

## Big Data & Knowledge Management Endeavour: MyAlumni UiTM - An Active Engagement Platform Initiative

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**Abstract:** Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) was established in 1956 as Dewan Latehan RIDA and has open its doors to more than 50 students with a focus to help the Malays in rural areas. Since then, the Dewan Latehan RIDA now known as Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) has started to grow into the largest higher education institution in Malaysia in terms of its physical infrastructure, staff organization and student registration. UiTM alumni include individuals from all walks of life in Malaysia. With a total of more than 800 thousand graduates, the number of UiTM Alumni is the largest in Malaysia and one of the largest in the world. UiTM's electronic database system (known as eAlumni) only started in 2006 and almost 300 thousand alumni data are still in the process of migrating from personal files to electronics version. Realizing the difficulties in this migration work process, Alumni Network Center, ICAN UiTM, has put an initiative to introduce MyAlumni UiTM. MyAlumni UiTM is the latest addition feature of the eAlumni UiTM database system. It is an interactive medium that aims to create interaction and engagement among UiTM alumni partners as well as help UiTM identify active alumni. MyAlumni UiTM is managed by the Data Unit, UiTM Alumni Network Center, ICAN in collaboration with the Infostructure Department, PPII. This article will share details of work processes and initiatives carried out by ANC, ICAN UiTM in an effort to ensure the existence of engagement and empowering of UiTM Alumni.

**Keywords:** Alumni Data, Big Data, Alumni Engagement, Alumni Information Technology, Knowledge Management

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) which was founded as *Dewan Latehan RIDA* was inspired by Onn Jaafar, the founder and former president of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO). This idea was originally inspired when he was on a study trip to Ceylon (now known as Sri Lanka) in 1951 to review Ceylon rural development program. A working paper has been developed to address the establishment of the Institute of Rural and Industrial Development (RIDA) and its objectives are to rebuild rural communities and to improve the rural economy of the Malays. In November 1956, the *Dewan Latehan RIDA* began their operations in Petaling Jaya, Selangor under its first director, Syed Alwi Syed Sheikh Alhadi.

*Dewan Latehan RIDA* held pre-university courses, business skills training, and several external professional courses offered by established international bodies, such as London Chamber of Commerce, Australian Chartered Secretaryship, Australian Society of Accountants and British Institute of Management. After the formation of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963, the training center began accepting Bumiputera students from Sabah and Sarawak and more academic programs were offered.

In 1964, the *Dewan Latehan RIDA* held its first convocation with 50 graduates were awarded certificates by Tun Abdul Razak, Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia. The *Dewan Latehan RIDA* was later known as the *Maktab MARA* in 1965. The name change meant that the college no longer operated under RIDA and instead became the most important unit under the MARA Training Division. In 1966, Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) at that time under the leadership of Tan Sri Arshad Ayub took over and enforced the role and responsibilities of RIDA. In 1966, the British Institute of Management had stopped conducting external examinations, *Maktab MARA* began conducting its own Diploma in Business Studies. International recognition for this course comes from Ealing Technical College in London, which is also its external examiner.

In 1967, *Maktab MARA* was upgraded to the Institut Teknologi MARA (ITM). Its establishment is in response to the need in Malaysia for trained professionals, especially among bumiputera. This shortcoming was identified through a manpower survey conducted by the government in 1965 in collaboration with the United Nations.



Figure 1: Photos of the first Batch of Dewan Latehan RIDA 1956

Source: <https://galeri.mara.gov.my/ARKIB>

By 1973, branch campuses were established in Perlis, Sabah and Sarawak. The development of ITM is divided into three stages, the first phase took place between 1967 to 1976 which involved the declaration of the institute as an autonomous body with its own 300-hectare campus in Shah Alam and placed under the Ministry of Rural Development. The second phase, which ran between 1976 and 1996, involved ITM quickly utilizing its potential as an institution of higher learning. Their actions led to the passing of the ITM Act in 1976 which placed the institute directly under the Ministry of Education. The third phase which ran from 1996 to 1999 began as a result of an amendment to the ITM Act 1976 which gave the institution all the powers of the university and is equivalent to all universities, although it still retains its name. Finally, in August 1999, the 4th Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, announced the change of ITM name to Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). With this recognition from the government, a major restructuring measure was undertaken to consolidate the University's resources for optimal productivity.



Figure 2. Progress of UiTM emblem

The Universiti Teknologi MARA Act 173 was drafted in conjunction with the establishment of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). It is considered important because the Act provides guidelines for the maintenance and smooth administration as well as other related matters. The Act also serves as a recognition of the transition of the institution from institute to university, and the authority given to it functions like any other university. This includes offering courses of study and awarding degrees at all levels.

## 2. METHODS

### a. ALUMNI of UiTM

UiTM Alumni have been gazetted as individuals who are students or become permanent staff at UiTM as well as special individuals who are specifically identified as 1) UiTM Alumni (Active students, graduate students, UiTM permanent staff), 2) UiTM Associated Alumni (Associate Alumni) (active and graduate students from Allied Colleges) and 3) Honorary Alumni of UiTM (Honorary Alumni) (former Vice Chancellor of UiTM, Pro Chancellors and Chairman of the Board of UiTM). Currently UiTM has a total number of 181,057 thousand active students, 17,706 active staff members 907,645 Graduate, 556,273 Alumni (UiTM, 2020)

UiTM is currently (and has been) active in collecting and promoting data of UiTM alumni who are active in fostering awareness, enthusiasm, commitment to continue to support and contribute to the development of UiTM teaching and learning as an alma mater.

### b. E-ALUMNI UiTM DATABASE

UiTM Alumni Data denotes to all types of personal information collected and its authenticity has been proven. In this context, the data in question is related to all UiTM alumni which includes basic data such as name, DOB, email address, graduation session etc. It also constitutes statistical data or any data that derived and generated from the basic data such as posters and infographics. Hence, UiTM alumni database data management system refers to all efforts and hard work in controlling the classifications and arrangement of Alumni data management in regular basis. All this energy involving the receiving, regulation, updating, archiving, confidentiality control and other requirements for care, better and planned of UiTM alumni data

UiTM alumni database involves 4 sections, namely:

- Data Collection
- Validation Information Data
- Alumni Data Function

- Data Sharing

1. Data Collection

The process of collecting alumni data is generally from two main sources, namely primary and secondary data. Primary data are obtained from the alumni themselves through UiTM's official portals, UiTM academic information, and information collected by the alumni association. Meanwhile, all secondary data can be obtained through public or private employers as well as alumni partners themselves which will be re-verified by the Alumni Network Center.

2. Validation Information Data

Alumni data cleansing is implemented based on the identity card number or other appropriate information and the information verification process is done entirely by the Alumni Network Center in collaboration with PPII as well as referring to resources related to alumni.

3. Alumni Data Function

In general, alumni data can help universities contact alumni for the following purposes:

- formulate strategies related to generation and funding
- increase the marketability of graduates
- related research improves the quality of graduates
- awards / recognition
- strategic planning
- promotion of alumni services / products / community involvement; and
- other university needs.

4. Data Sharing

UiTM Alumni data can be shared subject to Malaysia Personal Data Act-2018, UiTM rules, guidelines and all form of circulars that is in force.

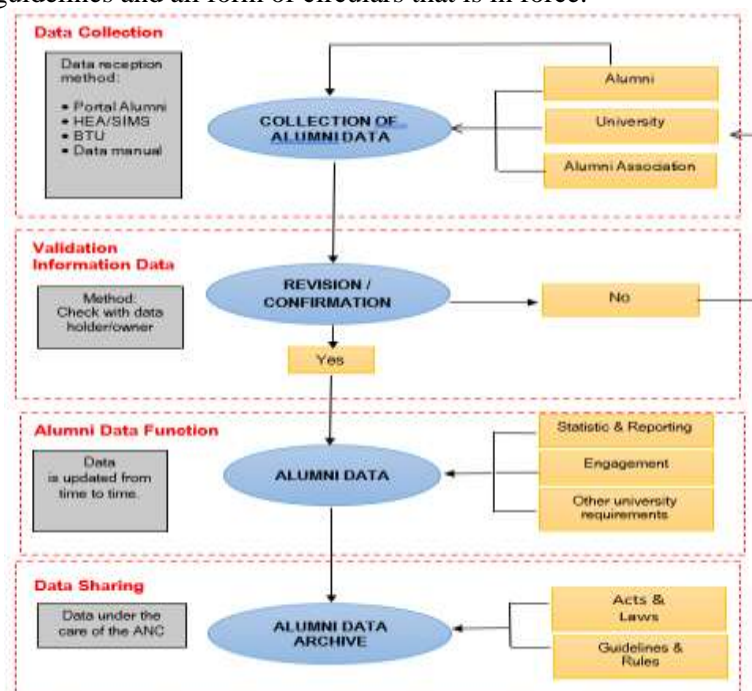


Figure 3. Flowchart of eAlumni UiTM Database Work Procedure

The existing version of the eAlumni UiTM database system was developed in 2006 and the process of updating the database system is still on going in phases and stages starting from 2012 until today (2020).

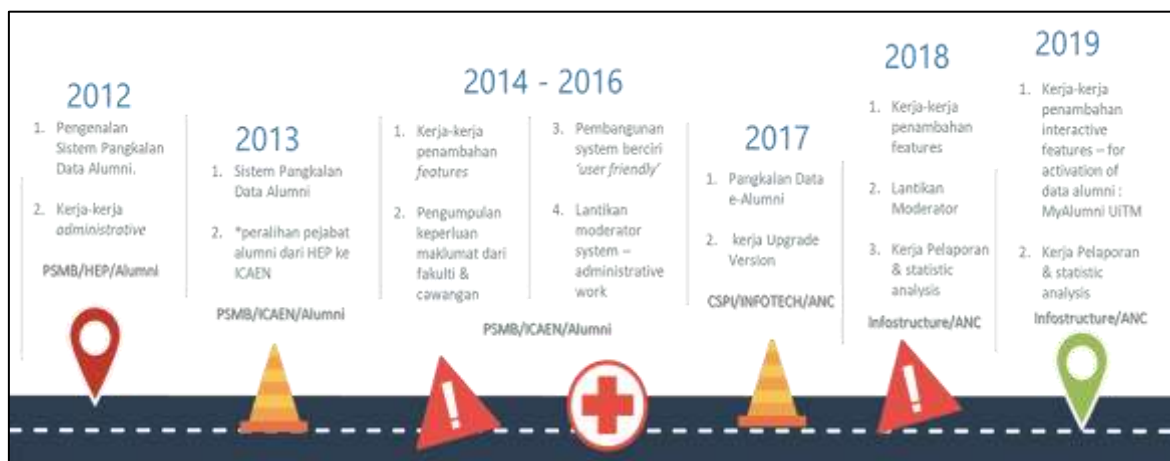


Figure 4. Milestone of eAlumni UiTM Database

With reference to the increasing number of Alumni and the requirement of Alumni engagement and network, the capabilities and abilities of the existing eAlumni UiTM database system have been identified as inefficient to meet the latest needs of the Alumni Network Unit (ANC), as well as UiTM alumni as the main users of the system. New requirements with interactive communication features among alumni, integration with the latest features such as crowdfunding, industry and so on are muchly needed.

Therefore, eAlumni UiTM Database system has been synchronized with a more strategic method of online communication engagement which is the use of interactive social media system template. This system template provides various functions that can be used for the development of a record analysis system and identification of active alumni. It has various interactive features that have been modified according to the needs and requirement of UiTM Alumni. At the same time, the developers of this interactive system are able maintain the original eAlumni UiTM Database program code work to ensure the actual results as required by the eAlumni UiTM data system.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION: MyALUMNI UiTM

eAlumni UiTM database is the main repository database for UiTM Alumni data. MyAlumni UiTM, is the latest additional feature of the e-alumni database system developed by the UiTM Alumni Network Center, ICAN in collaboration with the Infostructure Department, PPII. MyAlumni UiTM is an interactive medium that aims to create interaction and engagement between UiTM alumni partners as well as help UiTM identify active alumni. MyAlumni UiTM, is exclusive for UiTM Alumni and has a website like features which allows Alumni UiTM users, who sign-up for free profiles, to connect with other UiTM Alumni online. It allows Alumni UiTM users to share pictures, music, videos, and articles, as well as their own thoughts and opinions with however many people they like.





Figure 5. MyAlumni UiTM Avatar and emblem

The objective of MyAlumni UiTM development is not to override eAlumni UiTM Database, instead MyAlumni UiTM aims to enhance eAlumni UiTM database function by

1. Offering an informative and interactive platform with various latest features and more robust system security aspects.
2. Provide an online communication platform that features social media for information exchange between alumni.
3. Enables system development to be easier to develop and provide
4. Provide a more interactive interface and has the latest technological features

MyAlumni UiTM, also offers additional features namely:

1. UiTM Endowment link. This link offers a form of online payment gateway to all UiTM Giving@UiTM Projects and services.
2. UiTM JobShop Link. Jobshop is managed by Career & Counselling Centre, Student Affairs Division UiTM. This platform has been operating since its official launch in 2007. It is specifically developed to serve as a platform for employers to meet UiTM graduates and students for employment opportunities as well as internship placement. It aspires to effectively link UiTM talents to prospective employers as well as assisting the employers to look for the best candidates given their requirement.

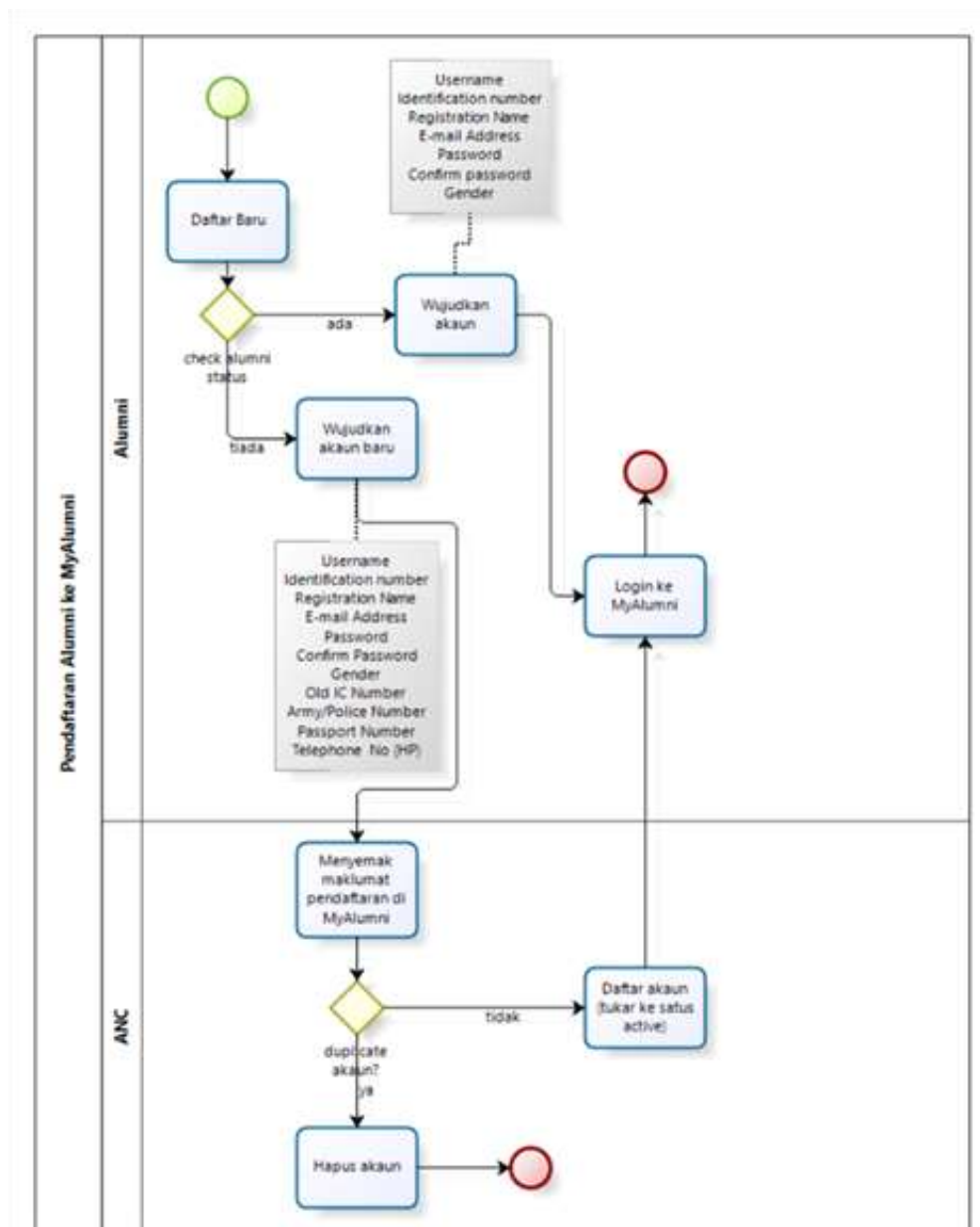


Figure 6. Flowchart of MyAlumni UiTM Database Work Procedure

With reference to Flowchart 2, all UiTM alumni register must go through MyAlumni UiTM official link – <http://alumniuitm.uitm.edu.my>. Admin System and Alumni Network Center will then check the information in MyAlumni (Check Alumni Status) through eAlumni UiTM Database. After being reviewed and identified, UiTM Alumni can then Create New Account (Record Already Exist – record between 2006-2020). For UiTM Alumni that the record is nonexistent yet in eAlumni UiTM database / Not Found/ record between 1957-2005) Admin System and Alumni Network Center will then check the information with UiTM Archive Department. After being reviewed and identified, UiTM Alumni can then Create New Account by fill in the required information (sign up) and finally Alumni fill in personal information (profile). Once all the steps take, Alumni users can then login to MyAlumni UiTM.



Figure 7. Interface of MyAlumni UiTM

In **conclusion**, MyAlumni UiTM was introduced with the aims for a better UiTM alumni network vision, as it is in line with UiTM Alumni core purpose, that is to support UiTM in becoming a globally renowned University, by providing new knowledge and creative solutions that make a positive impact on the economy and society of UiTM students, community members, Malaysians and beyond. The involvement of alumni in supporting and providing contributions voluntarily to UiTM is important for maintaining and expanding UiTM development. As one of the Malaysia's leading academic institution, UiTM exist for the community benefit, to advance local and international education, learning and sharing of knowledge and expertise in all area.

### 3. CONCLUSION

Our alumni provide crucial benefits that contribute to UiTM in many ways and scale, most importantly in enriching UiTM student's experience and knowledge. UiTM has an impressive number of alumni that by the extensiveness and the depth of our alumni their success and strengths in education, entrepreneurship and research, benefits us all. Ongoing knowledge sharing sessions with students and lecturers are the platform where alumni imparted their invaluable experience and guidance.

Nonetheless, the expectations placed on universities by students, governments and Malaysians have changed dramatically in recent years. There is now a clear belief that universities



exist to serve local and global society – whether through students' education, our graduate employability, or through our collaboration with members of the public within research and innovation platform. And upon having the largest number of alumni in Malaysia, UiTM Alumni are exceptionally well placed to meet these changing expectations.

With UiTM Alumni, Alumni Network Centre maintain and build upon our longstanding commitment to reinforcing university alumni engagement landscape with enduring outreach programs, activities and collaborations in supporting UiTM ecosystem as university to community. Alumni Network Centre are passionate in our belief that Alumni should play a fundamental role in creating and fostering more UiTM alumni engagement excellence, creativity and impact. Hence UiTM Alumni engagement is at the level of attraction, connection and affection alumnus has with their alma mater over time. we enable alumni to stay connected with their alma mater and with one another, and most importantly, UiTM enable Alumni to lead students and UiTM ambitions towards an outstanding globalize institution.

UiTM and its alumni working in partnership with all other alumni, governments, industry of all sectors and community in providing and developing social entrepreneurship innovation and idea that will make a difference. UiTM are always aspiring to provide alumni the environment that allow them to share, to transfer, and engage collaboratively with the wider segmentation of Alumni society. Alumni Network Centre believe that Alumni Working Together internally and externally with our various Alumni partners, including local, national and international Alumni from the public, cultural, commercial and voluntary sectors. These partnerships improve the quality of our work, increase its impact and enhance our reputation.

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