

Regulation and production of contemporary literature: An examination of literary evolution in the digital age

Robiatul Adawiyah*

Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author; Email: adawiyahrobiatul003@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The evolution of technology has significantly influenced the realm of literature. Once predominantly disseminated through oral and print mediums, literary works are now increasingly emerging in digital formats. The emergence of digital literature phenomena has impacted literary works' processes, outcomes, and production. Digital literature is not merely termed 'digital' due to its medium; it also entails form and regulatory framework differences. Unlike conventional literary works published in print, the production of digital literature is characterized by swiftness and demands rapidity. Employing netnography methodology with a descriptive approach to social change, this article explores the regulation of digital literature production, innovations in digital literary forms, the process of producing digital literature, and the changes occurring in print literature. The analytical process involves observing several platforms publishing digital literature, examining printed literary products, collecting regulatory data from various digital literary platforms, presenting the data, and drawing conclusions. The findings reveal that each digital literary platform has distinct regulations, unlike major print publishers with nearly uniform regulations. Furthermore, the rapid development of digital literature indirectly compels print literature to showcase greater creativity in marketing efforts to withstand the onslaught of innovative digital literary products in the contemporary era.

Keywords: Digital literature, literary production, literary regulation, digital platforms

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INTRODUCTION

Technological advancements have driven a remarkable surge in literature development in recent years. This global phenomenon has also significantly impacted Indonesian literature. Literary works, predominantly circulated in print form, have now expanded into the digital realm, contributing to the vibrancy of the digital landscape. Today's younger generation has abandoned print media in favor of electronic alternatives, getting all or most of the reading they need from the Web and digital platforms (Gomez, 2008:14). The advancement of technology has led to significant changes in societal dynamics, including how literary works are consumed and created. In the digital age, where speed and efficiency are expected, innovations across various aspects of life continue to unfold.

The digital era has revolutionized the creation, production, publication, and consumption of literature. In the past, literary works were mainly disseminated through oral tradition and print media. The digital revolution in digital books is not only about publishing management but also the unique content presented by digital books that is very different from printed books, namely content in the form of numeric symbols and bits that can be processed, stored, modified, and sent as data transmitted using various types of networks (Thompson, 2022:13). However, in the digital age, literary works are easily accessible anytime and anywhere. Ryan (2004:415) categorizes the history of writing into four periods based on technological innovations: the oral period, the chirography period (manuscript writing), the print period, and the digital period.

With smartphones, individuals can now enjoy literary works from around the world, spanning Indonesian, regional, and numerous foreign languages. This includes works from various genres, not just literature in different languages. Tewari (2016:2) states that online readers can easily transition

between pieces with a simple tap or swipe of their fingers. They can also switch between different media platforms, moving seamlessly from computers to laptops, mobile phones, tablets, and other electronic devices.

However, despite the many positive aspects associated with the proliferation of literature in the digital era, there are also some negative impacts. It is important to note that these impacts are not entirely negative. Based on print sales data on almost all books published and sold in the United States between 2004 and 2015, print book sales have declined by about 30% since 2008 due to the availability of ebooks of various genres at lower prices and the easy dissemination of digital books (Sharma, Telang, & Zentner, 2020). The digital era has led to a decline in the consumption of literature in print form, which has negatively impacted bookstores across various regions. Muratova (2024) notes that new trends have influenced the world of publishing markets. Mullan (2020) argues that digital technological advancements have decreased the number of print publications while increasing productivity.

The rise of digital literature has indirectly contributed to the closure of many bookstores due to the public's dwindling interest in purchasing physical books. Several bookstores have folded in recent years due to a need for more patrons. Gunawan (2023) argues that the closure and shutdown of bookstore outlets in various locations is a logical consequence of the rapid development of e-commerce, which has drastically altered society's shopping habits. The digitalization of the book industry, which began in the mid-1990s, has significantly impacted offset printing, *Amazon* has emerged as a global online bookstore (Thompson, 2021).

Not only does digital literature impact physical bookstore industries, leading to closures, but it also brings less favorable consequences for authors. Plagiarism has become easier and more prevalent with the proliferation of digital literary works. Hasan & Khan (2018:127) assert that the growth of digital technology has significantly enhanced accessibility for individuals, yet some frequently misuse this convenience. Nearly every year, cases of plagiarism perpetrated by certain writers against the works of others emerge.

The prevalence of plagiarism is not the sole issue plaguing the digital literary landscape; copyright issues regarding images commonly used as covers for digital literary works also arise. Many digital literary authors still lack a comprehensive understanding of copyright laws concerning images found on the internet. Khrystyna (2022) explained that many people commit copyright violations unconsciously due to a lack of knowledge, including breaches of the use of photos and images. Not all images widely available on the internet are free from copyright restrictions, posing a challenge for some novice digital literary authors unfamiliar with copyright laws about internet images.

Issues regarding copyright licenses for images often lead to content being removed from digital literature reading and writing platforms. This results in authors being blocked from such platforms and puts them at risk of legal trouble. The laws regarding copyright infringement are outlined in Law Number 19 of 2002. Annisa (2023) states that copyright protects various forms of intellectual expression, such as writing, music, images, films, paintings, software, designs, and other works of art.

Therefore, digital literary writers must be more careful in choosing images for their book covers. They must ensure that the images they take from the internet are copyright-free. Numerous websites provide a wide range of copyright-free images, such as *Unsplash*, *Pixabay*, *Pexels*, *Freepik*, and others (Atthoriq, 2023).

Digital literature has both negative and positive aspects. While there are some downsides to it, there are also many benefits for various parties. For instance, writers can now access various services for creating covers and editing digital manuscripts at different prices, and they can also take classes and training programs to improve their digital writing skills. Moreover, new digital reading and writing platforms are emerging every day in the form of applications and websites, both domestic and foreign. Some foreign platforms have become quite popular in Indonesia and have a significant market share. These platforms include *Wattpad*, a Canadian platform; *Fizzo*, a Chinese platform that is still under the same management as *Tiktok*; *Joylada*, a Thai platform; *Goodnovel*, a Singaporean platform; and many more.

Indonesia also has several popular platforms for digital literature, such as *KBM (Komunitas Bisa Menulis)*, which has been downloaded by over one million users; *Cabaca*, which has over a hundred thousand downloads (KBM:2024); and *Novelme*, which has over five million downloads (Novelme:2024). Each platform has its unique audience base, offering different literary works on themes, genres, segmentation, and presentation forms. These platforms are exclusively dedicated to

digital literature, and do not include game platforms that offer diverse storylines and user experiences. The development of digital literature has rapidly progressed in recent times, with an increasing number of enthusiasts.

In the beginning, digital literature was not respected and manuscripts circulating online were not considered as valuable as print publications. Ahmadun argued that literature published online was often considered as a "garbage dump" because it consisted of works that were initially rejected by print literary media (Situmorang, 2001). However, this assumption seems irrelevant because, in reality, many printed texts, such as those found in Gramedia bookstores, actually originate from digital literary works. For example, the novel *Antares* by Rweinda, published by Loveable, intentionally states on the cover that more than 42 million readers have read it on *Wattpad*. Due to its popularity, the novel has even been adapted into an eight-episode web series.

The novel *Antares* is just one example of how much digital literature has influenced the world of literature in Indonesia and the changing cycle of literature in Indonesia. Many digital literary works are still published in print and then adapted into series and feature films. Nowadays, even with the huge influence of social media, such as *Tiktok*, some content creators make short dramas with a duration of around 3-8 minutes from popular digital literature texts.

The audience for short dramas is quite large, some of which attract millions of viewers. For instance, the *Tiktok* account @villiacarl created a short drama based on a digital novel titled "Dinikah CEO Cantik" published on the *Fizzo* platform. Over 765,000 readers have already read the novel on *Fizzo*. The short drama comprises five episodes, each running for about 2 minutes and 20 seconds. The collective viewership of these five episodes is a staggering 13.9 million, indicating that an average of 2.78 million viewers watch each episode.

Several studies have been conducted on digital literature, but they mainly focus on analyzing digital literary works instead of examining the changes that have occurred in the transition from print to digital literature. For example, Asiyah, Sanjaya, Sartika, and Nurjanah (2021) conducted research on the use of digital literary works to enhance children's learning and religious values. Another study by Wilyanti and Wulandari (2023) analyzed the physical and structural aspects of audio-visual poetry on *YouTube* for teaching purposes. Additionally, Pratomo, Hikmat, and Safi'i (2024) conducted a trial on *Joylada*, a digital reading and writing platform, to evaluate its effectiveness in teaching popular literature courses to Indonesian literature students at Pamulang University.

The digital literary world is a unique phenomenon that has undergone significant changes in recent times. These changes have piqued the interest of researchers who want to analyze them further. This research will focus on four key areas: (1) regulations governing digital literature publishing, (2) innovations in digital literature forms, (3) production and publication of digital literature, and (4) changes in the production and publication system of printed literature. The next section will provide more in-depth details on each of these areas.

METHOD

This research is a qualitative study that will be analyzed using a netnography approach. Netnography is a methodology that helps gain an in-depth understanding of societal dynamics within the digital realm. It is a relatively recent research method pioneered by marketing professor Robert Kozinets in 1995. According to Sulianta (2022:5), netnography helps elucidate the socio-cultural and techno-cultural underpinnings behind various online social experiences. This includes video, audio, images, websites, links, or texts. Netnography provides comprehensive insights into the formation of societal patterns within digital environments, facilitating novel insights.

The material objects used in this research are the digital reading and writing platforms KBM and Fizzo. The two platforms are selected because, currently, in Indonesia, the two platforms have a vast number of users and are often discussed in the digital writer community. Fizzo currently has 50 million users, and KBM has 1 million users. In addition, the two platforms also come from different developers; KBM comes from Indonesia, and Fizzo comes from China. The different developers hope to broaden the understanding of the differences in services and work systems of digital reading and writing platforms originating from Indonesia and abroad.

This research uses a formal object in the form of postmodernism theory based on the views of Fredric Jameson, who considers today's society to be a consumer society whose life is dominated by the ideology of capitalism. According to Jameson (1990), postmodernism is a cultural response to

systematic changes in world capitalism, especially the shift towards globalization and financialization. Through Jameson's perspective, this research will try to see the development of literature in the digital era, which has undergone many changes and differences compared to literature in the pre-digital era.

This analysis comprises several stages: observing various platforms publishing digital literature, examining printed literary products, collecting data on regulations from multiple digital literary platforms, each of which typically possesses distinct regulations, presenting and discussing the gathered data, and drawing conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the analysis conducted through the employment of a netnography approach to the phenomenon of digital literature, several intriguing findings emerged regarding regulations in digital literature publishing, innovations in digital literary forms, processes of digital literary production and publication, and shifts in the system of print literary production and publication. Regarding regulations in digital literature publishing, each platform for reading and writing digital literature imposes distinct rules. This study will elucidate examples of regulatory differences between two popular online reading and writing platforms in Indonesia. One platform originates domestically, while the other originates abroad, commonly called a global platform.

Table 1. Production Regulations of Two Platforms for Writing and Reading Digital Novels in Indonesia

Number	Regulations on the Original Indonesian Platform: <i>Komunitas Bisa Menulis (KBM)</i>	Regulations on the Global Platform: <i>Fizzo</i>
1.	Authors have the freedom to publish their work without undergoing any editorial selection process.	Authors must write a minimum of 5000 words as a requirement to apply for a contract on the platform.
2.	The platform offers a wide range of literary works, including short stories, poetry collections, and novels.	Authors whose manuscripts have passed review must sign a contract.
3.	Authors have the freedom to monetize their published works.	Two types of contracts are offered: exclusive and non-exclusive, each with a specified time frame.
4.	The authors' earnings solely come from revenue sharing with readers who unlock locked chapters using coins.	There is no chapter-locking system, as authors' earnings are derived from advertisements and the performance of published manuscripts.
5.	The authors carry out the process of writing and editing manuscripts independently.	The process of writing and editing manuscripts is carried out independently by the authors. However, editors are still responsible for reviewing the manuscripts and managing authors' contracts with the platform.
6.	Authors monetizing their works must submit a statement affirming that the published work is original and not the result of plagiarism.	Authors are required to sign contracts when publishing their works.
7.	Accepting all types of literary works, including novels, short stories, serials, poetry, children's stories, and dramas.	The published literary works are novels.
8.	It is possible to publish manuscripts of various lengths, regardless of how short or long they are.	It is highly recommended to engage in long-form writing when creating a novel.
9.	There is no requirement to sign a contract or a specific time frame for any contractual agreement.	Authors are monitored by a sophisticated system that detects plagiarism and writings that do not comply with platform rules.

Although digital literature publishing gives freedom for writers to write and publish their books, writers are not free because there are still restrictions and rules applied by each digital literary reading and writing platform, and each platform has different policies. Publishing literary works on digital platforms has its challenges for writers because writers are fully responsible for the published works; writers act as writers and editors, cover designers, and marketers. In addition, as part of a popular culture product, digital reading and writing platforms also consider profit and loss because, after all, the platform

is an economic commodity product. Strauss (2022) explains that digital reading and writing platforms are designed to generate revenue through various means, such as advertising, subscription fees, and affiliate marketing, often prioritizing the platform's profits over the welfare of its writers.

Digital literature, as a product of technological advancement, presents differences in its production and publication methods and presentation formats. Technological progress fosters remarkable creativity and innovation in the literary field. Integrating text, static images, moving images, and audio is no longer surprising and has become commonplace. In addition to integrating various media, digital literature formats have become increasingly diverse with the emergence of chat-based literature, such as those found in the *Joylada* application, and literature presented in the form of online games.

As part of business in postmodern society, digital literature platforms are indirectly required to present various innovations and creations to attract more readers and writers. Innovation in digital literature can be seen as a driver of competition because businesses must continue to learn and adapt to remain competitive in the digital era (Saputra & Ali, 2024). However, apart from this, the various innovations presented in digital literature have made the world of literature look dynamically developing.

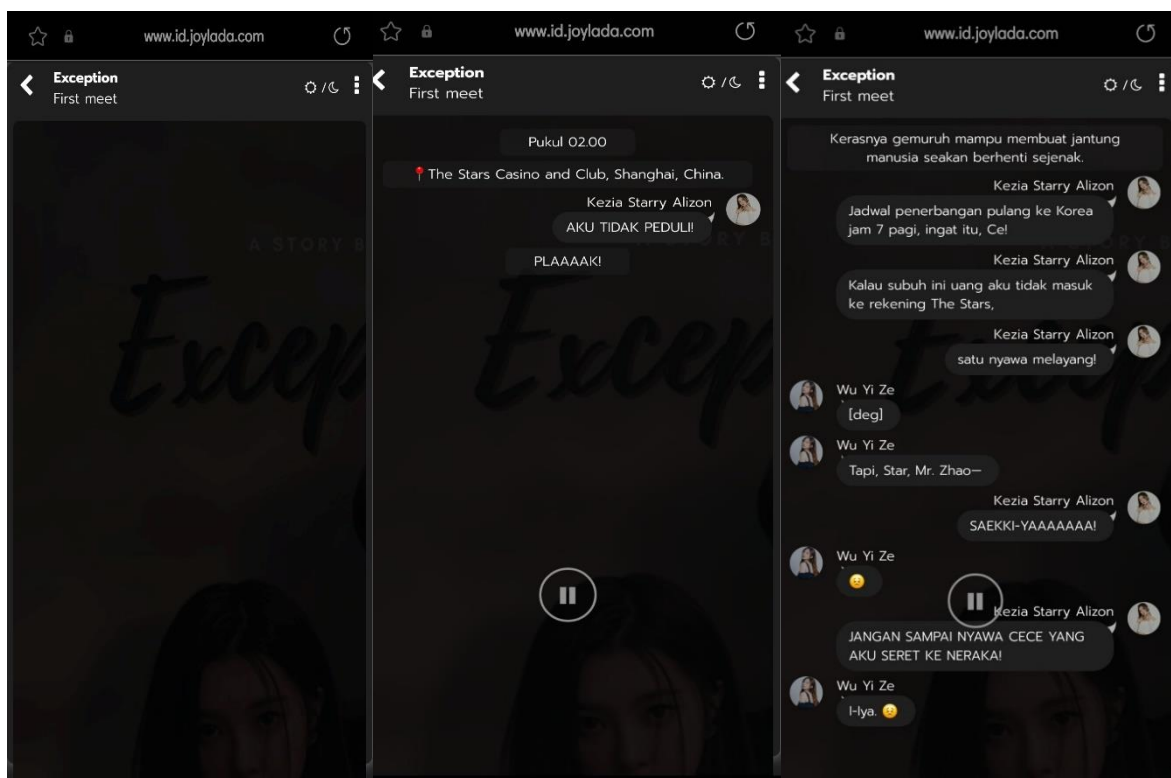


Figure 1. Chat Novel Feature on the Digital Reading and Writing Platform

Image Source: GRZL from Joylada

Another innovation in digital literature is literature within games. Through enjoyable gameplay, readers actively participate in determining the desired storyline. For example, in the game "King's Throne: Royal Delights," players can choose their characters and explore various narrative paths. However, each chosen path already has a predetermined narrative structure created by the game's story developers.

The plot presented in the game choices provides a different ending to the story. The player is taken to explore the story so that each player who also acts as a reader can have a different experience. Various alternative plots make digital literature a very postmodern media (Ryan, 2004: 423). Postmodern narratives often need clarification due to the narrative games presented. However, such narrative structures are very effective in creating an engaging storyline as they keep the reader guessing and actively involved in the story; the reader is forced to question the truth and re-evaluate their understanding of the story as new information is revealed (Selvi & Thilagavathi, 2018:1218).

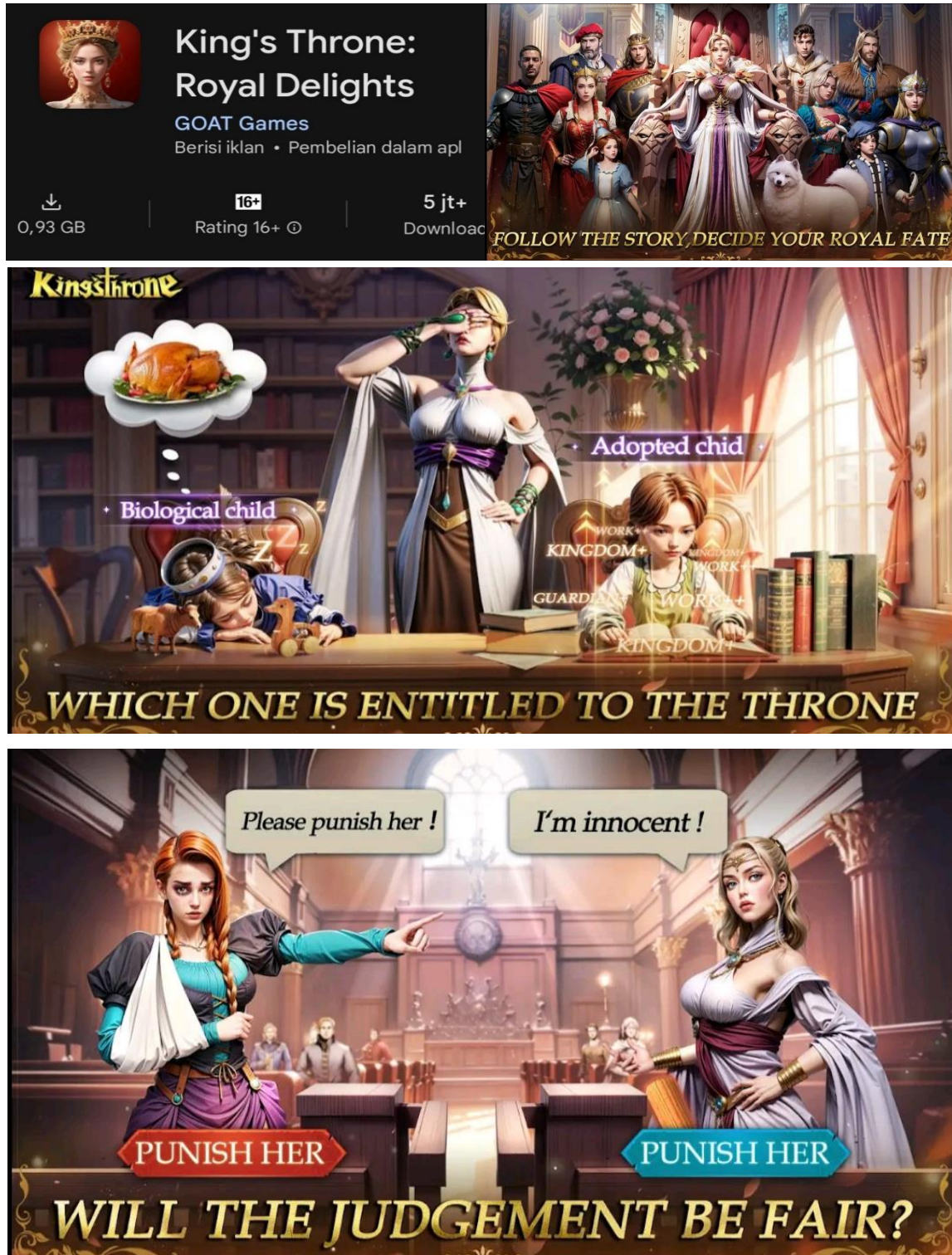


Figure 2. Representation of the Online Game "King's Throne: Royal Delights"

Image Source: King's Throne: Royal Delights

In addition to highlighting the differences in regulations and innovations within digital literature, this study also demonstrates the disparities in the production and publication of digital literature compared to print literature, as depicted in the following table.

Table 2. Differences in Production and Publication Processes between Digital Literature and Print Literature

Number	Production and Publication Process of Digital Literature	Production and Publication Process of Print Literature
1.	The selection period for publication is relatively short, typically lasting at most thirty days on average.	The manuscript selection period is exceptionally long, with the shortest average duration being two months and potentially extending to one year.
2.	The first five chapters must already demonstrate clear conflicts.	The first five chapters are not required to introduce the main conflict.
3.	The most enjoyed long-form manuscripts can contain hundreds of thousands of words.	The manuscript is not excessively long, typically containing no more than sixty thousand words.
4.	Editors typically handle only the initial selection process.	Editors maintain communication with authors from the initial selection process until the manuscript can be published in the market.
5.	Authors are solely responsible for writing and publishing their works.	A team of editors, layouters, and marketers assists authors.
6.	There is a demand to update the story daily with a specific word count.	There is no demand to update the manuscript daily because the manuscripts submitted to the publishing desk are already complete and are not works in progress.
7.	Market demand becomes crucial.	Market demand is important but not always paramount.

Changes to the print literature production system are outlined in the following table.

Table 3. Changes Occurring in Print Literature Production

Number	Production of Print Literature Before the Digital Literature Era	Production of Print Literature in the Era of Proliferating Digital Literature Development
1.	Authors submit manuscripts to the publisher for consideration by the editorial selection team.	Many publishers independently venture into various reading and writing platforms to seek manuscripts for print publication.
2.	The quality of the manuscript, including its plot, grammar, and the strength of its conflict, is highly important and prioritized.	The number of readers of digital manuscripts has become crucial for securing print publication by major publishers. A substantial readership and following in the digital realm is considered a significant advantage.
3.	Accepted manuscripts are published and distributed to conventional bookstores such as Gramedia, Togamas, and others.	Manuscripts published in print are marketed not only in conventional bookstores but also in online bookstores and e-commerce platforms.
4.	Published manuscripts are exclusively in book form.	Published manuscripts are not only in book form but also accompanied by various unique and appealing merchandise. Each book comes with its distinctive merchandise.
5.	Bestselling books in the market often have the opportunity to be adapted into films.	Popular books on digital platforms have the opportunity to be adapted not only into films but also into web series. Following this, they may be published in print or undergo the opposite process, transitioning from digital novels to printed novels before being adapted into films or web series.

Discussion

Regulations in Digital Literature Publishing

After analyzing the developments occurring in the realm of literature in the digital era over a period of time, it becomes evident that the era of technological advancement has brought about significant changes to the world of literature. Digital literature presents a unique opportunity to create and reflect upon the changes that have occurred, not only within the realm of media but also within

society, both in enjoyable and critical manners (Rettberg, 2021:117). These changes include alterations in the regulation of literary publication.

In the era preceding technological advancements, literary works could only be enjoyed orally or in print. However, in the present day, literary works can also be consumed digitally, making access easier and more efficient. Digital literature provides greater accessibility and ease of use, which can indirectly increase public participation in literary activities, especially among the younger generation (Botines & Alonso, 2023:5). The existence of literature in digital form can expand access to literature. The ease of access to digital literature can positively impact social equality and cultural diversity, as people from different backgrounds can now engage with a broader and more diverse range of literary works (Vanathi, 2023:204). The emergence of digital literature changes reading consumption and alters the regulations governing the publication of literary works.

Nearly every major publisher adheres to similar rules or regulations regarding publishing literary works in printed literature. Even if there are differences in regulations among major publishers, the variations implemented are similar. This starkly contrasts the regulations found in digital literature publishing, as each digital reading and writing platform possesses distinct sets of rules. The differences between platforms are considerable, particularly evident in publication regulations.

Recent times have witnessed a proliferation of digital reading and writing platforms, both domestic and international (global platforms), each imposing differing regulations on literary publication. These platforms vary widely in terms of accessibility and their author selection criteria stringency. While some platforms offer easy access to writers, others need help with rigorous selection processes.

One of the most popular digital reading and writing platforms in Indonesia, which can be considered a pioneering platform that paved the way for the emergence of other literary platforms, is *Wattpad*. The publication of literary works on *Wattpad* does not entail complex regulations, except for the requirement that works must be original, free from plagiarism, and devoid of any elements of discrimination or racism.

Anyone can freely publish their works on *Wattpad* without undergoing a selection process. However, the situation differs if a published work aims for commercial value. *Wattpad* does not grant authors the freedom to monetize their published works independently; rather, works monetized on *Wattpad*, or what *Wattpad* terms "premium works," are selected by *Wattpad* editors based on specific categories and criteria. While *Wattpad* does not explicitly outline the requirements for monetizing literary work, premium works on the platform generally encompass those with a substantial readership. For instance, the *Wattpad* premium novel "Mary's Bones" by Loutka has been read by over 139 thousand readers, while "Someone Else" by Novelsandcoffee has garnered over 11 million readers, among numerous other novels.

The digital world has given rise to a new concept of commercialization and economic sustainability (Zhao & Wang, 2023:5) that has also affected the world of digital literature, where in digital literature the commercial benefits of platforms still take precedence. Digital platforms have transformed the book industry, emphasizing the continued dominance of commercial interests over artistic and cultural values that can indirectly lead to the homogenization of content and the marginalization of diverse voices. The reason for this is that platforms will favor works that are in high demand over works that are in low demand. That phenomenon aligns with Karta's statement (in Jameson, 2020: iv) that postmodernism literature has been made a profitable commodity for capitalists.

In addition to *Wattpad*, numerous other platforms exist. However, this study will focus primarily on and delve deeply into two platforms considered the most popular amidst Indonesian society today: one originating from Indonesia, known as *KBM*, and another from China, *Fizzo*. The popularity of these two platforms can be gauged by the number of downloads on both the Play Store and the App Store. *KBM* has been downloaded by over one million users on the Play Store, and on the App Store, *KBM* ranks as the fifth most popular app in the book category. On the other hand, *Fizzo* has been downloaded by over 50 million users on the Play Store and ranks third on the App Store as the most popular app in the book category.

These two platforms implement vastly different regulations in the publication of literary works. Furthermore, they differ in the types of literature they accommodate. While *KBM* accepts all forms of literature, including poetry, serialized stories, short stories, and novels, *Fizzo* exclusively publishes

novels. Moreover, numerous other differences exist between the two platforms apart from the distinction in the types of literary works published.

The manuscripts published on *KBM* are not specifically limited in word count within a single literary work. This contrasts with *Fizzo*, which prioritizes the publication of lengthy manuscripts and even recommends manuscripts exceeding 150,000 words. *KBM* lacks a selection system for the publication of literary works, except for specific competitions that may be held, wherein expert juries conduct rigorous evaluations in their respective fields. However, beyond the competitions organized by *KBM*, anyone can become a writer and freely publish their works, provided that the published works do not contain elements of discrimination or racism and are original creations, not plagiarized. These criteria have become mandatory for almost all digital reading and writing platforms, including *Fizzo*.

In addition to granting authors the freedom to publish literary works of any genre, *KBM* allows its writers to monetize their published works independently, without intervention from *KBM* editors. Every writer has the opportunity to earn income from the monetization of their works. There are no contracts that authors need to sign when monetizing their works; they only need to submit their consent to publish their works.

The regulations implemented by *KBM* significantly differ from those applied by *Fizzo*. *Fizzo* provides editors for its writers and employs a contract system to publish works. Initially, *Fizzo* offered writers two types of contracts: exclusive and non-exclusive. However, currently, *Fizzo* only accepts manuscripts under exclusive contracts. Under an exclusive manuscript contract, the published work can only be released on *Fizzo*; it cannot be published on other platforms or adapted or printed without consent from *Fizzo*. Conversely, a non-exclusive contract allows the published work on *Fizzo* to be released on other platforms.

In addition to these differences, there are other distinctions between the two platforms. At *KBM*, there is no specific publication duration; at *Fizzo*, a work contract exclusively has a contract period of 50 years. Consequently, any work contracted exclusively with *Fizzo* during this period cannot be published elsewhere.

The disparities between the monetization systems and contracts also lead to differences in income. At *KBM*, authors' earnings solely stem from revenue sharing based on locked chapters. In contrast, at *Fizzo*, authors' primary income currently comes from advertisements embedded within each published chapter—a regulation that differs from *Fizzo*'s initial policies. Initially, the authors' main income source on *Fizzo* was determined by the word count written by the authors, resulting in higher earnings for longer works. However, the regulations have undergone continuous modifications due to numerous violations on the *Fizzo* platform, such as plagiarism and the presence of identical duplicate chapters.

The rules of digital literature publishing on a platform continue to change over time, not only because digital literature platforms want to maximize their profits (Spjeldnæs, 2022). Although maximizing profits is the essential factor in considering changing a rule as part of a business, changes in the rules of digital literature publishing on a platform generally occur due to a combination of technological advances, shifting reader preferences, industry developments, regulatory frameworks, and the needs of authors and publishers.

KBM and *Fizzo* require each uploaded chapter to contain a minimum of 1000 words. The policy was implemented because 1000 words are considered the ideal length for a novel chapter, short enough for readers to enjoy the story comfortably. The comfort of readers of digital literature is highly considered because it concerns the continuity of readers' subscriptions to the story and continuing to buy every chapter of the published story. If readers of digital literature continue to feel interested in reading the literature they read, profits will increase; readers in digital literature are a critical factor in driving revenue growth (Mark Wide Research, 2024). Readers who wish to enjoy monetized works on *KBM* must purchase a certain number of coins to unlock locked chapters, whereas, on *Fizzo*, all novels are provided for free, albeit accompanied by advertisements. If readers find the advertisements disruptive, they have the option to opt out of ad exposure by subscribing to *Fizzo* Premium, which entails paying a subscription fee to *Fizzo*.

Innovations in Digital Literary Forms

The digital world is a realm of constant innovation, which undoubtedly impacts the forms presented in digital literature. Digital literature can be seen as brimming with allure and far from monotonous. This is because of the various forms in which works are presented.

Digital literature not only exists in the form of written literature or the transition of media from print to digital; it transcends beyond that. Technology developers continue to develop remarkable innovations in the literary world, thereby creating unique platforms that indirectly give rise to literary works in different and impressive forms. Digital technology enables writers to enhance their activities and creativity (Arifin, 2021).

For instance, the developers behind the *Joylada* platform, a reading and writing platform for literature, introduced novels in the form of chat. Upon its initial emergence, chat novels were met with great enthusiasm as they brought a fresh perspective to the literary world. Chat novels are literary works presented as conversations or chats, supplemented with images, text, audio, and other elements to depict the story's background (Noveltoon, 2021).

Its unconventional form offers readers a unique experience, as they are not merely passive consumers of the text but must navigate through buttons to continue reading the chat novel. Chat novels provide readers with an experience unlike reading a traditional novel; rather, it resembles reading someone's messages. The dialogue language used mirrors the language typically used in chat conversations. Additionally, the narration within chat novels consists of brief, to-the-point narratives rather than lengthy prose.

In addition to the emergence of chat novels, there has been a proliferation of literature in the form of various games. These games span across different genres, such as romance, horror, thriller, action, science fiction, adventure, and more. Enjoying stories through games also provides an exciting experience because to progress through a story, a user must first overcome challenges within the game or complete specific missions to uncover the continuation of the story within the game.

Moreover, by immersing oneself in narrative-driven games, a user also has the freedom to choose the role of the character they wish to play. This allows users to feel truly immersed in the storyline. Games that offer users the flexibility to portray specific roles within the game enable them to engage more deeply with the gameplay (Robinson, Klarkowski, Rheeder, & Mandryk, 2022). Considering the rapid pace of technological advancement, it is anticipated that there will be even more innovations and creations in digital literature to look forward to.

The Production and Publication Process of Digital Literature

The evolution of media for literary consumption necessitates adjustments in the publication system of literary works. During the heyday of print literature, the publication process of a literary work could be intricate and time-consuming. However, in the current era of rapid digital literary expansion, the publication system of literary works has undergone significant changes.

Similar to print literature, digital literature also encompasses systems for production and publication. Print literature inherently demands prompt and consistent release. The selection process in print literature publishing typically spans from a few days to a maximum of thirty days, in contrast to the manuscript selection in major print publishers, which typically takes months, ranging from a minimum of two months to a maximum of a year.

Manuscripts intended for major print publication must be complete, indicating that they are fully finalized from prologue to epilogue rather than being works in progress. This starkly contrasts the publication system within the realm of digital literature. Manuscripts for digital literature publication under contract on a reading and writing platform typically require only 5000 words to be submitted to the editor for selection. However, some platforms may require a higher word count.

Upon submitting 5000 words accompanied by a comprehensive storyline synopsis and deemed successful in the editor's selection process, the subsequent step to publish and earn income from the work entails signing a contract. Only after the contract signing process is completed can the signed work proceed to the writing phase.

The initial five chapters in digital literature heavily influence whether a work is accepted for publication on a platform. Therefore, within these five chapters, authors must vividly demonstrate the story's main conflict and highlight the characters therein. This differs from the selection process in print publishing, which assesses the suitability of a work for publication based on its entirety.

Typically, authors are obligated to update their stories daily, with a monthly break of 3-4 days, and upload a minimum of 1000 words per chapter. Authors are responsible for consistently adding chapters to their work daily until its completion to retain readership. This contrasts with print literature, which is only published once the manuscript is complete rather than chapter by chapter.

Editors in digital and print literature also have markedly different roles. In digital platforms, editors do not have personal proximity to the authors or their manuscripts since their involvement is primarily limited to the initial stages, from manuscript selection to contract signing. Digital literature editors also lack control over the language used by authors; authors are entirely responsible for the organization of their writing. This differs from editors in print literature, who engage in intensive communication with authors until the manuscript is ready for publication in the market.

Digital literature circulating and becoming bestsellers largely exhibit similar tendencies and formulas. Digital literature, as part of popular fiction, also has a similar tendency to popular fiction, which promotes the same themes in published works of fiction. Popular fiction generally has many similarities because it relates to the entertainment industry and market interests. If the market conditions favour a work of fiction with a particular genre, the works published afterwards tend to follow the works that are in demand by the majority of the public (Murphy, 2017:25). This is because each platform adheres to market preferences. Market preferences are crucial as they determine the magnitude of profit accruable to authors and the companies overseeing digital literary products, contingent upon the number of consumers (Webster, 2014). The situation in the digital literary realm regarding taste differs significantly from that of print literature; Squires (2017:28) notes that publishing companies tend to have distinct market preferences, corporate environments, and individual tastes.

For instance, current market preferences lean towards stories themed around CEOs and one-night stands; consequently, works with similar themes have a higher chance of garnering contracts across almost all digital reading and writing platforms. In contrast, while acknowledging the significance of market preferences, print literature does not prioritize them in the publishing process. If a work is deemed exceptional and worthy of publication due to its unique qualities, it may still be published.

Both print and digital literature have their respective merits and demerits. Both deserve appreciation and should not favor one by denigrating the other. The presence of both print and digital literature adds diversity to the literary world; hence, both should be equally embraced.

Changes in the Production and Publication System of Printed Literature

The evolution of digital literature has profoundly influenced the landscape of print literature. Before the advent of digital literature, aspiring authors seeking to publish their works in print often had to submit their manuscripts to major publishers by physically delivering them to publishing offices or sending complete manuscripts via email to the desired publisher. In the past, authors who wanted to publish their books used to send their manuscripts to publishing offices or directly to publishers. The manuscripts were then reviewed. If accepted by the publisher, they were edited and possibly revised before being printed and distributed (Mukundarajan, 2017).

In the contemporary milieu, authors are not invariably required to pursue such avenues, as many major publishers actively scout for manuscripts on digital reading and writing platforms. A plethora of novels circulating in bookstores originate from digital platforms. Noteworthy among the major publishers frequently responsible for disseminating novels sourced from digital platforms are Loveable, KataDepan, Bukune, and numerous others.

Previously, the quality of manuscripts, encompassing plot, grammar, and the strength of conflicts, was deemed paramount and prioritized in publishing print literary works. However, in contemporary times, the number of readers of digital manuscripts has become a crucial factor for potential publication in print by certain major publishers. The curation of manuscripts from digital platforms for print publication has hitherto focused on the author's social capital (popularity), gauged by the number of readers and followers on social media (Stavropoulou, 2016). A substantial readership and following in the digital realm is advantageous for an author. Consequently, it is expected to find the number of readers of a digital novel featured on the cover when published in print.

The abundance of readership serves as an added value to a work when circulated in the market, as the number of readers listed on a book's cover indirectly influences prospective buyers' interest in purchasing the book. The greater the number of readers indicated on the cover of a book, the more intriguing it becomes to potential buyers. Including the number of readers on the cover of a book is a marketing strategy aimed at boosting its sales in the market. Nowadays, Publishers seek works with potential marketability and look for authors who can be utilized as market commodities (Bold, 2016).

The emerging differences are not limited solely to the production system but also extend to the publication system. In the past, printed books were exclusively distributed through conventional

bookstores such as Gramedia, Togamas, and others. However, nowadays, printed literature is also marketed through e-commerce platforms, and each publisher now operates its online store, reaching a more extensive and accessible consumer base.

In the digital literary onslaught era, which offers numerous captivating innovations and diverse experiences for readers, print literary publishers are inevitably compelled to innovate their products to capture the attention and interest of consumers. The integration of multimedia components, such as videos, animations, images, and interactive features, can enhance the reading experience. Innovations made by various digital literature platforms allow authors to create more engaging and immersive stories, and these innovations have changed how readers consume and interact with literary content (Xiaolan et al., 2021).

It cannot be denied that the emergence of digital literature platforms has shaken up the print literature industry. Therefore, in order for print literature publishing to survive amidst the onslaught of digital literature, print literature publishers must be able to adapt to the changes that continue to occur. Many print literature publishers have started to rethink their marketing strategies to attract more consumers, utilizing social media and other digital platforms to reach readers (BookPublishing, 2023).

As an effort to sustain the vitality of print literature, printed works that were once sold solely in book form are now offered a plethora of unique and appealing merchandise variations. Each book is accompanied by distinct merchandise. For instance, the novel "Renjana" by El Alicia, published by KataDepan, is marketed not only as a standalone novel but also with a range of enticing merchandise such as author signatures, batik bags, bookmarks, mirrors, postcards, keychains, and jade rings.



Figure 3. "Renjana" by El Alicia
Image: Shopee/KataDepan Publisher

Another difference lies in the adaptation of popular novels with large readerships. In the past, best-selling printed novels were often given the opportunity to be adapted into feature films, such as "Laskar Pelangi" by Andrea Hirata, "Hafalan Salat Delisa" by Tere Liye, "Surga yang Tak Dirindukan" by Asma Nadia, and many other novels.

Presently, popular and bestselling novels have the chance to be adapted into feature films and web series streamed on digital platforms such as *Netflix*, *Disney+*, *Prime Video*, *Video*, *VIU*, and others. Subsequently, they may be published in print, or the process may be reversed, starting from a digital novel to a printed one and then adapted into a film or web series. For instance, the web series "A Ship of Love," available on the *Video* app, is inspired by the novel "Barista Cafe Jomblo" by Santy Puji. The web series is based on a digital novel published on *Noveltoon* and has been read by over 2.1 million readers.

CONCLUSION

As a postmodern product, digital literature plays an active role in improving the economy of the owners of capital. The way digital literature works is very different from the way printed literature works. Each digital literature platform has different rules depending on the policies set by the company that owns the platform. For example, digital literature platforms *Fizzo* and *KBM* have their own policies and display models.

The continued emergence of digital literature platforms is also a result of the increasing competition in the world of literature as a commodity. Each digital literature platform developer strives to make their platform the most innovative and compete to be the best platform to attract more readers and writers because the profits earned will also be more significant with the increase in readers and writers.

The massive development of digital literature has had an impact on print literature. The ease of access and the variety of digital literature have made printed literature less and less popular. Print literature publishers have begun competing to survive amidst the onslaught of digital literature. Print literature publishers make various efforts to maintain their existence in the literary industry. Therefore, print literature publishers present a new product sales style by offering sales packages containing books, author signatures, and various exciting and unique merchandise.

In the future, it is hoped that researchers can delve deeper into the various innovations in the diverse digital literary landscape, expanding the horizons of all literary enthusiasts and scholars. This would indicate that the world of literature has progressed rapidly.

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