Varsities keen to click with alumni

Local unis wake up to vast potential of networking sites for tech-savvy alumni

BY AmELIA TAN

Universities are going online to connect with their increasingly tech-savvy alumni.

In June, the Singapore Management University (SMU) will launch its social networking website for alumni to keep in touch with one another and the university. It is hoped that a stronger sense of belonging will encourage more to give back to their alma mater.

SMU assistant director of alumni relations Ivan Low said: "We don't want the first call that an alumnum gets from the university to be one asking for donations. Communication has to be two-way and continuous. This will ensure that when the university asks for help from the alumni, it will come naturally for them to give back."

While most of the portal's features such as profile pages which can be customised, messaging, common interest groups and photo albums can be found on most public networking sites, SMU's alumni relations officers say its own site's selling point lies in its exclusivity.

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SMU office of advancement and alumni director Sharon Tan

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Graduating students and alumni are excited by these initiatives to engage them. SMU accountancy student Charu Srivastava, who will be graduating in July, said: "Online networking is what young people are used to. In fact, when I meet new people, I will ask them for their Facebook account and not their mobile number. I think it's good that SMU is creating a network just for its alumni."