

Could Peers24 be our very own social media network?

 By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

13 Feb 2020

Developed in the backyard of South Africa, Peers24 is social media network that focuses on value-driven content and is the idea of Yandisa Mtyide, a passionate and dynamic driven entrepreneur with a mindset for growth and love for technology.

Yandisa Mtyide, founder of Peers24, shares his journey of the 6-year development that eventually went live in July 2019.



Yandisa Mtyide, founder of Peers24

Can you tell us a bit about Peers24?

Peers24 is a social media platform targeted at web and mobile consumers that has been developed in our own backyard, South Africa. It is not your typical social media tool but mainly focuses on value-driven content.

Value-driven content is content or information shared by other connections that provides value to anyone that signs in or signs up on Peers24 such as trending jobs, movies, TV series, news, politics, business, technology, gardening, classifieds, noticeboard pins or posts, flights, documents, files, music, educational and entertainment videos and so much more.

Peers24 went live as a website in July 2019 and has progressed immensely through affiliations with massive entities such as Travelstart.com, *The New York Times*, The Movie DB (TV & Movies Database) to provide our users more valuable content for everyday use and sharing their experiences with other peers or connections.

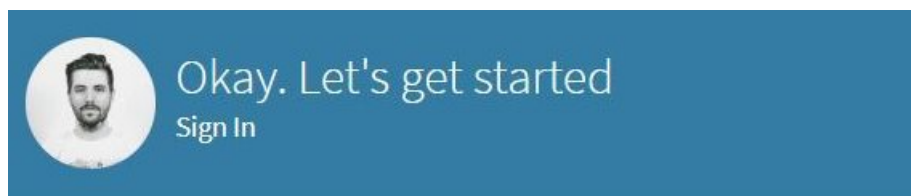
It is also valuable to note and learn that Peers24 is 100% bot free. Peers24 deals strictly with human interaction from sign up to sign in and sign out. Zero tolerance on bot activities – think advertisers.

■ **When, how and why did you get started?**

Peers24 was founded in a tiny room in a small town called Umtata in the Eastern Cape back in 2013 after I decided to take a break from the industry to stay with my parents and just reflect.


I have a passion and love for research on trending technologies, web and mobile development and the thought came to mind that South Africa doesn't really have a social media network that we could call our own; founded, brewed, developed with its entire core roots established in South Africa and most importantly, black-owned. How about that? Imagine!

Peers24 was personally funded (with little funds) from the beginning (initial stages) to the end (going live).



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I have to give so much gratitude and respect to the Microsoft Bizspark programme, if it wasn't for this programme there would be no Peers24 today. I was enrolled in the Bizspark programme (2014–2018) through an entrepreneurship programme offered by the Seed Academy – Seed Engine (Johannesburg, South Africa), a place for entrepreneurs. Through this programme, I received free software, access to Microsoft Azure and so much more that offered assistance to

the foundation and development of Peers24 as there was no funding at that stage.

To do what you love and love what you do really inspired me to carry out this project to completion and not a day went by without giving it my all – real passion, this is after all my long-term investment.

▀ **What is the core function of Peers24?**

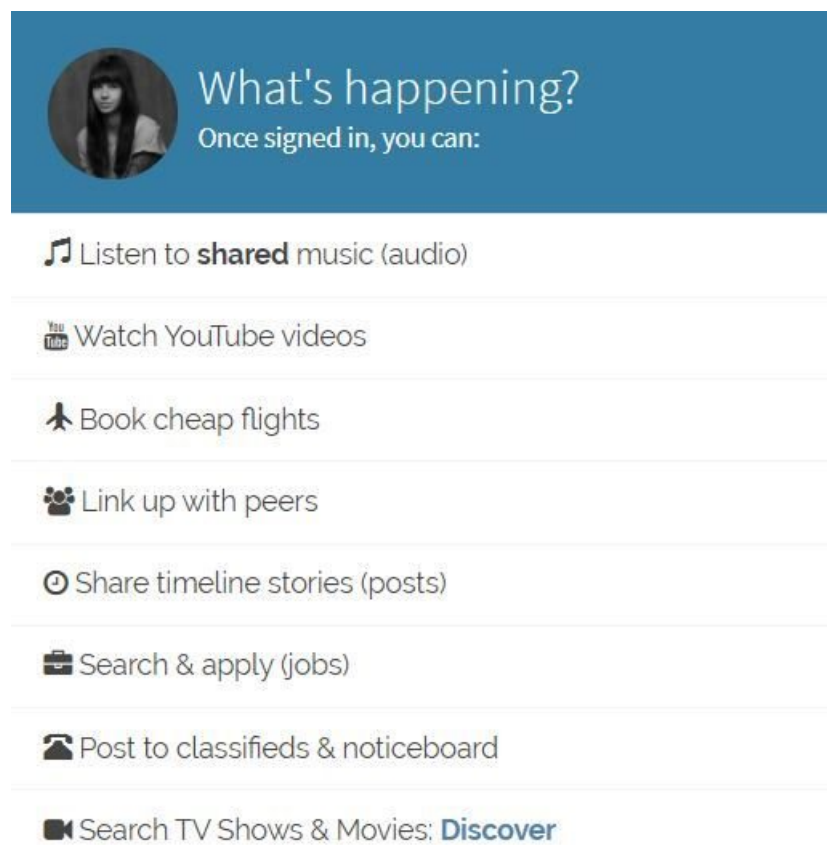
The core function is to provide a social networking coherence (news, media, timeline posts, classifieds, and noticeboard), document sharing, flight bookings, free + paid advertising (campaigns) and search (jobs).

▀ **What are some of the obstacles you've had to overcome since starting out?**

It is no secret to all of us aspiring entrepreneurs to the challenges of starting a venture and no reason to repeat what we have to endure, especially black entrepreneurs.

Though that being said, it is very important to be inspired and stay true to your dreams, goals and take action at every given opportunity.

I had to overcome funding challenges but that never limited me, having enrolled with Microsoft Bizspark programme gave the ammunition to explode, explore endless possibilities and reach my greater potential. Give a young man who has a passion for technology the tools and platform to do what he loves, the rest is history.



Thank you to the Microsoft Bizspark and Seed Academy – Seed Engine entrepreneurship programme.

▀ **What advice would you give to other aspiring entrepreneurs? If you are still chasing after your dreams, you are not running fast enough; sprint!**

I take great courage and pride from inspiring young entrepreneurs, their challenges and efforts to shine above the rest. Let us keep it moving soldiers – be inspired.

▀ **What has been your proudest achievement thus far?**

Really? (Laughing) Peers24! Apart from being the best student for Project IV (Software Development) at B-Tech level at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan and representing Port Elizabeth Technikon at the Microsoft Firefly National Competition (3rd Years) back in 2004, 2005 respectively.

▣ ***What does the future of entrepreneurship look like to you?***

If seed institutes (private and public entities) are prepared and willing to take risks in funding young ideas and ventures, the future looks good. I believe we will see more entrepreneurs come through the ranks and would be nice to see more schools engaging in entrepreneurship projects from as early as Grade 1 to teach young people the fundamentals of self-employment and what doors it can open for you – at a young age believe it or not.

Wouldn't that be awesome to have entrepreneurship workshops in all schools of basic learning?

▣ ***What do you think is the importance of startup accelerator/incubator programmes?***

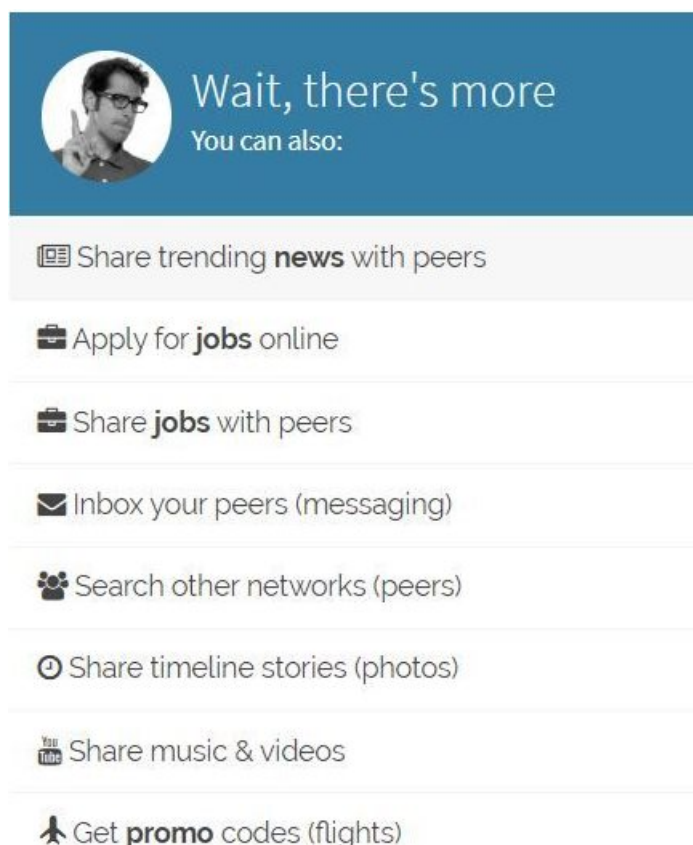
They are very important to the education, uplifting, development, collaboration, networking, funding of aspiring, cutting-edge projects in all industries whether research and technology-driven. The question is, "Do we have enough incubators/accelerator in South Africa. If yes, how easy is it to access these resources for the ordinary citizen?"

▣ ***What would you like to see changed in the South African startup landscape?***

More outreach entrepreneurship programmes to schools of lower learning (primary), disadvantaged areas.

Funding requirements made much easier and transparent to every living and ordinary South African of race and colour. Funding requirements or documentation should be made available in all languages.

Startup accelerator/incubation facilities should be made available to all provinces, towns, cities and rural places. Start small, think big and dream big.



▣ ***What do you believe are the traits an entrepreneur needs in order to succeed? Be persistent. Be patient. Be***

curious. Be passionate. Be inspired. Be consistent. Be you. The Seed Academy – Seed Engine taught me to Think.Be.Do. Dream big, set goals and take action - it's so important.

■ Tell us about your biggest struggles as an entrepreneur, as well as some major highlights.

The ominous process of being rejected regarding funding because you are either in the tech world and coming from a small town and also finding places to work on Peers24 with internet access have been the greatest challenges.

There were times when I had to borrow or ask my mom for R5 to buy airtime so I can exchange it for data to upload my work and run a few tests (laughing) - humble beginnings. I would at times walk from home to BT Ngebs Mall (5–7km) to access free Wi-Fi only to find out there is no electricity - can you imagine that?! But that has never discouraged me for the project was of great importance and had to be completed.

The major highlight undoubtedly was the first signup to Peers24. I think it happened three months after going live and I stayed glued to my analytics project to see how long the user visited (bounce rate), page views and areas of interest. That was a milestone but the biggest breakthrough was the retention rate and have the same user (IP) returning to Peers24, game set and match. To this day, since launch in July 2019, Peers24 has signed up over 100 users.

Most of the users on Peers24 visit the jobs section as well as browse latest and trending TV shows and series. Peers24 has also generated over 20+ clickthroughs for some of our Travelstart campaigns and nearly 500 timeline posts to-date added to Peers24. I never imagined this when I started developing Peers24 but to see such interaction from users and ease of use really gives me the motivation to enhance the tool and introduce more valuable sections within to social media platform.

■ Why would you encourage someone to become an entrepreneur?

Giving back to your community through creating jobs should be something to look forward to knowing that you have helped someone put food on the table, provide for school fees and clothes on their back. It is one greatest feeling in your entrepreneurial journey to be somebody that changed and affected someone life for better.

It is also a nice feeling to be listed among the greatest inventors, founders that have ever lived and played a major role in the uplifting of the country's economy (GDP), development of your country, family and personal growth.

■ Where would you like to see Peers24 in the next 5 years?

I would like to see a global brand that works with communities whether funding or providing sponsorship to projects that uplifts and bring change to the people around me.

I would also like to see more sign-ups, high user retention, more valuable content shared on the social media network and Peers24 hosted on high speed dedicated servers (US/Local data centres).

The biggest dream is to take Peers24 home to Umtata where it all started in probably 15 years time.

ABOUT EVAN-LEE COURIE

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