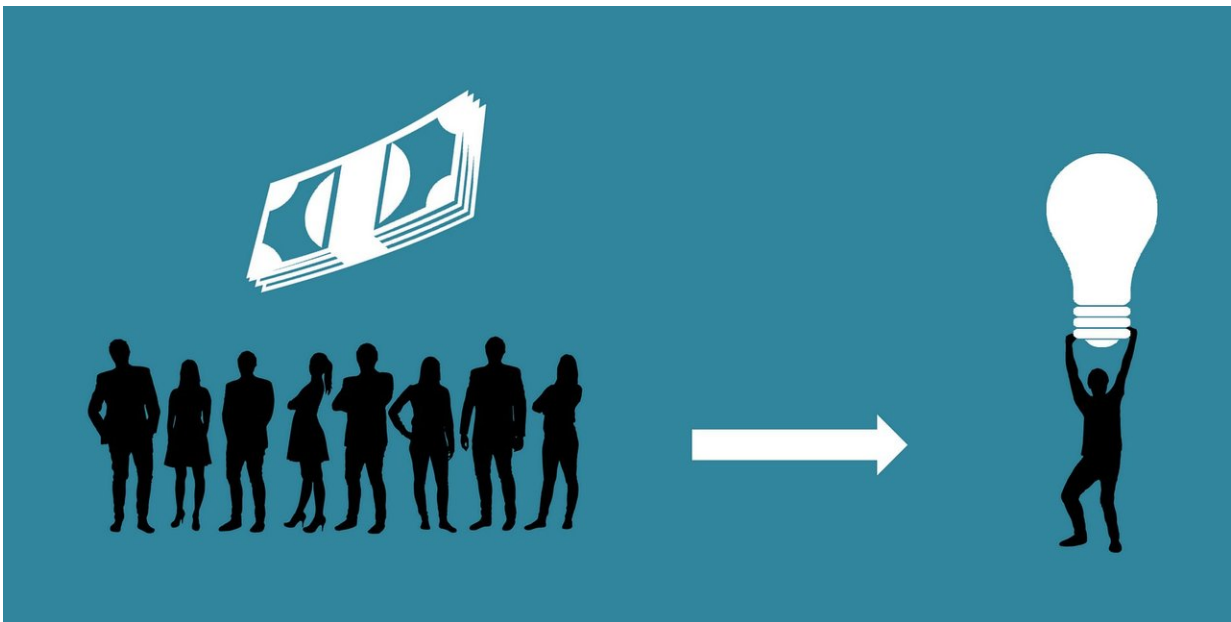


Image conscious people are more likely to give to crowdfunding campaigns

March 1 2018



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People who are more image conscious tend to support more crowdfunding campaigns according to a new study.

The research, from the University of Portsmouth, says that funders who have a public profile containing a photo are more likely to be image conscious and will engage in significantly greater levels of visible funding activity compared with those without.

However, the amount of non-visible activity - the amount of money contributed to each project - is lower among those with photos than those without.

Lead author of the study Dr Joe Cox, Principal Lecturer in Economics and Finance at the University of Portsmouth, said: "On the basis of our work, we conclude that self-presentation and online 'personal branding' is shown to have a significant effect on the behaviour of funders. This behaviour is partly influenced by a person's desire for image enhancement and their motivations to improve social image."

The study used data from an online pro-social lending [crowdfunding](#) platform, known as Lendwithcare, where details on the number of loans made by an individual are displayed publicly while the amount of money given is not.

By combining the results of a survey with contributors with recorded patterns of actual funding activity, the researchers were able to show that self-presentation associates with significant variations in the behaviour of online funders, especially in terms of their visible and non-visible activities.

Dr Cox added: "By contrast, we found no evidence of significant variations in lending behaviour according to levels of income, social capital or religiosity. These factors have been shown to relate positively and significantly to pro-social behaviours and philanthropy in offline settings, suggesting that the relationships between these variables may be different in online contexts.

"These findings contribute to the emerging research on digital philanthropy and self-presentation in online environments. Our research also highlights how platform owners can potentially influence the behaviour of self-presenting users by encouraging their funders to think

carefully about the creation of public profiles, while also making strategic decisions as to the lending activities that should be made publicly visible."

More information: Joe Cox et al, Being seen to care: The relationship between self-presentation and contributions to online pro-social crowdfunding campaigns, *Computers in Human Behavior* (2018). [DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2018.01.014](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.01.014)

Provided by University of Portsmouth

Citation: Image conscious people are more likely to give to crowdfunding campaigns (2018, March 1) retrieved 16 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-03-image-conscious-people-crowdfunding-campaigns.html>

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