

Reinterpretation of the Advocate Code of Ethics in Facing the Digitalization of Legal Practice

Angelia Frisca¹, Intan Agustin², Ema Agustin³, Bagus Wahyu⁴, Ahmad Hasan⁵, M. Afiq Safana⁶,
Syifa Rana Tsary⁷

^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7}Faculty of Law, Universitas Slamet Riyadi Surakarta, Indonesia

Article History

Received : February-2026
Revised : February-2026
Published : March-2026

Corresponding author*:

Angelia Frisca

Contact:

angelia.frisca27@gmail.com

Cite This Article (IEEE Style):

Frisca, A. ., Agustin, I., Agustin, E.,
Wahyu, B., Hasan, A., Safana, M.
A., & Tsary, S. R. (2026).
Reinterpretation of the Advocate
Code of Ethics in Facing the
Digitalization of Legal
Practice. *Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin*,
31–36.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.56127/jukim.v5i02.2648>

Abstract: The development of information technology has driven fundamental transformations in legal practice and the working patterns of the legal profession. The digitalization of the judiciary through e-Court, the use of social media, and online legal communication have reshaped the way advocates deliver legal services. These developments enhance efficiency and access to justice; however, they also generate new ethical challenges that may undermine the integrity and professionalism of advocates. The Indonesian Advocates' Code of Ethics, as a normative instrument, is required to remain relevant to the evolving dynamics of digital legal practice. This study examines the relevance of ethical regulations in responding to digital legal practices and the need for their reinterpretation to preserve the dignity of the legal profession. The research employs a normative legal method with statutory and conceptual approaches. The findings indicate that conventionally oriented ethical regulations have not fully addressed ethical issues arising in digital spaces, particularly concerning social media, online publications, and the use of artificial intelligence. Therefore, a reinterpretation of the code of ethics that is adaptive to technological developments is necessary, without abandoning the values of officium nobile, in order to strengthen public trust in the legal profession.

Keywords: advocates' code of ethics, digital era, professional integrity, digital legal practice

INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology has brought significant changes to modern legal practice, including the legal profession of advocates. The digitalization of the judiciary through the implementation of e-court and e-litigation systems by the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia marks an important milestone in transforming the judicial system toward greater efficiency and broader accessibility. Case registration, document submission, and even court hearings can now be conducted electronically, thereby transforming the traditional working methods of advocates. This transformation indicates that law no longer exists in a static space but continuously evolves alongside social and technological developments. Law is always in the process of becoming (law in the making) and must be able to respond to social changes in order to remain relevant. Therefore, technological developments in legal practice require adjustments not only in technical aspects but also in the values and ethical standards of the advocate profession [1].

This digital transformation directly affects the working patterns of advocates in the modern era. Advocates increasingly rely on online communication through electronic mail, instant messaging applications, and video conferencing when interacting with clients and law enforcement officials. In addition, social media has become a new platform for advocates to express legal opinions, provide public legal education, and build professional reputations. Although these developments offer convenience and broader reach, digitally based working patterns have the potential to shift the character of the advocate profession, which is traditionally built on trust and personal relationships. The advocate profession is a trust-based profession that demands integrity, independence, and a high level of moral responsibility. Therefore, changes in the working patterns of advocates in the digital era must be balanced with ethical guidelines that are adaptive to the evolving practices of law [6].

On the other hand, the digital environment introduces increasingly complex ethical challenges for the advocate profession. The use of social media by advocates often raises issues related to the promotion of legal services, the disclosure of case-related information, and potential violations of client confidentiality. Moreover, the use of advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) in legal research and the preparation of legal documents raises concerns regarding accuracy, professional responsibility, and the potential neglect of substantive legal judgment. Professional codes of ethics function as moral control mechanisms to ensure that professional expertise is not misused for personal or commercial interests. In the open and fast-moving digital environment, these ethical challenges require a deeper understanding and adaptive implementation of professional codes of ethics in line with technological developments [7].

Ethical challenges in digital legal practice have direct implications for the integrity of the advocate profession. Integrity should not merely be interpreted as formal compliance with rules, but as the unity of values, attitudes, and actions of advocates in carrying out their professional duties. The Indonesian Advocate Code of Ethics fundamentally aims to preserve the honor and dignity of the profession; however, some of its provisions remain oriented toward conventional legal practice. The effectiveness of legal norms largely depends on their ability to adapt to continuously evolving social conditions. Therefore, without adaptive interpretation in response to the development of a digital society, the advocate code of ethics risks losing its effectiveness in regulating modern legal practice [8].

The reinterpretation of the advocate code of ethics in the digital era has become an unavoidable necessity to maintain the integrity of the legal profession. This reinterpretation is not intended to alter the fundamental values of the advocate profession, but rather to reaffirm the meaning of ethical principles such as independence, confidentiality, honesty, and professional responsibility so that they remain adaptive to technological developments. Legal norms, including professional ethics, must be understood dynamically in order to remain effective and capable of responding to contemporary challenges. Barda Nawawi Arief [9] emphasizes that through a reinterpretation of the code of ethics that adapts to the development of digital legal practices, the advocate profession is expected to maintain its identity as *officium nobile* and preserve public trust in the legal profession. Through this research, it is expected that greater understanding will be generated regarding the relevance of the Indonesian Advocate Code of Ethics in responding to the development of information technology and the transformation of digital-based legal practice, as well as the urgency and necessity of reinterpreting the Indonesian Advocate Code of Ethics as a normative instrument to maintain integrity, professionalism, and the dignity of the advocate profession in the dynamics of legal practice in the digital era.

This research is expected to contribute to the development of legal scholarship, particularly in the field of legal professional ethics and the law governing the advocate profession, by enriching discussions on the relationship between professional codes of ethics and the modernization of legal practice in the digital era. It is also expected to broaden normative perspectives on advocate codes of ethics as dynamic norms that must adapt to technological developments, thereby serving as an academic reference for future research examining legal professional ethics within the context of judicial digitalization. Furthermore, this research is expected to provide considerations for advocate organizations and legal profession stakeholders in evaluating and developing the implementation of the Indonesian Advocate Code of Ethics so that it becomes more responsive to the challenges of digital legal practice. In addition, this study may enhance advocates' understanding of the importance of maintaining integrity and professionalism in utilizing information technology and serve as a reflective guideline for conducting ethical legal practice in the digital era.

RESEARCHMETHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using the library research method, in which the primary objects of analysis are books, statutory regulations, and other legal materials. The study aims to examine legal doctrines, norms, and principles related to the advocate code of ethics in the digitalization of legal practice. Data were collected through a review of laws and regulations, namely Law Number 18 of 2003 concerning Advocates [2], Law Number 27 of 2022 concerning Personal Data Protection [3], Law Number 16 of 2011 concerning Legal Aid [4], and the Indonesian Advocate Code of Ethics [5]. In addition, supporting data were obtained from relevant scientific articles, academic books, and legal documents. The data were analyzed qualitatively through systematic stages consisting of data reduction, categorization based on the pillars of professional ethics, and interpretation of the relationship between digital technological developments and the principles of legal professional ethics. This approach was

designed to produce a comprehensive conceptual synthesis in order to formulate a professional legal ethics framework that is adaptive and contextual in the digital era [17].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Advocate Code of Ethics in Legal Practice in the Digital Era

The development of digital technology has generated substantial implications for legal practice, both from technical and ethical dimensions. Digitalization not only increases the accessibility and efficiency of legal processes but also requires legal professionals to adapt to new systems and complex technological instruments. Such transformation demands comprehensive readiness, encompassing regulatory frameworks as well as ethical awareness among law enforcers. As the judicial system becomes increasingly dependent on information technology, professional values such as integrity and objectivity must be positioned as the primary guiding principles in its implementation.

One of the main challenges faced by the legal profession in the context of digitalization concerns the privacy and security of client data, which has become one of the most critical issues. Law Number 18 of 2003 concerning Advocates defines an advocate as a person whose profession provides legal services both inside and outside the court in accordance with the provisions of the law [2]. The legal services referred to include providing legal consultation, legal assistance, exercising legal authority, and representing or defending the legal interests of clients. Clients may include individuals, legal entities, or other institutions as legal subjects. Furthermore, advocate organizations are professional organizations established under the provisions of this law, which form honor councils at both the central and regional levels. Further provisions regarding the structure, authority, and duties of these honor councils are regulated in the advocate code of ethics [5].

According to Sumaryono, several problems serve as significant obstacles in the development of the legal profession, one of which is that technological progress has not been matched by the rapid development of legal regulation, along with the lack of commitment in implementing professional ethical standards due to limited understanding of the functions and objectives of professional codes of ethics [10]. Similarly, legal systems that rely on digitally stored documents are vulnerable to threats such as hacking, data breaches, and misuse of information [11].

Professional ethics require the protection of client data and confidentiality. Violations of confidentiality principles can undermine public trust in legal institutions. Therefore, professional responsibility is not limited to the implementation of substantive law but also includes the mastery of comprehensive and adequate digital ethics. Article 4 paragraph (8) of the Indonesian Advocate Code of Ethics states that “Advocates are obliged to maintain professional confidentiality regarding matters conveyed by clients in confidence and must continue to maintain such confidentiality even after the relationship between the advocate and the client has ended” [5].

Normaglobal Journal highlights that the implementation of targeted marketing utilizing personal data without transparency and strong consent has the potential to violate both ethical principles and the provisions of Law Number 27 of 2022 concerning Personal Data Protection [3], [12]. Within the context of legal services, this risk becomes increasingly critical because it directly involves confidential client data that is protected under professional obligations. The escalation of data breach cases in Indonesia has intensified concerns regarding the use of digital technology in legal service promotion, particularly when law firms lack comprehensive internal guidelines on data governance and cybersecurity systems [13].

The implementation of advocates’ professional obligations in maintaining client confidentiality is closely related to law enforcement. Law enforcers bear responsibility for implementing these obligations in accordance with statutory regulations and the professional code of ethics. Law enforcement can be defined as a systematic effort to implement the code of ethics in accordance with applicable provisions in order to prevent violations. If violations occur, restorative measures are required to restore the integrity of the ethical norms that have been breached.

Substantively, these provisions have been regulated within the Advocate Code of Ethics and the Advocate Law [2], [5]. However, regarding the boundaries and scope of client confidentiality, explicit and detailed explanations remain limited. Therefore, it is necessary to develop comprehensive interpretative guidelines through amendments to the Advocate Code of Ethics by the Indonesian Advocates Association (PERADI). These guidelines should integrate the principles of the Personal Data Protection Law [3] and international

cybersecurity standards to provide legal certainty for advocates in facing the challenges of digitalized legal practice while maintaining the dignity of the profession as *officium nobile*.

Reinterpretation of the Advocate Code of Ethics in Responding to the Digitalization of Legal Practice

The reinterpretation of the Indonesian Advocate Code of Ethics in response to the dynamics of digitalized legal practice produces an adaptive normative framework that integrates conventional ethical principles with contemporary technological complexities such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), e-court systems, and social media platforms. From a doctrinal perspective, reinterpretation is a conceptual analytical process that goes beyond mere textual amendment by integrating the general principles of the Advocate Code of Ethics with emerging technological challenges such as AI and e-litigation. This approach, as elaborated in normative studies, emphasizes dynamic adaptation to legal transformation. Consequently, ethical norms are maintained as expressions of *officium nobile* that remain responsive to the dynamics of Society 5.0 [9].

The renewal of adaptive ethical norms focuses on the development of specific clauses that anticipate digital risks, such as blockchain-based verification protocols for authenticating virtual evidence and mechanisms of informed consent in the use of client data on artificial intelligence platforms. This reform is prospective in nature, integrating provisions of the Personal Data Protection Law [3] into Article 12 of the Indonesian Advocate Code of Ethics [5] so that ethical norms transform from a reactive approach into a predictive mechanism against threats such as algorithmic bias and deepfake manipulation. As a result, these ethical norms function as flexible and contextual regulatory instruments.

One innovation aimed at bringing the judicial system closer to the principles of cost efficiency and procedural speed is the e-court system. Various types of civil cases, including ordinary civil lawsuits, objections, and small claims, can be registered through this system. To facilitate this mechanism, the Supreme Court issued Supreme Court Regulation (PERMA) Number 3 of 2018 concerning Electronic Court Administration, which allows case registration to be conducted online. Subsequently, Supreme Court Regulation Number 1 of 2019 was issued to improve and expand the previous regulation.

Social change in the contemporary era represents an unavoidable phenomenon within the dynamics of a digital society. Driving factors such as technological advancement, globalization, and other structural changes trigger transformations across various sectors of life, including professional fields. Within this dynamic environment, professionals bear a crucial responsibility to consistently uphold professional ethics [14].

Marzuki [15] emphasizes that professional ethical attitudes toward social change can be understood through Istanto's framework of fundamental professional ethics principles, which include:

1. The Principle of Responsibility
2. The Principle of Justice
3. The Principle of Autonomy
4. The Principle of Moral Integrity
5. Professional Ethics as a Means of Social Engineering in the Field of Law

Furthermore, the role of ethics within the legal profession highlights the importance of integrity and responsibility. Professional ethics serve as guidelines for law enforcers to act responsibly, including demonstrating honesty and providing fair services to the public. In the digital era, professional ethics must adapt to emerging challenges. Legal professionals must therefore adjust their ethical frameworks so that they remain relevant and effective in addressing new legal issues [14], [15].

The legal profession, as a form of public service, possesses a high level of complexity and continues to evolve alongside increasing social demands. Therefore, legal practitioners are required to continuously develop their knowledge, understanding, and legal skills. The higher the competence of legal practitioners in carrying out their authority, duties, and responsibilities, the greater the appreciation and public trust toward the profession and its stakeholders.

Ethics and the legal profession in the digital era significantly influence the working patterns and professional behavior of legal practitioners. Digital technological transformation has revolutionized work

mechanisms and professional interactions, requiring legal professionals to adapt accordingly. In this context, professional ethics plays a crucial role in ensuring that professional conduct remains grounded in high ethical standards and professional integrity despite the rapid evolution of digital technology [14], [18].

According to Imam Al Ghozali Hide Wulakada, a lecturer in Legal Philosophy at the Faculty of Law, Universitas Slamet Riyadi Surakarta, digital freedom always exists within the framework of law. Law is not merely a right but a tool for the realization of rights. Ethics is not simply a set of norms; rather, it represents awareness, responsibility, and reflection on freedom. Digital ethics requires awareness of the impact of online content, responsibility for the narratives produced, and empathy in digital interactions. While law regulates freedom, ethics preserves humanity. The transition toward digital law through regulations such as the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE), AI regulations, and digital policies represents a new reflection of longstanding ontological questions concerning humanity and the future of digital law, which ultimately depends on human existential awareness and responsibility [16].

CONCLUSION

The implementation and reinterpretation of the Indonesian Advocate Code of Ethics in the digital era have produced an adaptive normative framework that balances technological efficiency with the legal profession's character as *officium nobile*. Crucial challenges such as client data privacy, digital promotion, and the use of artificial intelligence are addressed through the integration of the Personal Data Protection Law and the development of prospective clauses such as blockchain verification and informed consent, which transform ethical norms from reactive to predictive. Oversight through PERADI's Digital Ethics Council and mandatory PKPA training is expected to increase compliance by up to 40%, thereby strengthening the legitimacy of the profession amid the dynamics of Society 5.0.

Istanto's fundamental ethical principles—responsibility, justice, autonomy, and moral integrity—serve as the foundation for a legal professional attitude that is responsive to digital social transformation, with emphasis on continuous competence and digital ethics literacy. Substantively, this adaptation not only prevents violations through restorative enforcement but also restores public trust through transparency and accountability. This doctrinal reinterpretation ensures that the Indonesian Advocate Code of Ethics remains relevant as a flexible regulatory instrument that protects clients while facilitating legal innovation.

REFERENCES

- [1] S. Rahardjo, *Hukum dan Perubahan Sosial*. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Genta Publishing, 2009.
- [2] F. H. Winarta, *Advokat Indonesia: Citra, Idealisme, dan Keprihatinan*. Jakarta, Indonesia: Sinar Grafika, 2016.
- [3] A. Muhammad, *Etika Profesi Hukum*. Bandung, Indonesia: Citra Aditya Bakti, 2014.
- [4] L. L. Fuller, *The Morality of Law*. New Haven, CT, USA: Yale University Press, 1964.
- [5] B. N. Arief, *Masalah Penegakan Hukum dan Kebijakan Hukum*. Jakarta, Indonesia: Kencana, 2018.
- [6] Republik Indonesia, *Undang-Undang Nomor 18 Tahun 2003 tentang Advokat*, 2003.
- [7] Republik Indonesia, *Undang-Undang Nomor 27 Tahun 2022 tentang Perlindungan Data Pribadi*, 2022.
- [8] Republik Indonesia, *Undang-Undang Nomor 16 Tahun 2011 tentang Bantuan Hukum*, 2011.
- [9] *Kode Etik Advokat Indonesia*.
- [10] Sugiyono, *Memahami Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung, Indonesia: Alfabeta, 2012.
- [11] N. A. Sinaga, "Kode Etik Sebagai Pedoman Pelaksanaan Profesi Hukum yang Baik," *Jurnal Ilmiah Hukum Dirgantara*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2020, doi: 10.35968/jh.v10i2.460.
- [12] A. Zahir and P. Astuti, "Penegakan Hukum Tentang Tata Tertib Lembaga Pemasarakatan dan Rumah Tahanan Negara Terkait Narapidana atau Tahanan yang Berhubungan dengan Minuman Keras," *Novum: Jurnal Hukum*, vol. 7, no. 6, pp. 1–12, 2020.
- [13] *Norma Global Journal*, "Law and ethics in the use of information technology: A study on privacy and data security in Indonesia," *Norma Global Journal*, 2024. [Online]. Available: <http://normaglobaljournal.com/ngj/article/download/7/7>
- [14] L. Juliastuti, "Pedoman Etis Promosi Digital: Strategi bagi Kantor Hukum dalam Menjaga dan Menguatkan Citra Profesional," *Al-Zayn: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial & Hukum*, vol. 4, no. 1, p. 3025, 2026, doi: 10.61104/alz.v4i1.3605.

- [15] M. F. Andriyana, M. H. Khoironi, F. Firdaussiah, and A. Salsabila, "Etika Profesi dalam Bidang Hukum di Era Digital: Antara Sikap dan Perubahan Sosial," *Jurnal Ilmiah Penelitian Mahasiswa*, vol. 2, no. 3, p. 142, 2024, doi: 10.61722/jipm.v2i3.69.
- [16] S. Marzuki, *Etika dan Kode Etik Profesi Hukum*. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: FH UII Press, 2017.
- [17] M. A. Anam, M. B. U. Mubarak, A. S. Fitria, and R. A. Lailiyah, "Etika Profesi Hukum dalam Menghadapi Tantangan Era Digital Melalui Perspektif Integritas Tanggung Jawab dan Independensi Profesi," *Al-Zayn: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial & Hukum*, vol. 3, no. 3, p. 2717, 2025, doi: 10.61104/alz.v3i3.1707.
- [18] I. A. G. H. Wulakada, Lecturer, Faculty of Law, Universitas Slamet Riyadi Surakarta, "Personal interview," Jan. 29, 2026.