

**Press Release**

**Peoplefund.it and Crowdfunder merge to create UK’s leading crowdfunding network**

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**The British crowdfunding market heats up as two of the biggest platforms join forces to create the UK’s leading crowdfunding network.**

Two South-West rewards-based crowdfunding websites, are to merge this month creating the UK’s leading crowdfunding network.

Exeter’s [Crowdfunder](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/), run by [Crowdcube](http://www.crowdcube.com/), the world’s leading equity crowdfunding company will join forces with Plymouth’s [Peoplefund.it](http://www.peoplefund.it), launched by KEO digital, the makers of [rivercottage.net](http://www.rivercottage.net/), [fishfight.net](http://www.fishfight.net/), [landshare.net](http://www.landshare.net/) and [energyshare.com](http://www.energyshare.com/).

[Peoplefund.it](http://www.peoplefund.it/) and [Crowdfunder](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/) will combine their technology and marketing platforms, branding and teams to create a platform that will rival other new entrants to the crowdfunding market, including US-based Kickstarter.

It is hoped that the move will further grow the market which is already estimated to be worth £80 million\*. “It’s a game-changing move for Peoplefund.it and makes us the UK’s leading [crowdfunding](http://www.peoplefund.it/) network,” says Nick Underhill, Peoplefund.it’s co-founder. “Our aim is to inspire, engage and transform communities through enterprise - and following the arrival of Kickstarter in the UK - this is another huge step forward for British crowdfunding.”

“The merger of [Crowdfunder](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/) and [Peoplefund.it](http://www.peoplefund.it/) makes a huge amount of sense for UK projects that need funding,” says Crowdfunder founder, Darren Westlake. “It will deliver scale, expertise and marketing reach - essential for those projects who want the best funding platform possible.”

Backed by the UK’s leading University of Enterprise, Plymouth University, and their Enterprise Accelerator Partnership, Peoplefund.it has already created a network which now includes:- [WeDidThis](http://www.peoplefund.it/partners/wedidthis/), the Arts and Culture funding platform, and publishing crowdfunder [Unbound](http://unbound.co.uk/).

The Peoplefund.it network reaches over 2 million people thanks to being part of [KEO’s digital](http://www.keofilms.com/keo-digital/) network which includes rivercottage.net, fishfight.net, landshare.net and energyshare.com.

It will also have its own distinct British and community feel says Peoplefund.it co-founder, Simon Deverell. “The international arrivals into the UK market are fantastic news as they grow and validate the market, however [Peoplefund.it](http://www.peoplefund.it/) has a distinctly UK feel in line with our culture. It’s more local and community connected. It’s a great platform for entrepreneurs, socialpreneurs and civic-preneurs who want to make a difference. Peoplefund.it seeks to remodel the relationship between communities and UK enterprise - one street at a time.”

Peoplefund.it, moved to the South West, following the establishment of a partnership with Plymouth University. “This is a very exciting step for Peoplefund.it and opens all sorts of opportunities not only for the learning community at Plymouth University, but also for enterprise in the region,” said Professor Wendy Purcell, Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive of Plymouth University

Peoplefund.it enables people with a great business idea to ask the general public for the funding they need to set up or expand. The business sets a target for the money it wants to raise and explains how it will use the cash. People can then make pledges for small amounts of money in return for a reward if the target is reached.

Peoplefund.it has raised £40k in six days for [The Bicycle Academy](http://www.peoplefund.it/the-bicycle-academy/), thought to be one of the UK’s fastest crowdfunded projects ever. Other successful projects to date include the [Food Cycle Station House Community Café](http://www.peoplefund.it/foodcycle/), a group of people cooking reclaimed surplus food on a ‘pay what you can’ basis. London based [MONOLITH magazine](http://www.peoplefund.it/monolithmagazine/) that successfully raised £4,067, from 37 backers, to launch the first issue of the magazine. While [Leeds Bread Co-op](http://www.peoplefund.it/leeds-bread-coop/) recently raised over £8,000 to set-up a community bakery.

Launched in November 2010, [Crowdfunder](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/) has established itself as one of the UK’s leading rewards-based crowdfunding websites. It has raised more than £330,000 for nearly 200 ideas and projects including the creative arts as well as community and charity based projects. Crowdfunder recently helped [The Magnets](http://themagnets.com/), a group of a cappella stars making great music simply with their mouths, exceed their funding target when they raised £15,081. Bristol based bike cafe [‘Roll for the Soul’](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/investment/roll-for-the-soul-a-community-bike-cafe-for-bristol-1228) also successfully raised £13,047 while [A Great Little Place](http://www.greatlittleplace.com/), a social network site based in London, raised £11,023 from 380 funders.

Ends.

**Editors Notes:**

\* Estimated value of funds raised by crowdfunding in UK in 2012. Source: NESTA.

**About Peoplefund.it**

Launched in November 2011, by KEO digital, makers of rivercottage.net, fishfight.net, landshare.org and energyshare.com, Peoplefund.it is the UK’s leading crowdfunding network. Peoplefund.it aims to inspire, engage and transform communities through enterprise. It enables people with a great business idea to ask the general public for the funding they need to set up or expand. The business sets a target for the money it wants to raise and explains how it will use the cash. People can then make pledges for small amounts of money in return for a reward if the target is reached. Peoplefund.it has raised over £200,000 for over 60 projects. Peoplefund.it’s founding partners are NESTA and Plymouth University.

**About Crowdfunder**

Launched in November 2010, Crowdfunder is one of the UK’s leading reward crowdfunding websites. It has funded approaching 200 projects, raising over £330,000 for great ideas, people and projects in the process.

The site, which helps fund a diverse range of projects, from musicians, filmmakers and photographers through to community and charity based pitches based both in the UK and abroad, is owned by Crowdcube, the world’s first equity crowdfunding website. Crowdcube has successfully secured over £4.4 million pounds of investment in UK businesses from its 25,000 registered investors.

**About KEO digital**

KEO digital’s mission is to deliver ideas which might just change the world. With an objective to engage, inspire and enable, it’s built a reputation for creating ground up solutions which tackle key issues. The team first established their digital credentials when they started [rivercottage.net](http://rivercottage.net/), which has grown to be one of the biggest food community platforms in the UK. Its subsequent Chicken Out digital campaign, launched in 2009, changed the Nation’s relationship with food provenance and animal welfare, and was followed by Landshare.net, an innovative allotment sharing network. FishFight.net launched to support Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall’s BAFTA winning fish discards campaign, transformed the Nation’s attitude to fish - and influenced the EU to review its policies. It won Broadcast Digital Awards' Best Multi-Platform Project. 2011 saw the launch of [energyshare.com](http://energyshare.com/) which has become the UK’s No 1 community renewable energy platform and was followed by NESTA backed crowdfunding platform, [peoplefund.it](http://peoplefund.it/). Most recently KEO digital has launched Cornwall’s group purchasing platform, [cornwalltogether.com](http://cornwalltogether.com/) in partnership with the Eden project, NHS and Cornwall Council.

**About Peoplefund.it’s Partners**

**About NESTA**

NESTA is the UK’s foremost independent expert on how innovation can solve some of the country’s major economic and social challenges. Its work is enabled by an endowment, funded by the National Lottery, and it operates at no cost to the government or taxpayer. It is a world leader in its field and carries out its work through a blend of experimental programmes, analytical research and investment in early-stage companies. [www.nesta.org.uk](http://www.nesta.org.uk/).

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**About Plymouth University**

Consistently ranked as one of the leading universities in the UK, and placed at 318 in the latest Times Higher Education world rankings, Plymouth has a strong record of excellence, enterprise and innovation across its teaching and research activities and is distinguished by its long-term engagement with business and the community. Celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2012 and this year’s recipient of the Queen’s Anniversary Prize, the University enjoys outstanding links with employers and plays a key role in civic and regional leadership. With around 30,000 students, including those studying higher education at its partner colleges throughout the South West, the University is one of largest in the UK. It enjoys a high rate of graduate employment and has recently invested more than £150 million in its estate and facilities to enhance the student experience and support world-class research. Plymouth has embedded sustainability across its operations, and in 2010 was named by People & Planet as the UK’s number one green university. It is a founding partner in the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry and is the leading provider of Higher Education in Cornwall.

For more information, please visit [www.plymouth.ac.uk](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.plymouth.ac.uk%2F&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNFYacv8EHGYI97FioiATyr9spkRDA).