

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**THE ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF  
WATTPAD TOWARDS WRITERS IN  
MALAYSIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Reading materials like books are no longer limited to paper-based publication but rather it has been infused with the utilisation of technology, including the availability of many writing applications that can be used to write. Wattpad is a website that enables writers to publish new user-generated stories. It aims to create a social community for both amateur and established writers with readers by offering free and paid reading as well as ease of use. Although past literature posits that such application has received worldwide recognition, the use of Wattpad has yet to receive much response in Malaysia as opposed to other countries. This study thus explores the roles and functions of Wattpad particularly for Malaysian writers as the main users of the application. This was achieved using qualitative analysis obtained from interview sessions with 11 informants that comprises of Malaysian writers who use Wattpad for their writing needs. The results indicated that Wattpad has various roles and functions towards Malaysian writers as well as the local creative writing industry. In this regard, the roles of Wattpad can be divided into four fractions, namely as a community of writers and readers, collecting creative writing works, facilitating the transition from traditional to digital writing, and supporting the Malaysian writing industry. Meanwhile, its functions can be categorised into three groups, which are for the readers, writers, and publishers. Such findings show that Wattpad can compete with other competitors in establishing itself as an online platform that facilitates writing and reading worldwide.

Keywords: Wattpad, Technology, Roles, Functions, Creative Writing

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

Technological advancement has changed the daily life of the society throughout time. Traditional methods no longer bound our everyday lives, but it has evolved parallel with the constant development in technology. Similarly, human's literacy (i.e., the ability to read and write) is no longer limited to pens and papers. With the internet's existence, access to reading materials such as news, entertainment, and literature is now within our fingertips, including written arts and aesthetic writings. This leads to an increase in the number of writers following the availability of facilities that everyone can use regardless of age, level of education, race, and nationality differences.

From the context of foreign countries, such advancement is often utilised to ensure the constant production of literacy and literary works. In this regard, this study has found an increasing acknowledgement and worldwide use of an online writing and reading application known as Wattpad. Previous literature suggests that Wattpad has various roles and functions that are beneficial to its users, particularly writers, including its role as a platform for users to read and write. This suggests its primary role as a community for both readers and writers to cohabit. Such opinion is supported by Cohn (2016) statement that Wattpad is starting to gain a foothold as a creative reading platform among readers since 2006 and continues to evolve to the year 2020 and beyond. The reading and writing platform is in the form of an application that can be installed on smartphones and computers. Wattpad was initially a free application before it was upgraded into a free and paid platform.

According to Justin (2016), Wattpad can be considered an excellent platform as it encourages writing in its own style. The platform contains a variety of written arts including the parody of *The Hunger Games*. Scott (2018), also said fan fiction is one of the genre that been written in Wattpad. Besides, it also works with renowned publishers like Kindle that produce and sell e-books on Amazon. This allows the published works to be widely distributed around the world. Hence, Malaysia should