evangelism in these areas. In

addition, resistance to technology among some theology students and church community leaders is also an obstacle that needs to be considered. Some feel more comfortable with traditional evangelism methods and may view the use of technology as "less spiritual" or even potentially distracting from the core message of the gospel. Overcoming this resistance requires a careful and balanced approach, demonstrating how technology can enhance, not replace, traditional methods of evangelism.

In this context, theological educational institutions such as Kerusso Theological College (STT) have a crucial role in preparing students to use technology for evangelism. Their challenge is not only to equip students with technical skills, but also with a deep theological understanding of how technology can be used to “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19) in the digital age. A survey by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in 2020 revealed an alarming gap. Only 45% of theological schools have a specific curriculum on the use of technology in ministry. This figure shows an urgent need for improvement in this area. STT Kerusso and other theological educational institutions need to work together to expand and deepen their technology training programs. To anticipate this, the following concrete steps can be taken including integrating training in digital content creation, social media management, and video editing into the core curriculum. The addition of a specific module on digital evangelism strategies is also essential to prepare students for the realities of ministry in the digital age. Additionally, providing wider access to the latest technological tools and relevant software can provide students with valuable practical experience.

Collaboration with Christian technology practitioners and digital media experts can also provide practical insights and relevant case studies for students. Inviting guest speakers from the technology industry or conducting workshops with churches that have successfully integrated technology into their ministries can provide valuable perspectives on the practical application of technology in the context of evangelism. Theological educational institutions should also help students understand the ethical complexities of using technology for evangelism. This includes critical issues such as online privacy, integrity in digital self-presentation, and how to handle online disagreements with “love and humility” (Ephesians 4:2). Students need to be trained to navigate the complex digital ethical landscape, understand the implications of their digital footprint, and how to maintain ministry integrity online.

Beyond that, students must be prepared to be “salt and light” (Matthew 5:13-14) in the digital world. This means not only using technology to spread a message, but also bringing positive influence and a message of hope into an online space that is often filled with negativity, conflict, and misleading information. Students need to be trained to use social media and other

digital platforms not just as a means of spreading information, but as a means to build community, grow faith, and promote the values of the Kingdom of God. The development of digital media literacy should also be a critical component of theological curricula. Students need to be taught how to critically evaluate sources of information, recognize fake news and disinformation, and how to contribute to online discussions in a constructive and enlightening way. These skills are not only essential for their own ministry, but also for guiding their future congregations in navigating an increasingly complex media landscape.

While technology offers tremendous opportunities to extend the reach of the Great Commission, it is important to remember that technology is not a substitute for the power of the Holy Spirit in evangelism. As Zechariah 4:6 reminds us, “‘Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty.” Technology must be seen and positioned as a means to amplify and extend the work of the Holy Spirit, not as a substitute for Him. Evangelists and theological educators need to continually emphasize that while technology can extend the reach and effectiveness of evangelism, the core of the gospel remains unchanged. The message of God’s transformative love, Christ’s sacrifice, and the call to repentance and discipleship remain central to the church’s mission, regardless of the medium used to deliver it. Thus, the use of technology in evangelism offers tremendous opportunities to extend the reach of the Great Commission, but it also presents complex challenges that must be met with wisdom, prudence, and faithfulness to biblical teaching. Theological educational institutions have a great responsibility to prepare a new generation of evangelists who are not only technologically proficient but also theologically and ethically grounded.

This generation of evangelists must be able to use technology effectively while remaining faithful to their calling to “be witnesses to me” (Acts 1:8) in an evolving digital world. They must be bridges between the rich traditions of faith and the realities of a dynamic digital world, bringing the timeless message of the gospel into contemporary contexts in ways that are relevant and transformative. Integrating technology into evangelism is not just about adopting new tools, but about rethinking how we do mission in the context of a digital culture. This requires a holistic approach that combines deep theological understanding, solid technical skills, a keen ethical awareness, and an unwavering reliance on the leading of the Holy Spirit. With this approach, the church can harness the power of technology to advance the kingdom of God while remaining faithful to the essence of the gospel and the call to make disciples in all nations.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Mastery of technology has had a significant impact in supporting the spread of the Great Commission among students and alumni of STT Kerusso. Through social media and messaging applications, the Gospel can be spread more quickly, widely, and efficiently, without being limited by distance or time. Technology also allows for more personal interactions and adjustments to evangelism strategies according to the preferences of the digital generation. However, despite offering many opportunities, mastery of technology presents challenges that cannot be ignored, such as limited technical knowledge, access to digital devices, and resistance to innovation among students and evangelists. These challenges hinder the optimal use of technology, especially in communities that do not yet have adequate access to digital facilities.

As an educational institution, STT Kerusso has an important role in improving students' technological skills through more comprehensive training and support. The addition of more in-depth training programs related to digital technology needs to be integrated into the curriculum, so that students can use technology wisely and effectively in evangelism. In addition, training on digital content creation, social media management, and video editing will be very useful to increase the effectiveness of spreading the Gospel message.

STT Kerusso as an educational institution, is expected to be able to further integrate technology into the evangelism curriculum by adding special modules on digital evangelism strategies and practical projects that utilize technology. This will help students develop skills that are in line with the needs of evangelism in the digital era. In addition, STT Kerusso needs to increase student access to technological devices, including computers, editing software, and stable internet connections, so that all students can learn and apply technology well.

Collaboration with technology practitioners and external training providers is also recommended to provide practical insights to students. Relevant case studies will help students understand the application of technology in evangelism in more depth. In addition, the formation of a technology community or club on campus that focuses on innovation in digital evangelism can be an important step in supporting the development of students' technology skills. Through this community, students can share knowledge, learn together, and actively engage in innovative efforts to expand the reach of evangelism in the digital era. With these steps, STT Kerusso can optimize the use of technology to support the Great Commission more effectively, face existing challenges, and prepare a generation of evangelists who are able to answer the needs of the times.

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