

## **ENHANCING DIGITAL LITERACY AND CYBERSECURITY TO PREVENT SEXTORTION CASES IN THE COMMUNITY**

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### **Abstract**

Sextortion is a serious threat to the privacy and psychological well-being of the community in Sungai Belidak Village, Kubu Raya Regency, driven by low levels of digital literacy. Sextortion, a form of sexual extortion through social media, has shown an increasing trend in this area. This community service program aims to enhance digital literacy and cybersecurity awareness to empower residents to protect themselves from such threats. Initial surveys revealed that only 30% of respondents felt confident in managing their digital security. The program adopts a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, actively involving the community in every stage—from planning to evaluation. The results show a significant improvement in understanding privacy settings and measures to prevent sextortion. In addition to technical training, the program offers ongoing support to ensure participants can apply their new skills in daily life. This initiative contributes meaningfully to strengthening digital resilience at the community level and effectively preventing the broader spread of sextortion cases.

**Keywords:** cybersecurity; community; digital literacy; sextortion

### **Abstrak**

*Sextortion merupakan ancaman serius terhadap privasi dan kesejahteraan psikologis masyarakat di Desa Sungai Belidak, Kabupaten Kubu Raya, yang dipicu oleh rendahnya literasi digital. Sextortion, bentuk pemerasan seksual melalui media sosial, menunjukkan tren peningkatan di wilayah ini. Program pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan meningkatkan literasi digital dan keamanan siber warga agar mampu melindungi diri dari ancaman tersebut. Berdasarkan survei awal, hanya 30% responden merasa percaya diri dalam mengelola keamanan digital. Kegiatan ini menggunakan pendekatan Participatory Action Research (PAR), yang melibatkan masyarakat secara aktif dari tahap perencanaan hingga evaluasi. Hasil menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan dalam pemahaman tentang pengaturan privasi dan pencegahan sextortion. Selain pelatihan teknis, program ini juga menyediakan dukungan berkelanjutan untuk memastikan keterampilan yang diperoleh dapat diterapkan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Inisiatif ini berkontribusi dalam memperkuat ketahanan digital di tingkat komunitas dan mencegah meluasnya kasus sextortion secara efektif.*

**Kata Kunci:** keamanan siber, komunitas; literasi digital; sextortion

## **INTRODUCTION**

In today's digital era, low digital literacy and poor cybersecurity awareness have made many rural communities vulnerable to online threats, including cybercrimes like

sextortion a form of sexual extortion where perpetrators exploit victims through personal information or images shared on social media. This crime not only invades privacy but also causes serious psychological harm. In Sungai Belidak Village, Kuburaya, the lack of digital education and awareness has led to increased vulnerability, especially among women and youth. Addressing this issue requires a structured community engagement program to raise digital literacy and promote safe online behavior to protect residents from such threats.

The community's lack of understanding of digital risks makes them increasingly susceptible to such attacks. Research by Aina M. Gassó et al. (2019) and Manuel Gámez-Guadix et al. (2022). indicates that sexting can lead to victimization through sextortion, especially among youth with low self-regulation and vulnerability to peer pressure. Victims often experience feelings of helplessness, shame, and depression, as noted by Mirjana Gavrilović Nilsson et al. (2019). These findings highlight the need for mental health support systems and the importance of emotional education within digital literacy initiatives.

An initial survey conducted on November 5, 2023, revealed that only about 30% of residents felt confident in managing their digital security, while the majority lacked understanding of social media privacy settings or the preventive measures required to protect themselves from such crimes. Furthermore, in February 2023, RUAI TV News reported cases of prostitution and sexual extortion in South Pontianak, raising concerns about the increasing prevalence of similar crimes in the region. Sungai Belidak Village, identified as a strategic location for socialization and prevention, has been recognized as an area in need of greater attention in terms of digital literacy and cybersecurity.

In discussions with the village head, Juliansyah, on November 6, 2023, the residents of Sungai Belidak expressed their need for educational programs on digital security, particularly those focusing on preventing sextortion. This underscores the urgency of implementing digital literacy assistance programs in the village, as many residents remain unaware of how to effectively and securely protect their personal data when engaging on social media platforms.

A literature review shows that the issue of low digital literacy is not unique to the residents of Sungai Belidak but is also experienced by communities in various regions of Indonesia. Nurbayanti et al. (2021). highlighted that the lack of digital literacy socialization and education is a primary factor contributing to the high risk of cybercrimes, including sextortion. Furthermore, Saragih's (2024) study delves deeper into how digital literacy can help reduce gender-based violence in cyberspace, emphasizing that technical knowledge alone is insufficient. Instead, understanding safe behavior in digital environments is equally critical.



**Figure 1 Interview with the head of Sungai Belidak village**

An interview with the head of Sungai Belidak Village revealed growing concern over the increasing number of villagers particularly youth who fall victim to online scams and sextortion due to low digital awareness. This local insight underscores the urgency of preventive efforts. Another study by Arianto (2021) emphasizes that social media is a platform vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Therefore, programs that enhance digital literacy are key to protecting users from crimes such as sextortion. In addition, a study by Syafryan (2023) highlights the importance of strengthening legal regulations to protect victims of sextortion in Indonesia, but also stresses that prevention begins with improving digital literacy.

The mentoring program designed in this community service aims to provide comprehensive education and training on safe social media use, as well as enhance the public's ability to protect their privacy and digital security. This program offers a different approach from previous studies by emphasizing the importance of

collaboration between the community, local leaders, and relevant institutions to create local initiatives focused on preventing cybercrimes. The program also includes ongoing mentoring to ensure that the knowledge gained can be applied in daily life, enabling the community to be better prepared to face sextortion threats and improve overall digital security.

Based on the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method, this program actively involves the community at every stage from problem identification and planning to implementation and evaluation to ensure that the solutions developed are relevant and sustainable. The main objective of this community engagement program is to increase digital literacy and cybersecurity awareness among the residents of Sungai Belidak Village, with a particular focus on preventing sextortion and other forms of online exploitation. These participatory steps are expected to enhance the program's effectiveness and create a long-term positive impact by empowering the community to protect themselves and improve their overall digital well-being.

## **METHOD**

This community service activity was carried out in Sungai Belidak Village, located in Kuburaya Regency, West Kalimantan. The program adopts the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which emphasizes the active involvement of the local community at every stage—from planning and implementation to evaluation. The main target group of this activity consisted of village residents who are vulnerable to cybercrimes, particularly sextortion, with a total of 50 participants involved, including youth, women, and local community leaders. By applying the PAR method, the program ensured that the interventions provided were aligned with the actual needs and context of the community, while also adhering to ontological, epistemological, and axiological principles in the community engagement process.

The use of PAR as the methodology for this community service is based on the principle that active participation from the community will enhance the relevance and success of the program. This method prioritizes collaboration between researchers, local

stakeholders, and the community at every stage, ensuring that the outcomes are more aligned with the real needs and challenges faced by the community.

### **Identifying Problems and Community Needs**

In the initial stage, a survey was conducted with the community of Sungai Belidak Village, Kuburaya, which revealed that only 30% of the population had knowledge of how to protect personal data on social media. Most of the community members were unaware of measures to prevent sextortion. Follow-up surveys and interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the issues, involving local leaders to reach all segments of the community.

### **Program Planning**

Based on the identification results, a training program was designed, covering digital literacy, cybersecurity, and sextortion prevention. The training materials were simplified to be easily understood, supported by a local working group tasked with acting as intermediaries and assisting with implementation. The training schedule was made flexible to ensure maximum participation.

### **Training Program Implementation**

The training program was divided into theory and practice sessions. In the theory session, participants learned about digital literacy, cybersecurity, and sextortion. The practice session involved hands-on exercises in managing social media privacy and identifying cyber threats. Group discussions encouraged active participation, with personal guidance from the mentoring team to ensure participants' understanding.

### **Ongoing Mentoring**

After the training, participants received mentoring through individual and group consultations to ensure the application of the knowledge gained. The team monitored participants' progress in using social media safely and provided solutions if any challenges arose.

### **Reflection and Evaluation**

The evaluation phase involved a structured approach using both quantitative and qualitative instruments. Data collection was conducted through validated questionnaires

designed to measure participants' levels of digital literacy and awareness of cybersecurity risks, particularly related to sextortion. These instruments were adapted from standardized digital competency frameworks and reviewed by experts to ensure content validity. In addition to surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews were conducted with selected participants, community leaders, and program facilitators to gather richer qualitative insights. This mixed-method approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the program's outcomes.

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to measure changes in digital literacy and cybersecurity awareness before and after the program. Meanwhile, qualitative data from FGDs and interviews were coded thematically to identify recurring patterns, participant reflections, and suggestions for improvement. The evaluation results revealed a significant improvement in participants' understanding of safe online behavior and strategies to prevent sextortion. These findings were discussed collaboratively with community stakeholders, leading to program refinements aimed at ensuring long-term impact and sustainability.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSS**

### **Identification of Community Problems and Needs**

From the initial survey and interviews conducted, it was found that the majority of people in Sungai Belidak Kuburaya Village have low digital literacy, especially regarding personal data security on social media. Only around 30% of respondents felt confident in managing their digital privacy. This vulnerability makes people easy targets for sextortion, which is extortion through the use of personal information or pictures of victims on social media. The identification of community problems and needs was carried out through initial surveys and interviews with residents of Sungai Belidak Village. This process aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the community's digital behavior and their awareness of online risks, particularly those related to sextortion. The findings are presented in the following figure:



**Figure 2 Identification of Community Problems and Needs Planning**

To ensure that the program design was aligned with the community’s actual needs and context, a participatory planning process was carried out. This involved collaboration between multiple stakeholders, including local residents, community leaders, the Office of Communication and Information, and academic institutions. The stages of the planning process, along with their respective targets, timelines, and resources, are outlined in the following table:

**Table 1 Planning Matric**

Programme	Programme Target	Implement ation Time	Person in Charge	Tools and Materials Requirement	Programme Success Assumptions
Problem Identification	Initial survey and interviews	Week 1	Research Team	Survey form, recording device, laptop	Accurate data on community needs in Sungai Belidak Village, Kuburaya
Formation of Participatory Team	Establishment of working groups	Week 1–2	Programme Coordinator	Administrative documents, communication tools, meeting rooms	Teams are formed with representatives from the community, local leaders, and experts
Plan Development	Digital literacy and sextortion prevention programme plan	Week 2–3	Plan Drafting Team	Laptop, planning software, paper, stationery	A comprehensive plan that meets the needs of the community
Workshop and Training	Workshops and training for the community	Week 4–5	Programme Facilitator	Training room, projector, training	Participants understand the basic concepts of

				materials, handouts	digital security and sextortion prevention
Interactive Activities	Simulations and practical exercises in the community	Week 5–6	Facilitators and Volunteers	Computer devices, internet connection, practical training materials	Participants are able to handle real-life situations on social media with confidence
Mentoring and Support	Individual and group mentoring sessions	Week 6–7	Mentors and Facilitators	Mentoring room, communication devices	Participants can apply the learnt skills effectively
Joint Reflection	Evaluation discussion and feedback collection	Week 7–8	Evaluation Coordinator	Feedback form, recording device, laptop	Constructive evaluation and useful feedback
Programme Adjustment and Re-implementation	Implementation of changes and new training sessions	Week 8	Adjustment Team	Updated training materials, training room	Programmes are improved based on evaluation results and feedback

**Implementation of the Training Programme**

To address the identified digital literacy gaps, a series of workshops were organized and attended by members of the Sungai Belidak community. These sessions focused on fundamental aspects of digital security, including practical guidance on managing social media privacy and strategies to prevent sextortion. The implementation of the training activities is illustrated in the following figure:



**Figure 3 Training Implementation**

### **Ongoing mentoring after the**

Ongoing mentoring is one of the key elements of the programme. Individual and group mentoring sessions are conducted to ensure participants can effectively apply the knowledge gained in their daily lives. Mentoring also includes reflective discussions and evaluations to assess the successes as well as challenges faced during the programme.

### **Reflection and Evaluation**

Community service related to improving digital literacy and cyber security in Sungai Belidak Kuburaya Village showed significant results in terms of community knowledge and awareness of the threat of sextortion. This activity was carried out through several stages involving training, practical simulations, and mentoring designed to improve digital literacy as well as skills in managing privacy on social media. The results of this programme were measured based on an initial survey before the training and a follow-up survey after the activity ended, as well as through an evaluation of the impact felt by the community.

To measure the effectiveness of the program, a comparison was made between participants' digital literacy levels before and after the training. The initial survey indicated that only 30% of residents felt confident in managing their social media accounts and understanding the dangers of sextortion. However, following the completion of the training and mentoring sessions, this number increased significantly to 75%, reflecting a substantial improvement in the community's awareness of privacy and cybersecurity. The comparison is presented in the table below:

**Table 2 Comparison of Community Digital Literacy Before and After Training**

<b>Aspects of Digital Literacy</b>	<b>Before Training (%)</b>	<b>After Training (%)</b>
Knowledge of privacy settings	35	80
Ability to identify cyber threats	30	75
Understanding of sextortion	25	70

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Confidence in managing social  
media account security

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30

75

As seen in the table above, improvements were made in almost all aspects of digital literacy. The training covered techniques for managing privacy on various social media platforms, how to recognise digital fraud attempts, and strategies for reporting sextortion threats. The biggest increase occurred in the knowledge aspect of privacy settings, which increased from 35% to 80%.

The results of this programme showed that the participatory approach adopted, where the community was directly involved in every stage of the activities, successfully improved their understanding of digital threats. The training also succeeded in instilling awareness that sextortion is a serious problem that can be prevented through proper knowledge and precautions. The success of this programme is in line with the findings of Nurbayanti et al. (2021), who stated that socialisation and counselling on digital literacy can significantly reduce the risk of cybercrime, including sextortion, among communities with low digital literacy levels. In addition, the results of this training corroborate the views of Saragih (2024), who stated that digital literacy requires not only technical understanding, but also knowledge of wise and safe digital behaviour. People who are more aware of the importance of safeguarding personal data and being careful when interacting online will find it more difficult to become victims of sextortion.

Bandura's (1986) social learning theory also proved relevant in the context of this training. Through direct observation and interactive simulations, the Sungai Belidak community was able to observe and practice good digital security measures. The programme created an environment where participants could learn from real-life experiences as well as from interactions with fellow participants and facilitators. Simulation-based training, such as responding to suspicious requests for personal information on social media, greatly assisted the community in identifying potential threats in cyberspace.

After the training, the ongoing mentoring phase provides more in-depth results. It ensures that the community not only gains new knowledge, but is also able to apply that knowledge in their daily lives. During the mentoring period, 65% of participants reported that they felt more confident in managing their social media accounts and better prepared to deal with potential sextortion threats. This approach also reduced participants' reliance on outside help in dealing with cyber threats. Compared to other studies, such as the one conducted by Noval et al. (2022), this programme shows more concrete results in reducing people's vulnerability to cybercrime. Noval's research emphasises the importance of improving digital literacy, but does not include ongoing mentoring that is directly integrated into community life. In the context of Sungai Belidak Village, this approach proved effective in ensuring the sustainability of the impact of the training provided.

While the programme was an overall success, some challenges also arose during implementation. One of the main challenges was the limited access to technology for some participants. Some communities still had difficulty accessing devices or stable internet connections, which caused them to not be able to follow the entire training session optimally. Therefore, the training was conducted by providing additional devices as well as using face-to-face methods for communities that did not have sufficient digital access. Another challenge was resistance to digital behaviour change. Some participants, especially the older ones, were initially reluctant to implement new security measures because they were used to the old ways of using social media. However, through a personalised mentoring approach, they gradually began to adopt new, safer habits.

The implementation of this community service program in Sungai Belidak Village, Kuburaya, proved effective in enhancing digital literacy and cybersecurity awareness, particularly in the context of preventing sextortion. Participants showed marked progress in understanding privacy settings, identifying online threats, and applying preventive strategies. The use of participatory methods and social learning theory played a key role in embedding this knowledge into everyday practices.

Moreover, the continued mentoring efforts contributed significantly to sustaining the program’s long-term impact. The following table summarizes the key indicators used to measure the program’s success:

**Table 3 Programme success indicators**

Indicators	Target	Achievements
Improved knowledge of privacy settings	70%	80%
Ability to identify cyber threats	60%	75%
Reduced vulnerability to sextortion	50%	65%
Confidence in managing social media accounts	50%	75%

Sextortion poses significant psychological risks, particularly for minors, such as anxiety and depression, making the involvement of health professionals like pediatricians crucial in prevention efforts (O'Malley et al., 2020). Educating both parents and children about the dangers of online interactions is essential, as is integrating support systems within schools. (O'Malley et al., 2023) also highlight the importance of equipping school counselors with tools to identify and manage sextortion cases. Similarly, Hong et al. (2019) reported that 6–8% of children in the Czech Republic have been victims of online extortion involving intimate content, underscoring the need for early preventive measures. Wolak et al. (2018) called for education programs tailored to improve understanding within investigative and judicial institutions and recommended mandatory education frameworks to build an informed society. Practical strategies, such as avoiding the storage or sharing of intimate content even in trusted relationships (Pethers et al., 2023), and promoting cybersecurity awareness at the university level (Mondal et al., 2022), can also reduce risk. Additionally, Gohil et al. (2021) and Rathod et al. (2021, 2022) stressed the value of procedural methods to identify offenders on social media, while Kang (2018) emphasized the need for clear policies to educate youth about the dangers and legal implications of sextortion.

## **CONCLUSION**

The conclusion of this community service programme shows that the activities to improve digital literacy and cyber security in Sungai Belidak Kuburaya Village have successfully achieved the set goals and targets. Through training, practical simulations, and ongoing mentoring, the village community experienced significant improvements in terms of knowledge and skills to manage privacy on social media and recognise and prevent the threat of sextortion. Survey results showed an increase in community understanding of privacy settings from 35% to 80%, and the ability to identify cyber threats from 30% to 75%. In addition, confidence in managing social media accounts also increased from 30% to 75%. The participatory approach that actively involved the community, as well as the application of social learning theory, proved effective in ensuring the application of the knowledge gained in daily life. Despite the challenges of limited access to technology and initial resistance to digital behaviour change, the programme was overall successful in reducing the community's vulnerability to the threat of sextortion. The success of this programme confirms the importance of digital literacy in dealing with cybercrime and can be used as a model for development in other communities with similar problems.

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