

## Turbine lands (yet another) influx of cash, Masher Media scores for development of Myminipeeps

Despite disparaging reports of VC's tightening the screws on who gets their cash, and who doesn't, yesterday's news of major player Turbine and startup Masher Media both receiving investment money sheds a new light on the state of play.



Westwood, Massachusetts based giant Turbine, developers and publishers of the successful Lord of the Rings Online series, recently scored \$6.6 million in series D funding, part of a planned \$50 million investment round. This funding comes just one month before the planned public release of their Dungeons and Dragons Online: Eberon title goes live. As you'll remember, Turbine made [some waves](#) a few weeks back when it announced that their long time subscription based title Dungeons and Dragons Online would be going the free-to-play route. The title will still incorporate subscriptions, qualifying these paying players as VIP members with a monthly allowance of in-game currency to spend, but otherwise, it's wide open for free gaming.

The yet again in the title stems from the fact that over the past several years of operation, Turbine has raised literally tens of thousands of dollars in venture capital. The lions share arrived via GGV Capital and Time Warner in 2008, where the company saw \$40 million in investments. Previous investors include Columbia Capital, Tudor Ventures, Highland Capital Partners, and Granite Global Ventures.

On the other end of the spectrum, August 11th also saw VC money flowing into (yet another) virtual world for children. Tech Coast Angels has invested \$300k in [Masher Media Inc.](#), who are currently working on [MyMiniPeeps.com](#), a virtual world aimed at kids ages 6 to 13. This new virtual world is billed as, "an online experience as exciting as a video game but with more social networking, multiplayer, and complete and enriching real-world content."



"Even in this difficult economy, Masher Media is a good example of how a great new company with an exceptional market opportunity can get investment money and get it fast," said Richard Sudek, president of TCA.

And as evidenced in our [video interview](#) with Rebel Monkey CEO Margaret Wallace, the kids virtual world space is becoming an increasingly crowded space, Masher Media is holding one particular ace-in-the-hole that would certainly be attractive to any investor: CEO [Sherry Gunther](#). Counting over 20 years experience entertaining kids, Gunther has produced animated hits including The Simpsons, Rugrats, Family Guy, and PowerPuff Girls to name a few. She also has two Emmy Awards and a Cable Ace award in the trophy cabinet.

Tech Coast Angles founder Luis Villalobos comments, “As investors, first and foremost we bet on people, and Sherry Gunther, the founder and creative genius behind Masher Media is one of the most accomplished people in her industry. Moreover, Masher Media has a terrific concept in a fast-growing market. This was an easy investment decision.”