

# Startup stirs up Cape rent market

By [Dave Chambers](#)

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Digital disruption is starting to eat into the property rental market, spearheaded by a Cape Town startup.



HouseME founders Benjamin Shaw and Kyle Bradley

HouseME, which charges landlords 2.5% of monthly rentals instead of the 7% typically quoted by estate agents, says its business has grown by 30% every month since it launched at the end of 2016.

It has signed up 1400 landlords and claims to have raised landlords' rental returns by 9% with its online auction platform, where would-be tenants bid on properties.

Now CEO Ben Shaw says the company is expanding beyond the Western Cape, ready to take on "archaic property players who believe they know the market better than a tech startup".

Disruptors in other fields are part of HouseME's package. Property maintenance in Cape Town is handled by the online tradesmen's network, FixForward, in Muizenberg; Stellenbosch software developer StraTech built its rent-collection platform; and letters of demand are generated on Cape Town law firm Marlon Shevelew's RentDoc.

Shaw said pricing inefficiencies prompted the company's launch. "Neither agents nor landlords have an accurate view of exactly what a property is worth to a tenant - only the tenant knows that."

And it quickly became clear technology could solve other problems, such as tenant screening, maintenance, lease agreements, rental guarantees, deposit management, inspections and viewings.

"Agencies and DIY landlords compete with HouseME, but could equally be served as clients."

HouseME raised funding from angel investors in August 2015 and September 2016, and took on seed investors in January. It has just expanded to Gauteng and has its sights on KwaZulu-Natal.

*Source: The Times*

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