



## **The UK Soil Observatory (UKSO) and mySoil app: crowdsourcing and disseminating soil information.**

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Digital technologies in terms of web based data portals and mobiles apps offer a new way to provide both information to the public, and to engage the public in becoming involved in contributing to the effort of collecting data through crowdsourcing. We are part of the Landpotential.org consortium which is a global partnership committed to developing and supporting the adoption of freely available technology and tools for sustainable land use management, monitoring, and connecting people across the globe.

The mySoil app was launched in 2012 and is an example of a free mobile application downloadable from iTunes and Google Play. It serves as a gateway tool to raise interest in, and awareness of, soils. It currently has over 50,000 dedicated users and has crowd sourced more than 4000 data records. Recent developments have expanded the coverage of mySoil from the United Kingdom to Europe, introduced a new user interface and provided language capability, while the UKSO displays the crowd-sourced records from across the globe. We are now trying to identify which industry, education and citizen sectors are using these platforms and how they can be improved. Please help us by providing feedback or taking the survey on the UKSO website. [www.UKSO.org](http://www.UKSO.org)

The UKSO is a collaboration between major UK soil-data holders to provide maps, spatial data and real-time temporal data from observing platforms such as the UK soil moisture network. Both UKSO and mySoil have crowdsourcing capability and are slowly building global citizen science maps of soil properties such as pH and texture. Whilst these data can't replace professional monitoring data, the information they provide both stimulates public interest and can act as 'soft data' that can help support the interpretation of monitoring data, or guide future monitoring, identifying areas that don't correspond with current analysis. In addition, soft data can be used to map soils with machine learning approaches, such as SoilGrids.