





## ARTICLE

# Challenges in Implementing Digital Democracy

## A Case Study of Sinjai Regency

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**Abstract:** This study explores the dynamics of digital democracy in Sinjai Regency by examining the factors that shape public participation, particularly access to information, digital literacy, and technological infrastructure. This study used a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach; data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, focus group discussions, and documentation involving citizens, youth, government officials, and local digital media practitioners. The findings reveal five dominant factors influencing digital democracy: (1) limited and unequal internet access across regions, particularly in rural areas; (2) low digital literacy which reduces the ability of citizens to filter accurate political information; (3) the strong role of young people as digital actors in political engagement; (4) government digital initiatives-though available-remain underutilized due to limited public capability and uneven dissemination; and (5) local digital media serving as an important intermediary in delivering political information. These factors collectively contribute to the low level of digital participation in Sinjai. The study proposes several solutions, including expanding internet infrastructure through cross-sector collaboration, strengthening community-based digital literacy training, enhancing government digital services, and establishing an independent body to oversee digital democracy implementation. The results highlight the need for inclusive policies that consider geographical and socio-economic disparities. This research contributes novelty by focusing on digital democracy gaps at the local scale and emphasizing community capacity as a key determinant in achieving inclusive digital participation.

**Keywords:** Digital Democracy; Digital Literacy; Information Access; Digital Participation.

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## 1. Introduction

Digital democracy opens up space for people to engage in the political process through online channels, obtain information faster, and express their opinions (Nurhakim & Lestari, 2025). Although this technology has great potential to strengthen democratic systems, the gap in its implementation remains a significant problem (van Dijk, 2006). One of the main issues is equal access on the internet, especially in remote areas (Levin & Mamlok, 2021). This limited access hinders most people from participating effectively in the digital democracy process (Hilbert, 2020). Without an adequate internet network, public participation through digital platforms is not optimal (Best, 2010; Thomas et al., 2024). In addition, digital literacy is a major challenge in digital democracy. People who do not have digital skills have difficulty filtering relevant information from various sources, such as social media, which provides information from various elements whose truth still needs to be questioned (Murdock, 2002; Nam, 2011).

This research aims to delve deeper into the factors that affect the implementation of digital democracy, particularly in the areas of information and transparency (Salemink et al., 2017). This research also focuses on developing concepts and solutions to reduce disparities in Sinjai Regency, with the hope of encouraging equitable access to inclusive information (Milner, 2006; Riggins & Dewan, 2005). The qualitative method used in this study, with a phenomenological approach, can provide more complete and comprehensive data on the issues faced and solutions that can be applied.

The formulation of the problem in this study:

- **RQ1:** Why does public participation in digital democracy remain low, particularly regarding limited access to accurate information in political decision-making processes?
- **RQ2:** To what extent can the community effectively filter relevant information to obtain accurate data for informed political participation?
- **RQ3:** What strategies or policies can be developed to bridge these digital gaps and foster more inclusive digital democracy?

The problem-solving offered in this study includes: (1) the government and the private sector need to collaborate to expand the internet network by utilizing the latest technology. (2) comprehensive digital literacy training at the education level and in the community to improve the ability to critically analyze information in cyberspace. (3) collaboration between the government, the private sector, civil society, and CSOs in designing policies and initiatives that can foster inclusive digital democracy. (4) the establishment of independent bodies or institutions that can oversee the implementation of digital democracy and assess its impact on equal participation (Elliott et al., 2021; Legner et al., 2017). Some of the results of related research include: “digital divide”, revealing that although the physical gap in technology access has been reduced in developed countries, the gap in digital skills and technology use is widening. Digital democracy has great potential to transform how people participate in political life. Nonetheless, there are challenges related to the surveillance and misuse of digital space (Congge et al., 2023). The digital divide refers not only to physical access to technology, but also to how technology is used, digital skills possessed, and its influence on social and economic opportunities (van Dijk, 2006). Some studies have suggested that policies that focus more on skills development and social empowerment help reduce these inequalities (van Dijk, 2002). Access to information technology, such as computers and the internet, is

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greatly influenced by educational factors, family context, socioeconomic status, generation, gender and ethnic background (Korupp & Szydlik, 2005).

Other research shows that the digital divide is not only a matter of access to technology but must also be understood in many dimensions, including mental, material, skill, and usage (van Dijk, 2002); other, more complex issues involving the skills, use, and social impact of technology (Selwyn, 2004). To ensure that the internet can be used to strengthen democracy, it is necessary to improve digital skills (Min, 2010). Countries with good ICT infrastructure tend to have higher levels of democracy and political freedom (Shirazi et al., 2010). Although there are signs of increased participation among groups that are usually marginalized by the digital divide, in terms of education and income, it still affects the extent of political engagement (Nam, 2011). More research is needed to understand the factors of the digital divide, especially in terms of providing access to underserved groups (Riggins & Dewan, 2005). Several studies related to digital democracy, however, are still missing studies related to the gaps that occur, especially at the regional scale. Although there are many applications of digital democracy in developed countries, major challenges are still faced in developing countries such as Indonesia. Some of the latest findings in digital democracy include: (1) Digital political participation, research results show that although digital platforms can increase political participation, in reality the participation is uneven (Korupp & Szydlik, 2005); (2) Access to information and transparency, revealing that access to public information in the digital era is very important to increase government transparency and accountability (Salemin et al., 2017); (3) E-Government, shows that even though many countries have implemented digital government systems, there are still challenges for people, especially those living in remote areas and limited technology; (4) challenges and opportunities in digital democracy, the results of the study show that inequality has an impact on the quality of democracy (Congge et al., 2023).

This research offers novelty with two main aspects that have not been explored in existing literature: (1) Access to information and transparency in digital democracy; (2) Community capacity in digital literacy. Some of the novelties proposed in this study include: (1) factors that cause the limitations of digital literacy that limit people from filtering relevant information, which is an area that is often overlooked in digital democracy research that focuses more on technology and platforms; (2) This research not only identifies problems, but also offers concrete solutions to reduce the digital divide, inclusive solutions that differentiate in various socio-economic and geographical contexts are the novelties that distinguish this research; (3) This research emphasizes underserved groups, such as people in remote areas, who are often not covered in policies and studies on digital democracy.

## 2. Methods

This study employs a qualitative, phenomenological approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of digital democracy in Sinjai Regency. The phenomenological approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to directly capture participants' lived experiences regarding access to information, digital literacy, and engagement in technology-based democratic processes (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The research was conducted in Sinjai Regency, South Sulawesi, from August to October 2024, involving observation sites at the Department of Communications, Information Technology, and Cryptography office; the Sinjai Regency Election Commission; villages in districts affected by blank spots; and the local university campus. Data collection was conducted using four techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and

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documentation. Operationally, the researcher conducted direct observations of digital technology users at various locations, including schools, government offices, and public spaces in Sinjai Regency.

In-depth interviews were conducted with 24 informants, selected through purposive sampling based on relevance, group representation, and depth of experience regarding digital democracy in Sinjai Regency. This number was deemed sufficient to achieve data saturation in qualitative phenomenological research (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The distribution of informants was divided into the following four groups: (1) The general public, consisting of residents who are both active users and non-users of digital platforms, totaling 8 individuals (INF-01 to INF-08), selected from three different subdistricts to represent variations in internet access conditions in urban, suburban, and remote rural areas; (2) Students and young people who actively use social media and digital platforms for political information, totaling 6 individuals (INF-09 to INF-14), consisting of university students and high school/vocational school students in Sinjai Regency; (3) Local government officials from the Department of Communication, Information Technology, and Cryptography and the Election Commission of Sinjai Regency, totaling 6 individuals (INF-15 to INF-20), who possess the authority and technical knowledge regarding digital infrastructure and the implementation of technology-based elections; and (4) Activists and managers of local digital media in Sinjai Regency, totaling 4 individuals (INF-21 to INF-24), who serve as disseminators of political information in the digital space. The interview guide was developed based on three research questions (RQ1-RQ3) formulated to ensure the discussion remains aligned with the research focus. The data collection schedule was carried out in stages: initial observation and recruitment of informants in the first week of August 2024; in-depth interviews in the second through fourth weeks of August 2024; FGDs in September 2024; and a documentary study in October 2024.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with two groups: the first group consisted of election officials from the Sinjai Regency Election Commission to understand public participation in the election and the second group consisted of staff from the Sinjai Regency Communication, Information, and Cryptography Agency to obtain data on internet access coverage throughout Sinjai Regency. Documentation was obtained from secondary sources, including the number of voters in Sinjai Regency, voter participation summaries, and relevant local regulations from the Sinjai Regency Election Commission. After the qualitative data was collected, data verification and validation were conducted through two methods: member checking and cross-checking data to verify interview findings and checking the consistency of data from various sources.

The flow of the research can be seen in Figure 1. In this study, it is related to the factors that affect inequality that arises in the implementation of digital democracy, identifying and developing concepts to reduce gaps in digital democracy, especially regional scale.

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Figure 1. Research Flow

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Results

In an effort to understand the dynamics of digital democracy in Sinjai Regency, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with various informants representing all levels of society. The results of these interviews reveal diverse perspectives that enrich our understanding of the factors that influence people's participation in the digital space. The following is based on the results of interviews with various informants directly:

##### A. General Public

Villagers in Sinjai Borong District said the internet network is unstable, and they often have to look for specific spots or high points to get a signal. Residents of North Sinjai District explained that internet access is better, but disruptions during peak hours still occur frequently.

##### B. Students and the Younger Generation

From the results of direct interviews, students admitted that they are highly dependent on the internet for studying. On campus, connections are smooth, but at home—especially in suburban areas—connections are often slow and hinder online tasks.

##### C. Local Government Apparatus

Government officials admit that the network infrastructure is uneven and that improvement efforts are still moving slowly, so the community has not yet received optimal access. From these answers, it is clear that local government officials are committed to increasing public participation through technology, but they also face significant challenges in digital literacy and community engagement. Efforts to provide training and socialization are an important step to overcoming these barriers (Pemerintah Daerah Kabupaten Sinjai, 2023).

In order to increase transparency and efficiency, the Indonesian General Election Commission has developed various applications that support the implementation of regional head elections. One of the main applications used is the Vote Counting Information System (SIPPS). The app enables quick, accurate vote counting, with results accessible to the public in real time (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, 2024). SIPPS serves to make it easier for election officials to enter voting data from each polling station (TPS). With an integrated system, voting data can be sent directly to the Sinjai Regency Election Commission data center, thereby reducing the possibility of errors and fraud. In addition, the Sinjai Regency Election Commission also uses the Voter Data Information System (Sidalih) application, which helps in validating and verifying voter data. The app ensures that only registered voters can vote, thereby improving the integrity of the electoral process.

In an effort to increase voter participation, the Sinjai Regency Election Commission launched the Smart Voter application. This application provides information on voting, polling station locations, and the candidates to be chosen. With a user-friendly interface, it is hoped that the public will find it easier to get information and be motivated to participate in the regional elections. The Sinjai Regency Election Commission also uses social media and other digital platforms to disseminate information on the implementation of the regional elections, including through these applications. This strategy is expected to reach more voters, especially the younger generation, who are more familiar with technology (Rusdi & Febriansyah, 2023). By leveraging information technology effectively, the Sinjai Regency Election Commission is committed to conducting clean, transparent, and democratic elections and to increasing public trust in the Indonesian election process in Indonesia. The use of applications is based on the General Election Commission’s regulations on the use of Information Systems. And General Election Commission Regulation Number 7 of 2022 concerning the Preparation of Voter Lists in the Implementation of General Elections and Voter Data Information System.

#### D. Local Digital Media Activists

Digital media activists say they often have to move to strong Wi-Fi places, such as cafes, in order to upload content without a hitch. From the informants’ responses, it is evident that local digital media activists are committed to increasing community political awareness in the community through educational content. However, they face challenges in funding and resources, which limit their ability to reach a wider audience and disseminate information effectively.

#### E. Data Analysis

Table 1. Initial Coding

Participant Statement	Initial Code (Open Code)
“One of the biggest challenges is digital literacy. Many residents still have difficulty understanding which information is correct and which is not so that their participation in providing feedback is limited.”	Low digital literacy
“The internet network here is sometimes good, sometimes bad, only a few points/places have good networks, in our village, the internet network is often unstable. Sometimes, we have to go to higher places to get a better signal. This makes it difficult to access important information, especially when there is the latest news.”	Limited internet access
“Online campaigns really help us to better understand the existing candidates. Through social media, we were able to participate in live debates and discussions without having to go to physical events. This makes information more accessible.”	Digital activism of the younger generation
“We have launched a digital platform that allows the public to access information about government policies and programs. However, we recognize that not all citizens know how to use this platform effectively.”	Lesser-known digital aspiration services
“We believe that digital media has a crucial role in educating the public about their rights. We strive to create informative and easy-to-understand content to raise political awareness among citizens.”	The role of local online media

Table 2. Axial Coding

Initial Code	Category (Axial Code)
Low digital literacy	Socio-Cultural Factors
Uneven internet access limitations	Technology & Infrastructure Factors
Digital activism of the younger generation	Demographic & Generation Factors
Lesser-known digital aspiration services	Government Policy Factors
The role of local online media	Media & Information Factors

(Axial coding = grouping the initial code into larger categories/themes)

Table 3. Selective Coding

Category	Selective Code
Socio-Cultural Factors	Digital literacy and community participation culture are still in decline
Technology & Infrastructure Factors	Access and quality of digital technology in all regions is still limited
Demographic & Generation Factors	The role of the younger generation and students is more inclined to digitalization
Government Policy Factors	Government digital policy support and innovation has been undertaken but limited in the ability of the public to use
Media & Information Factors	The role of local media is very helpful to convey information to the public

(Selective coding = unifying categories into core themes)

### Essence of Synthesis

From the coding results, it can be concluded that five main factors influence digital democracy in Sinjai Regency:

- a. Digital literacy and → participation culture are still low, especially in rural areas.
- b. Access and quality of digital technology → limitations of the internet and of application use.
- c. The role of the young generation and students → the main motor of the digital movement.
- d. Digital policy support and innovation → There are government digital services, but they are not optimal.
- e. Local digital media as a support for democracy → online local media strengthen the flow of political information.

Here is a more in-depth explanation of the essence of the coding results that show the influence of five main factors on digital democracy in Sinjai Regency:

- a. **Digital and Cultural Literacy.** Digital literacy participation is the ability of individuals to use information and communication technologies effectively. In Sinjai Regency, the low level of digital literacy, especially in rural areas, is a major challenge. Many people are unfamiliar with using digital devices and the internet, so they find it difficult to access information on political participation. A culture of participation also requires an understanding of the importance of involvement in decision-making. Without a clear understanding of their rights in a democracy and of how to use technology to express their opinions, people tend to be passive. Therefore, digital literacy training programs and awareness campaigns on the importance of political participation are essential to build a strong foundation of democracy.
- b. **Access and Quality of Digital Technology.** Access to digital technology is a key factor in creating an inclusive democratic environment. In Sinjai Regency, limited internet infrastructure, especially in rural areas, is a major barrier. Many communities still rely on unstable internet connections, making it difficult to access information and participate on digital platforms. In addition, the quality of the available technology also affects the user experience. If the

- apps used to interact with the government or news platforms are not properly accessible, people will lose interest in getting involved. Therefore, investment in technological infrastructure and improvements in internet access quality are needed so that people can actively participate in the democratic process.
- c. The role of the Young Generation and Students. The younger generation, including students, has a significant role as a driving force in digital democracy. They are a group more familiar with technology and able to use social media and digital platforms to voice opinions and organize movements. Their involvement in political discussions and social campaigns through digital media not only increases political awareness among peers but can also reach a wider society. Therefore, it is important to provide space for the younger generation to innovate and collaborate in creating digital solutions that support people's participation in democracy.
  - d. Digital Policy Support & Innovation. Although the government in Sinjai Regency has provided several digital services, the community has not fully utilized them. Existing policies need to be optimized to ensure these services truly meet the community's needs. Innovation in digital policy, such as the development of more user-friendly applications and the provision of transparent, accessible information, is essential. In addition, community involvement in the policy formulation process can increase a sense of belonging and encourage active participation (Pemerintah Daerah Kabupaten Sinjai, 2023).
  - e. Local Digital Media as a Pillar of Democracy. Local digital media plays an important role in strengthening democracy in Sinjai Regency. By providing relevant news, analysis, and information, local media can bridge the information gap between government and society. This media serves not only as a source of information but also as a platform for public discussion and debate. When people have access to accurate and balanced information, they are better able to make informed decisions and participate in the democratic process. Overall, these five factors are interrelated and form an ecosystem that affects digital democracy in Sinjai Regency. Increasing digital literacy, access to technology, engaging the younger generation, policy support, and strengthening local media are steps that need to be taken simultaneously to create a more participatory and democratic society. Collaborative efforts from all parties, including government, civil society, and the private sector, are urgently needed to realize the potential for a better digital democracy.

## 3.2. Discussion

### 3.2.1. Digital Literacy

Low digital literacy is a major obstacle to digital democracy in Sinjai Regency. Many residents, particularly in rural areas and among older generations, are not accustomed to using digital devices, making it difficult for them to access political information and technology-based government services. This situation results in disparities in knowledge and participation, with digitally illiterate groups often passive and marginalized in the democratic process. This finding aligns with [van Dijk's theoretical framework \(2006\)](#), which identifies four levels of digital access: motivation, physical access, skills, and usage. This study found that residents of Sinjai living in remote areas are still generally hindered in accessing skills; thus, even as physical infrastructure becomes available, their ability to utilize technology for political participation remains limited. This contrasts with findings in developed

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countries, which indicate that while the physical gap has narrowed, the skills gap has actually widened (van Dijk, 2006). The context of Sinjai Regency confirms that these two types of gaps remain intertwined and mutually reinforcing.

Furthermore, the complex interfaces of government applications, the lack of user guides, and the public's limited ability to discern credible information exacerbate this situation. These conditions leave some residents feeling alienated from the digital space and reluctant to participate in discussions or elections. Selwyn (2004) emphasizes that digital inclusion is not merely about device ownership but involves meaningful engagement in the digital space. This condition remains unfulfilled for the majority of Sinjai's digitally marginalized residents. To address these challenges, efforts are needed to enhance digital literacy through training that reaches all segments of society and to simplify government digital services to make them more user-friendly. This is crucial so that the public can access political information on an equal footing and actively participate in the democratic process. Min (2010) indicates that internet skills and political interest are the two primary factors determining the level of digital democratic participation, a finding highly relevant to the situation in Sinjai District, where both factors remain at low levels.

### 3.2.2. Access and Quality of Technology

The availability of internet networks and digital devices plays a crucial role in society, particularly regarding participation in democratic processes. Based on data from the Sinjai Regency Department of Communications, Information Technology, and Cryptography, internet coverage in Sinjai Regency is approximately 90% evenly distributed. However, there are still several areas across nine sub-districts that lack or have weak internet access (often referred to as "blank spots").

List of Blank Spot Areas in Sinjai Regency:

- a. Bulupoddo District: Four blank spots located in Bulutellue Village, specifically in Tanatekko Hamlet (3 points) and Langori Hamlet (1 point).
- b. South Sinjai District: One blank spot located in the Gova environment.
- c. West Sinjai District: Four blank spots, specifically in Bontolempangan Village (3 points in Ambi Hamlet) and Gunung Perak Village (1 point in Tassoso Hamlet).

Access to and the quality of internet networks in Sinjai Regency remain the main challenges in supporting digital democracy. Based on the results of the Sinjai Regency Department of Communications, Information Technology, and Cryptography mapping (August 15-22, 2025), there are 46 weak signal points spread across seven sub-districts, especially in rural areas. This condition shows that the network equity has only reached around 90%, so  $\pm 10\%$  of areas have not been able to access the internet optimally.

The distribution of weak signal points is at:

- a. East Sinjai District (5 points) – Patalassang and Dumme Villages
  - b. South Sinjai District (14 points) – spread across Leppang, Bontonitu, Boja, Annie, Babara, Honto, Bulukamase, Labettang, and Puncak
  - c. Tellulimpoe District (5 points) – Pattongko, Toribi, and Tapillasa Villages
  - d. Sinjai Borong District (3 points) – Coddong and Palangka Villages
  - e. Bulupoddo District (2 points) – Bulubulu and Bululohe Hamlets
  - f. West Sinjai District (6 points) – Turungan Baji, Gunung Perak, and Lembanna
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g. Pulau Sembilan District (12 points) – Buhung Pitue, Padaelo, and Pulau Persatuan

These weak signal points are not only located in settlements but also in public service locations such as schools (elementary, junior high, high school/vocational school), health centers, and village offices, thereby directly affecting public access to information. The limitations of this network hinder the dissemination of political information during regional head elections. People in blank spot areas have difficulty accessing information about candidates, work programs, election schedules, and digital education disseminated through social media or official government websites. As a result, digital-based political participation becomes uneven and may reduce the quality of voter decision-making.

In addition, weak networks also limit the effectiveness of digital campaigns, especially for young voters who rely heavily on online media. On the other hand, election organizers experience limitations in conveying information quickly and transparently to people in distant areas. Overall, these findings show that digital democracy in Sinjai Regency has not operated optimally due to unequal access to technology. Improving and equitable network infrastructure must be a priority so that political information can be accessed equally by all people and so that participation in elections can be inclusive.

### 3.2.3. The Role of the Young Generation and Students

The young generation and students have a strategic role as the driving force of digital democracy in Sinjai Regency. This group is more accustomed to using technology and social media, which can serve as a bridge of information between the government and the community. Through platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter, they can disseminate political information, educate voters, and organize digital campaigns that reach large audiences. Their involvement in online discussions and debates raises peer political awareness and encourages public participation. However, their contribution is still hampered by inequality of access to technology in some regions. To optimize this role, support is needed through digital skills training, collaboration spaces, and partnerships with governments and local organizations. With this support, the young generation can become agents of change, strengthening digital political participation in Sinjai.

### 3.2.4. Regulatory Support

Local government regulations are an important foundation for a safe, inclusive, and effective digital democracy. The Sinjai Regency Government has developed several key regulations, including Sinjai Regulation No. 48 of 2023 concerning Electronic-Based Government Systems (SPBE) and the Regent's Regulation No. 44 of 2023 concerning Regional Development Plans 2024–2026. This regulation is a guideline for strengthening digital transformation in the government sector. These regulations need to be strengthened by ensuring the protection of personal data, enhancing information security, and simplifying digital services to make them easily accessible to the public. The government also needs to encourage innovation by collaborating with universities, digital communities, and local media to create a more interactive platform for public participation. In addition, education about people's digital rights is very important so that citizens understand their roles and responsibilities in digital democracy. With the right regulatory support, the digital environment in Sinjai will be more conducive to transparent and inclusive political participation.

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### 3.2.5. The Role of Local Media

Local digital media plays an important role as a conduit of information, a space for public dialogue, and a monitor of government policies. In Sinjai Regency, local media are helping the community get accurate information amid rampant misinformation. By providing news, analysis, and educational content, local media help maintain transparency and improve people's political literacy. Local media also encourages public participation through online discussions, polls, and live broadcasts, allowing people to be directly involved in local political issues. In addition to serving as a channel for participation, local media acts as a government supervisor by raising public issues, potential policy deviations, and ineffective services.

By utilizing digital technology, local media can reach a wider area, including people in remote areas. Therefore, support is needed to strengthen the local media's capacity through collaboration, training, and access to resources, so they can continue to play a role in advancing digital democracy in Sinjai Regency. In addition to the above findings, the informants provided concrete inputs that strengthened the research recommendations. Two representative informant quotes:

“If the internet connection were good and there were training on how to use government apps, maybe we could also vote or share our opinions online. So far, we haven't known how to access them.” (INF-01, Interview, August 2024)

“Young people actually want to get involved, but many parents or villagers don't know how to distinguish between information. The government or universities could provide regular training so that people aren't easily swayed by misinformation.” (INF-09, Interview, September 2024)

These quotes show that the proposed solution is not merely an academic conception, but also a need arising from field experience.

## 4. Conclusion

This research shows that community participation in digital democracy in Sinjai Regency continues to face significant obstacles. The two main factors that cause low participation are unequal access to the internet and low digital literacy, especially in rural areas. There are still blank spots in various sub-districts, making it difficult for some people to access political information quickly and accurately. At the same time, the public's limited ability to use digital devices and their inability to sort information make it difficult for them to be actively involved in the technology-based political process. This condition has led some citizens to remain passive and marginalized in the digital democracy space. On the other hand, people who have better digital literacy tend to be able to access relevant information and participate more actively. These findings confirm that equitable distribution of infrastructure and community capacity building are essential to create an inclusive and equitable digital democracy in Sinjai Regency.

Based on the results of the study, some recommendations that can be developed to reduce the digital democracy gap are:

- **Strengthening Digital Literacy:** It is necessary to organize a digital literacy training program that reaches all levels of society through schools, community centers,
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universities, and local government programs. The government's digital platform also needs to be simplified to be more user-friendly, with easy-to-access technical guidance and support. Awareness campaigns on the importance of digital political participation must also continue to be strengthened.

- Equitable distribution of Internet network infrastructure: Local governments need to prioritize improving it, especially in areas that still have blank spots. Equitable network distribution is a fundamental step to ensure that all people have equal access to political information.
- Collaboration between actors; Collaboration between the younger generation, the government, community organizations, local media, and the private sector needs to be expanded. This collaboration can accelerate innovation, provide resources, and encourage the development of digital education programs and more effective public participation platforms.
- Strengthening ICT Policy and Investment: The Sinjai Regency Government should strengthen regulations to support ICT infrastructure investment and expand community access to digital devices, especially in rural areas. This policy will help reduce the digital divide and provide fairer opportunities for all citizens to participate in digital democracy.

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