

WHO GIVES A CRAP? THESE GUYS, PROUDLY.

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Illustration by Olexa Hewryk

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By Emmett Lindner

In July 2012, Simon Griffiths had been on the toilet for a while. Like, 50 hours a while. By the time he finished doing his business, he had earned \$50,000.

Griffiths did not need to seek medical attention—the feat of immobility was part of a crowdsourcing effort to fund a venture he cofounded: Who Gives A Crap, a mission-driven toilet paper company. The Coop recently began selling this brand, which is more than just your average roll of squares: Who Gives A Crap, it turns out, actually gives a s—.

Its two toilet paper varieties are made from 100 percent recycled fibers or bamboo. The company donates half of its profits to sanitation initiatives around the world. According to the Who Gives A Crap website, to date, the company has raised more than \$14 million for water, sanitation and hygiene partners who work to give access to clean water and toilets for people globally. The company verifies the donations through an external auditor.

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“We take something that everybody needs and use the proceeds to help people in need,” Griffiths said in a 2012 YouTube video that introduced the company. He added, “And that feels really, really good.”

But it’s not only the mission that gives comfort—reviews of the product have been good, too. While some users have noted the bamboo version holds up better than the recycled, the brand has received positive feedback from professional testers.

“I happened to get an Instagram ad for Who Gives A Crap,” one review said of the toilet paper brand in Wirecutter. “I’ve had a subscription to Who Gives A Crap ever since. And I’m never going back.”

Representatives for Who Gives A Crap declined to be interviewed for this article. (Perhaps the only thing they do not give a crap about is local publicity.)

As the company’s founders tell it, the mission of Who Gives A Crap came before its push to bring consistent wipes to the masses.

Who Gives A Crap was founded in Melbourne, Australia, by Simon Griffiths, Danny Alexander and Jehan Ratnatunga. After the success of Mr. Griffith’s Indiegogo fundraising campaign (the test of toilet endurance), Who Gives A Crap delivered its first products for sale in March 2013.

“We never wanted to be toilet paper moguls when we were kids—it was the sanitation problem that brought us to this,” Griffiths said in a 2020 profile in *Financial Review*.

According to the Who Gives A Crap’s website: To meet the global demand for toilet paper, nearly 2 million trees a day would need to be cut down.

There are other products on the market that also use alternative sources but, based on conservative estimates by Who Gives a Crap studies, more than half the world’s population still uses traditional toilet paper.

Griffiths grew up in Perth, Australia, and backpacked through developed countries while he was studying engineering and commerce at the University of Melbourne.

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“We spent a lot of time in Malaysia, and as a young kid all you want to do is play with other young kids. It didn’t matter if you did not speak the same language, you could still have fun,” he said in the *Financial Review* profile.

“I became really interested in social mobility and how being born on one side of the border versus the other would ultimately result in a very different course of life for those people,” he added. “Why is that, and then how can you shift it?”

He later found a statistic stating that 40 percent of the world’s population did not have access to a toilet, and he began to map out his mission.

Who Gives A Crap took off in earnest during the pandemic. During that time when sanitary products like toilet paper were flying off shelves, causing shortages and inspiring frenzied searches for more, Who Gives A Crap experienced a boon. As supermarkets had trouble keeping toilet paper in stock, Who Gives A Crap began to pop up on threads around the internet for its online accessibility and altruism.

“Our customers essentially sent us viral when people were sharing photos of empty supermarket shelves, and they were saying: ‘Why are you buying from the supermarket? You should be buying from Who Gives A Crap,’” Griffiths shared in *Financial Review*.

The company began to sell in a day what it would usually sell in a month, and at its pandemic peak, it was selling 28 rolls of toilet paper a second.

At that time, Griffiths said, his company was “not able to deal with fluctuations in volume that big, so we had to turn the website off to make sure we’ve got enough stock for our subscribers and business customers.”

Who Gives A Crap sold out around the world, and the company’s waitlist quickly reached more than half a million people.

Once the logistics were settled, that meant more resources for its mission, too. By July 2020, Who Gives A Crap was able to donate nearly \$6 million from its global sales—its largest donation at the time.

By 2020, the company had a staff of about 100 and began to ship its rolls to 36 countries, with warehouses in Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Netherlands. The company received about \$50 million in investments in 2021, according to *Financial Review*.

Who Gives A Crap has, by all accounts, used its popularity to bolster its charitable mission. A letter of donation confirmations signed by Pitcher Partners, an independent accounting and tax agency, said that the donations for the fiscal year 2025 were greater than 50 percent of the profits before donations during that same period.

Who Gives A Crap has moved beyond the toilet paper roll business.

In May of 2025, the company partnered with Erewhon, the food store that gained notoriety for its celebrity shoppers and jaw-dropping price tags. Example: Less than 13 ounces of olive oil for \$43, a price point antithetical to that of the Coop. Even at Erewhon, a four-pack of Who Gives A Crap remains relatively well-priced, coming in at \$9.99, according to the store's website.

The partnership resulted in limited-edition digestive smoothies, named C.R.A.P. (Coconut, Raspberry, Aloe Vera and Probiotics—Who Gives a Crap, if you couldn't tell, sticks to a theme.)

The company has diversified, now selling disposable tissues, "Dream Cloths" (hyper-absorbent Swedish dishcloths made from plant-based materials), scrub sponges (also fully from plant-based inputs) and trash bags (made from 100% recycled materials). It also sells fully recycled bags for when your dog gives a you-know-what on the streets of New York.

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