

## Digital Literacy Of The Community In Using E-Court At Purwakarta Religious Court

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### ABSTRACT

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*The e-Court system is intended to modernize judicial public services by enabling electronic case registration, payments, summonses, and proceedings. Yet access to the system does not automatically ensure that justice seekers can use it independently. This study analyzes community digital literacy in using e-Court services at the Purwakarta Religious Court through David Bawden's framework of digital skills, background knowledge, core competencies, and attitudes and perspectives. A descriptive qualitative approach was used. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with purposively selected justice seekers, PTSP officers, court clerks, and advocates, non-participant observations, and document analysis. The findings show that users' ability to create accounts, manage email, upload documents, and make electronic payments remains uneven. The court's 2024 records show that 1,344 of 2,578 cases (52.1%) were registered through e-Court, but this figure indicates adoption rather than independent digital capability. Users frequently relied on officers, family members, or advocates because of limited devices, connectivity, prior experience, confidence, and understanding of procedures. Although many users viewed e-Court as efficient, positive attitudes did not consistently translate into independent use. The study concludes that e-Court implementation is a socio-technical policy issue. Courts should combine active outreach, guided practice at a dedicated help desk, accessible instructions, privacy safeguards, and indicators that measure independent and equitable use.*



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## INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation in governance has encouraged e-government as a strategy for improving the efficiency, transparency, and quality of public services (Suhendra et al., 2022). In this setting, digital literacy is not limited to operating a device; it involves accessing, understanding, evaluating, and using digital information effectively and responsibly (Bawden, 2001; Lisyawati et al., 2023; Sitalhis & Novaria, 2024). The use of digital technology in bureaucracy is therefore part of good-governance reform, but the benefits of electronic services are not distributed automatically. Unequal access to devices, internet connectivity, accounts, and prior experience can produce unequal ability to use digital public services (Kamsidah, 2022; Prasetyo et al., 2022; Silitonga, 2023). The central issue is therefore not only whether an electronic service is available, but whether users can access it, understand it, and use it independently and safely.

One example of digital public service implementation is the electronic court system, or e-Court, developed by the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia. The system enables users to register cases, pay court fees, submit case documents, receive summonses, and participate in selected court proceedings through e-Filing, e-Payment, e-Summons, and e-Litigation. Its implementation is based on Supreme Court Regulation Number 1 of 2019, as amended by Supreme Court Regulation Number 7 of 2022 concerning electronic case administration and court proceedings (Mahkamah Agung Republik Indonesia, 2022). The policy is intended to support simple, fast, affordable, transparent, and accountable judicial services. Its realization, however, depends not only on system and regulatory readiness but also on the ability of service users to navigate the system.

Previous studies show that the public still faces obstacles in using e-Court services. Research at the Belopa District Court found difficulties with document uploads, internet connectivity, electronic payments, and understanding the service flow, which led users to return to the court for assistance (Putri & Salenda, 2021). Research at the Salatiga District Court likewise identified limited technological literacy, network constraints, and inadequate supporting facilities, while recommending outreach and assistance (Albani & Kurniawan, 2025). Studies of e-Court use in Batusangkar, South Sulawesi, and Central Java also report gaps in public understanding, email use, infrastructure, and the perceived utility of electronic services (Putri & Sari, 2026; Mokoagow et al., 2026; Rofiq et al., 2025). These findings indicate that digital literacy is an important condition for the effectiveness of electronic justice services. Nevertheless, previous research has more often emphasized system implementation or technical barriers than the way social relations, user confidence, and local service practices shape digital literacy in everyday use.

A similar phenomenon was found at the Purwakarta Religious Court. Initial observations indicated that some justice seekers had difficulty understanding online case registration, uploading electronic documents, and using an active email address as an administrative requirement. As a result, users frequently depended on PTSP officers when accessing e-Court services. Court records for 2024 show that 1,344 of 2,578 cases were registered through e-Court, equivalent to approximately 52.1%. This figure shows that the service had been adopted, but it should not be interpreted by itself as evidence of independent digital capability. A substantial proportion of cases still used conventional registration. The local case therefore provides an opportunity to examine the difference between nominal adoption of a digital service and meaningful, independent use by the community.

This condition indicates that the success of e-Court is not determined only by the readiness of the system and regulations, but also by the community's ability to use digital technology in a socially situated setting. This study applies David Bawden's (2001) framework, which connects digital skills, background knowledge of information, core competencies, and attitudes and perspectives on information use. The dimensions are treated as interrelated: a user may have a positive attitude toward e-Court but still be unable to use it because of limited access, prior knowledge, practice, or confidence. Accordingly, this study asks how the community uses e-Court services, understands their procedures and mechanisms, and develops the competence and readiness to search for, understand, evaluate, and use digital information. The study aims to analyze community digital literacy in using e-Court services at the Purwakarta Religious Court and to derive practical implications for inclusive public policy.

## METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze community digital literacy in using e-Court services at the Purwakarta Religious Court. The approach was selected because the study seeks to understand users' experiences, perceptions, and obstacles in an actual service setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis. The observations focused on how users accessed the e-Court service, created or used accounts, prepared and uploaded documents, and completed electronic payments. Documents included the court's 2024 case-registration records, e-Court information materials, service procedures, official reports, and research photographs.

Informants were selected purposively because they had direct experience with the service and could provide information-rich accounts of its use. Four criteria were applied: (1) justice seekers who had registered, attempted to register, or received assistance in using e-Court; (2) PTSP officers who directly assisted e-Court users; (3) court clerks who handled electronic case administration; and (4) advocates who had used e-Court for case registration or submission. These categories were included to represent user experience, frontline implementation, administrative procedures, and the perspective of experienced users. Informants were required to describe at least one concrete stage of the service or one obstacle encountered in practice; they are identified by role rather than by name. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Credibility was strengthened through source and technical triangulation. Source triangulation compared accounts from justice seekers, PTSP officers, clerks, and advocates. Technical triangulation compared interview statements with observation notes and documents, including court records and information materials. When discrepancies appeared, the researchers checked the relevant recordings or transcripts, field notes, and documents before including the issue as a final theme. Coding and verification were conducted iteratively using Bawden's four dimensions as analytic categories.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Community Ability to Use Digital Services in the e-Court System

Interviews with the Chief Registrar indicated that e-Court use had increased since 2022 as part of judicial modernization. The increase, however, was not matched by equal digital capability among service users. Some justice seekers were unfamiliar with basic operations such as opening links, navigating menus, managing email, and completing online forms. PTSP officers consequently became an essential bridge between the electronic system and users.

Users described difficulties in creating an e-Court account, maintaining an active email address, uploading case documents in the required format, and completing electronic payments. Some preferred to come to court in person because they were concerned about making an error in a legal-administrative process. Others lacked a personal device, a stable internet connection,

or a bank account and therefore relied on family members or court staff. These experiences indicate that many users had only a basic operational ability and had not yet developed the confidence to complete the process independently.

PTSP officers and advocates confirmed that users frequently depended on third parties for registration, document uploads, and electronic payments. Advocates considered the technical process manageable when the documents were prepared in the correct format, but emphasized that the more persistent barrier was the user's ability to understand and apply digital procedures. The preference for direct service was therefore not merely a rejection of technology; it was also a practical response to uncertainty, limited practice, and the availability of trusted assistance at the courthouse.

Observation showed that people attending the court were generally more comfortable with face-to-face service than with the available digital channel. Although the court had provided information about e-Court, some users still could not follow the electronic steps without help. This demonstrates a gap between service availability and service usability: a digital service can be formally accessible while remaining difficult to use for people with limited devices, experience, or confidence. The result is that digitalization has not yet removed the need for assisted service at the Purwakarta Religious Court.

Viewed through Bawden's (2001) framework, the problem is not simply a shortage of digital skills. Digital skills interact with background knowledge, access to devices and connectivity, and opportunities for guided practice. Users' reliance on PTSP officers or family members shows that e-Court transactions are often assisted or delegated rather than independent. Consequently, the 2024 figure of 1,344 e-Court registrations out of 2,578 cases (52.1%) indicates adoption, but it is not a direct measure of digital inclusion or user independence.

The preference for face-to-face service is also sociologically meaningful. It can be understood as a rational response to uncertainty about document formats, payments, account security, and the consequences of an error in a legal process. Face-to-face interaction offers immediate clarification and draws on trusted relationships with officers, family members, or advocates. This finding challenges an individual-deficit explanation that places the problem only in the user's skills. Court assistance reduces barriers in the short term, but if it only substitutes for user learning, it may reproduce dependence. Inclusive digital justice therefore requires a supported transition from assisted to independent use.

### **Public Knowledge of e-Court Procedures and Mechanisms**

The findings show that public knowledge of e-Court procedures and mechanisms at the Purwakarta Religious Court remains limited. Many justice seekers were unaware of e-Court before visiting the court and learned about it only after receiving an explanation from an officer. Users also described incomplete understanding of case registration, account use, and electronic payment. Some knew that payment involved a bank transfer but did not understand the steps inside the system; some did not have a personal bank account and depended on family members for payment.

The researchers observed an e-Court information board in the service area. The board presented information about the electronic service as part of the court's effort to inform the public.



Figure 1. E-Court Service Information Board

Source: Researcher documentation.

The information board demonstrates an institutional effort to disseminate information, but its presence did not automatically produce understanding. Some users still required officers to explain the steps and answer questions in person. Information through social media and the website was also relatively passive and did not reach all potential users. In the local social context, people often obtained information through direct explanation and trusted interpersonal networks rather than by independently searching the court website. The problem is therefore not only a lack of information; it is also a mismatch between the court's communication channels and the community's information-seeking practices.

PTSP officers and advocates reinforced this finding: many users did not know that case registration could be conducted online and only recognized the service after an officer introduced it. They also lacked a complete understanding of account use, document submission, and electronic payment. This pattern confirms that public knowledge was often produced at the point of service rather than before the user arrived at the court.

In Bawden's (2001) terms, background knowledge involves more than receiving a message; it includes the ability to locate, interpret, evaluate, and apply digital information. The information board demonstrates availability, but availability does not guarantee comprehension. The community's reliance on face-to-face explanations shows that digital information becomes usable when it is translated through a trusted social relationship. This explains why passive dissemination has limited effect and why the e-Court information gap is also a communication and social-context problem.

The implication is that outreach should be active, multimodal, and delivered at the moment users need it. Step-by-step visual guides, short videos or voice notes, and simple explanations of email, document formats, payments, and notifications can be distributed through PTSP, Posbakum, village networks, advocates, and official WhatsApp or social-media channels. Such communication recognizes the community's existing trust networks while gradually building the capacity to seek and evaluate information independently.

### Community Competence and Readiness to Use e-Court

The findings indicate that community competence and readiness to use e-Court remain suboptimal. Some users needed assistance from family members or officers from the login stage through the use of e-Court features. Several had never attempted the process independently and did not understand the information displayed by the system. The limitation was therefore not only technical; it also reflected limited opportunities to practice and to develop confidence in a high-stakes administrative setting.

At the same time, some informants expressed a positive attitude toward digital technology. They considered e-Court efficient, time-saving, and consistent with contemporary public services. Yet this positive assessment did not consistently translate into independent use. The gap between perceived benefit and actual behavior shows that attitude alone is insufficient

when users lack devices, prior experience, procedural knowledge, or confidence. Age, education, connectivity, and willingness to learn interact with one another rather than operating as isolated causes.

Under Bawden's (2001) framework, core competence includes the ability to access, understand, evaluate, and use digital information effectively. The Purwakarta case shows an incomplete transition from assisted performance to independent competence. A user may complete a transaction with an officer's help without acquiring the capability to repeat the process. In addition, the barriers reported in this study are both individual and institutional: devices, connectivity, service design, guidance, age, education, and motivation are interwoven. This interpretation is consistent with Silitonga's (2023) finding that digital skills gaps in Indonesian public-sector transformation require policy and organizational capacity-building, not only an expectation that individuals will adapt by themselves.

The community's positive attitude should therefore not be interpreted as fixed resistance when it is not accompanied by independent use. In a legal service, users may reasonably choose a trusted intermediary to reduce the risk of submitting the wrong document, missing a notification, or exposing personal information. The court can respond by reducing perceived risk through guided practice, plain-language instructions, teach-back confirmation, and clear privacy safeguards. This approach treats digital literacy as a condition of equitable access to justice rather than as a personal deficit.

### **Policy Implications And Practical Recommendations**

The findings imply that the court should treat digital literacy as an access-to-justice condition. The objective should not be merely to increase the number of e-Court registrations, but to enable justice seekers to complete essential steps safely and understand what they submit. Four practical actions follow.

First, the court should establish a dedicated e-Court assistance desk within PTSP with trained officers and a standard workflow: identify the user's needs, demonstrate the process in plain language, guide account and email use, assist with documents and payment, ask the user to repeat the key steps, and provide a one-page checklist. Officers should never request or retain passwords, personal identification numbers, or banking credentials.

Second, the court should shift from passive information boards to targeted outreach through village offices, religious and community networks, Posbakum, advocates, and official WhatsApp or social-media channels. Short visual guides, voice notes, and low-text explanations should cover email, file formats, payments, notifications, and the consequences of missing a step. Outreach should specifically include older adults and users with limited education, devices, or connectivity.

Third, the court and relevant government agencies should reduce infrastructural barriers by providing secure devices, stable internet, scanner or camera access, charging facilities, and privacy at the assistance desk. Payment guidance should explain lawful options consistent with court rules and should not encourage users to share passwords, PINs, or account credentials. Technical failures should be recorded and coordinated with the relevant bank or system administrator.

Fourth, implementation should be monitored through indicators of equity and independence, including the proportion of non-advocate applications completed without officers taking over, the stage at which users most often fail, repeat visits for the same step, completion time, and user comprehension. Where ethically appropriate, these indicators can be disaggregated by age, residence, and other relevant characteristics. Monthly review by the court and reporting to the relevant directorate can connect local evidence to improvements in system design and training.

Taken together, these actions suggest a policy shift from technology provision to assisted digital inclusion. The Supreme Court and the Directorate General of Religious Courts can support

this shift by standardizing user-centered materials, training modules, and privacy safeguards, while individual courts adapt communication to local social practices. The success of e-Court should therefore be assessed through efficiency together with independent, secure, and equitable use.

## CONCLUSION

The study finds that community digital literacy in using e-Court at the Purwakarta Religious Court remains uneven across Bawden's dimensions. Users' operational skills are limited in account creation, email use, document uploads, and electronic payments. The 2024 record of 1,344 e-Court registrations out of 2,578 cases, or approximately 52.1%, shows meaningful adoption but does not establish independent capability. Many transactions still depend on PTSP officers, family members, or advocates.

Public knowledge of e-Court procedures is also limited. Information boards, websites, and social-media content demonstrate institutional provision, but they do not automatically produce comprehension. In the local social context, users often trust direct explanations and interpersonal networks more than passive digital information. The main gap is therefore socio-technical: system availability is not yet matched by the community's access, background knowledge, confidence, and opportunities to practice.

The community's generally positive view of e-Court indicates that resistance to technology is not the only explanation for low independent use. Users may choose face-to-face assistance as a rational way to manage uncertainty and the perceived consequences of error in a legal process. The court should therefore combine active outreach, a dedicated assisted-digital desk, teach-back guidance, secure facilities, privacy safeguards, and monitoring indicators that distinguish adoption from independent and equitable use.

Because this is a descriptive qualitative study at one court, its conclusions are context-bound and should not be generalized statistically to all courts. Future comparative research can examine how different courts organize assisted digital services and can measure whether users move from officer-supported transactions to independent use over time.

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