

BLOG CREATION TRAINING TO INCREASE THE POTENTIAL OF ECO TOURISM THROUGH SOCIAL NETWORK MEDIA

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Abstract

In an effort to increase the potential of eco tourism through the use of digital technology, this community service program is implemented with the main aim of training eco tourism actors in creating and managing blogs, as well as using social media for tourism promotion. This training is designed to address the lack of digital skills among eco tourism practitioners and improve their skills in creating attractive and effective digital content for online promotions. The method used in this training includes a series of theoretical and practical workshops that focus on the basics of blogging, search engine optimization (SEO), and social media marketing strategies. The results of this training show a significant increase in participants' knowledge and skills in creating blogs and utilizing social media, which is reflected in the increase in the quality of their content and online activities. This study recommends further development of the training curriculum with the integration of advanced techniques and more varied case studies, as well as increased ongoing support for trainees in applying new knowledge and skills in the real context of the ecotourism business.

Keywords: Eco Tourism, Blogging, Social Media, Digital Education, Online Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

In the current digital era, social media has developed into a major platform for disseminating information and promoting various sectors (Xu, L., Ao, C., Liu, B., & Cai, Z, 2023), including the tourism sector. Sustainability-based tourism, better known as eco tourism, has become a global trend that not only supports environmental conservation, but also offers authentic experiences to tourists who care about ecological sustainability (Niñerola et al., 2019). Even though eco tourism has great potential to improve the local economy, many natural tourism destinations are still unable to utilize advanced information technology to increase their visibility (Xu et al, 2023). In this context, blogs and other social media platforms offer great opportunities to promote eco tourism destinations in a creative and interactive way. However, limited knowledge and skills in managing and utilizing these digital tools effectively are the main obstacles (Niñerola et al., 2019). Therefore, the importance of training in creating engaging digital content and using search engine optimization (SEO)

techniques is crucial to unlocking the full potential of eco tourism at a global level (Xu et al. , 2023).

Partner Problems

One of the main challenges faced by eco tourism actors in Indonesia is the suboptimal use of digital media. Even though social media and blogs can be very effective marketing tools, many business actors in this sector are still hampered in applying information technology for promotion. Lack of knowledge in creating interesting and search engine friendly (SEO friendly) content means that their promotional activities are less able to attract the attention of potential visitors. In addition, limited technical skills in using online platforms and lack of access to the latest technology make it difficult for them to compete in the global market. This problem requires an integrated solution to develop the digital skills of stakeholders, so that they can effectively use blogs and social media to communicate the value and uniqueness of the natural tourism destinations they manage.

Benefits and Urgency (Priority) of Community Service

The use of information technology, especially through social media and blogs, has significant potential in advancing sustainable tourism such as eco tourism. Improving the digital skills of eco tourism actors will not only increase the visibility and attractiveness of their destinations online, but can also significantly support the local economy through increasing the number of tourist visits. In a global context, where competition for tourist destinations is increasingly fierce, the existence of an effective digital platform is crucial. This competitive advantage can be achieved through efficient and strategic promotion using modern digital tools. Furthermore, the adoption of digital marketing strategies by eco tourism actors is an urgency that cannot be ignored to reach a wider audience and take advantage of market trends that focus on sustainability. Thus, community service aimed at increasing digital capacity is not only strategically relevant but also urgent, given the rapid changes in global tourist preferences and the increasing emphasis on environmental sustainability.

Purpose of Community Service

The main aim of this community service is to empower eco tourism actors through training aimed at honing their skills in creating and managing effective blogs. Through this initiative, it is hoped that actors can develop content that is not only visually appealing, but also optimized for search engines, thereby increasing their chances of being discovered and accessed by potential tourists online. Furthermore, this service aims to increase awareness and understanding of the strategic benefits that can be obtained from the use of social media as an integral part of a marketing strategy. Through the effective use of these digital tools, it is hoped that ecotourism actors can proactively participate in the global tourism market, attract more visitors,

and simultaneously contribute to the preservation of the ecological and social values they promote.

RESEARCH METHOD

Preparation phase

The preparation stage is the initial and critical step in implementing community service which aims to increase the capacity of eco tourism actors through blog creation training. At this stage, a series of in-depth needs analysis activities were carried out for eco tourism business actors, which aimed to identify gaps in their digital competencies, especially in the aspects of content creation and use of social media for promotion. Based on the results of this analysis, the service team developed a tailor-made training curriculum, which includes essential modules such as the basics of blogging, search engine optimization (SEO), and digital marketing strategies. Apart from that, the team also prepared the human resources involved, which involved recruiting experts in the fields of IT, digital communications and sustainable tourism, as well as preparing the supporting infrastructure and logistics, including selecting the technology and training platforms to be used. This stage is very important because the quality of preparation directly influences the effectiveness and smooth implementation of the training, as well as the achievement of the expected results from this service.

Implementation stage

The implementation phase of this community service involves carrying out a series of training workshops designed to improve the abilities of ecotourism actors in creating and managing blogs. This workshop is organized into several sessions, starting with theoretical teaching that provides basic knowledge about blogging, SEO, and the use of social media as a promotional tool. Next, participants are invited to take part in a practical session, where they can immediately apply this knowledge in creating and optimizing their own blog. This practical approach is expected to strengthen their understanding and skills in real-time. Monitoring and evaluation is also carried out periodically during the workshop to ensure that the training material is delivered effectively and identify areas that require further adjustments or emphasis. This stage is very crucial because it is a direct application of the theory that has been learned and is an important moment to obtain feedback from participants, which will be useful for improving the next training session and measuring the level of success of this service program.

Implementation Method

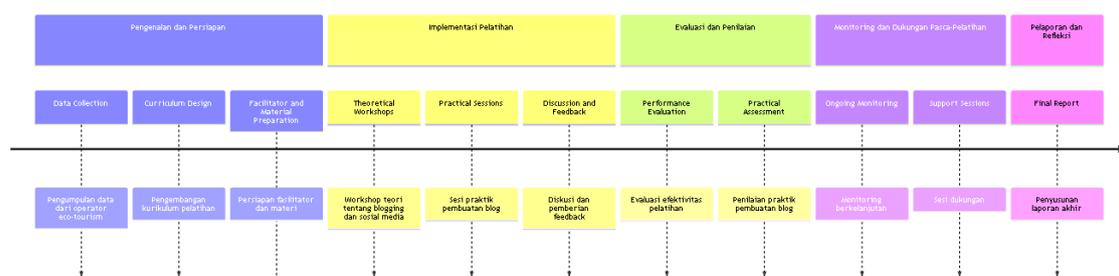
In implementing this training program, we adopted a participatory method that prioritizes the active involvement of all participants. This method is designed to not only convey theoretical knowledge, but also emphasizes direct practice with the principle of "learning by doing". Each participant is given the opportunity to be directly

involved in the process of creating and optimizing a blog, starting from determining the design, selecting content, to applying effective SEO techniques. This approach is enriched by the use of various learning aids such as interactive presentations, video tutorials and relevant case studies, all of which aim to improve participants' theoretical understanding as well as practical skills. Furthermore, evaluation of the success of this training was carried out through direct feedback from participants as well as analysis of the performance of the blogs they had created, enabling the service team to effectively measure the impact of the training on improving the digital skills of eco tourism actors. This implementation method not only focuses on increasing individual capabilities, but also on creating sustainable added value for the development of ecotourism as a whole.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The implementation stages used to carry out PKM activities for the 2022/2023 Even Semester academic year are:

Table 1. Stages of Implementation of Training Programs for Eco Tourism



1. Introduction and Preparation:

- **Data Collection:** Conducting surveys and interviews with eco-tourism operators to identify their specific training needs in digital skills and online promotion.
- **Curriculum Design:** Developing a training curriculum that meets the identified needs, including topics such as basic blogging, SEO, social media usage, and content analysis.
- **Facilitator and Material Preparation:** Preparing a competent team of trainers and appropriate training materials, including slides, video tutorials, and reading materials.

2. Training Implementation:

- **Theoretical Workshops:** Holding theory sessions that provide basic knowledge about blogging and social media, including content strategies and SEO techniques.

- Practical Sessions: Participants engage in hands-on practice by creating and optimizing their own blogs. Facilitators guide the participants through this process, offering feedback and improvement suggestions.
 - Discussion and Feedback: Conducting Q&A sessions and discussions to address the challenges faced by participants and to gather their input for the refinement of the training process.
3. Evaluation and Assessment:
- Performance Evaluation: Assessing the effectiveness of the training through questionnaires and direct feedback from participants on what they have learned and implemented.
 - Practical Assessment: Evaluating the blogs created by the participants to see the application of the techniques taught during the workshop.
4. Post-Training Monitoring and Support:
- Ongoing Monitoring: Following up with participants after the training to ensure that they are effectively applying the skills learned.
 - Support Sessions: Providing support sessions or consultations after the training to help participants address the challenges they encounter in managing their blogs and social media strategies.
5. Reporting and Reflection:
- Final Report: Compiling a final report that includes the entire training process, outcomes achieved, and recommendations for future program improvements.

These stages outline a comprehensive approach to community service through training, designed to enhance the digital capabilities of eco-tourism operators, thus promoting sustainable tourism practices through effective online engagement.



Figure 2. Implementation of Training

CONCLUSION

This scientific article presents the results of a community service program that focuses on blog creation training to increase the potential of eco tourism through social media. The results obtained show a significant increase in the ability and confidence of ecotourism actors in using information and communication technology for tourism promotion and management. This training program successfully integrates theory and effective practice, thereby providing a better understanding of the strategic benefits of blogging and social media in the eco tourism business. Trainees demonstrate increased ability in creating engaging content and effective SEO optimization, both of which are key to attracting visitors and promoting sustainability through tourism activities.

Suggestion

1. Improved Training Materials: For the next iteration, it is recommended that the training materials be further enriched with actual case studies that demonstrate best practices in blogging and social media marketing in the context of eco tourism. This will provide further insight and inspiration for participants on how to apply learning in their real settings.
2. Collaboration with Digital Experts: Expanding networks with digital experts and influencers in the field of eco tourism can provide more opportunities for participants to learn from experts and increase their visibility on social media.
3. Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation: Implement a robust monitoring and evaluation system to measure the long-term impact of this training. This includes tracking the growth of blog traffic and engagement on social media, as well as its impact on the number of tourist visits.

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3. Xu et al. (2023) identified that ecotourism has been rapidly developing in recent years. The research field of ecotourism spans many disciplines and is a comprehensive interdisciplinary subject
4. Xu et al. (2023) also presented new insights through intuitive visual images regarding the main clusters and their advance in ecotourism research based on high impact citations and research frontier formed by citations
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6. Xu et al. (2023) concluded that ecotourism has entered the third stage of Shneider's four-stage theory of scientific discipline.