

The future is SHARING

From a houseboat in Amsterdam to a lawnmower or a housekeeper, collaborative consumption is a new movement where instead of buying things, people are now sharing them with each other instead.

BY JESSICA ABELSOHN

We were always taught to share. Now, the concept is the foundation of an economic movement that everyone can participate in.

Collaborative consumption, or the sharing economy, is a movement about sharing your resources, services and goods with those around you. Because realistically, everything is for hire.

Just as sites like eBay and Gumtree allow for peer-to-peer business, so too do sharing economy sites such as Airbnb, Uber, Mama Bake and Open Shed. Share your home, or even your igloo, car or tools with others or vice versa. There are even sites that give people access to your washing machine. As the saying goes, access trumps ownership.

Why share?

The sharing economy is built on a core concept – things are expensive to buy. If you're not using them, share them with people who need them. When it comes to your finances, it can equate to big bucks for you.

Do you have a vacant bedroom? A holiday home or a spare driveway? Tools not being used? Collaborate with others online and you might be able to bring in some cash.

However, it's also about the money you'll save. Generally speaking, renting is cheaper than buying, especially if you only need a power saw for one hour or a car for a quick trip up to the shops. It's a win-win situation.

Housekeeping

Generally speaking, these sites are exceptionally safe. Users are vetted using identification systems and money is transferred through verified methods such as PayPal. Many sites offer insurance should things go sour.

The system generally works on reputation and rating whereby users earn feedback. If you're worried about things getting stolen or broken, choose the people most trusted by others.

If you're using the goods or services, it's like anything in life – be polite, clean and always give it back to the person in the condition you rented it in.

Case in point

AIRBNB – airbnb.com

Looking for somewhere a bit different to stay, instead of a run-of-the-mill hotel? Why not try a treehouse in Bali, an apartment in Paris or a beautiful villa in Tuscany? Airbnb is the place to go to find unique accommodation at your next holiday destination.

It has more than one million listings worldwide and is represented in more than 190 countries.

As an Airbnb host, you can list your spare room, your whole home or even your houseboat on the website free of charge. You decide how much to charge per night, week or month. On average, a typical host earns \$4505 annually.

Then sit back and wait for the bookings to start flowing in. It's as simple as that. »





GOGET – goget.com.au

Why fork out the initial and ongoing cash to put your car on the road when, for a minimal membership and hourly or daily fee, you can have one at your disposal when you need it?

According to GoGet, since they started, 16,902 private cars have been removed from our roads.

The company estimates that it costs \$650 a month to own and run a car. Compare this to GoGet’s most expensive membership fee of \$29 per month, plus an hourly or daily fee and the savings are clear.

OPEN SHED – openshed.com.au

If you’re on the hunt for a whipper snipper, a set of golf clubs, a wind-up gramophone or kayak, Open Shed may be the place to find it. It’s an online marketplace for users to share tools, camping gear, electronics and everything in between.

According to Open Shed, there are numerous benefits to being part of the online community. In addition to making a bit of pocket money, by renting out your tools, you’re saving the environment and meeting neighbours.

AIRTASKER – airtasker.com.au

Airtasker is all about outsourcing, because there’s always someone nearby who can help. It’s simple –

post a chore that you need done, select the Airtasker you think is best, then get in direct contact with them to discuss the nitty gritty.

While the majority of the tasks online are household chores or tasks for businesses, there have been some extravagant requests. One person went so far as to fly an Airtasker to the US to pick up an engagement ring. Another paid someone to stand in line for the *Game of Thrones* exhibition.

Airtasker has 270,000 members across Australia. On average, Australians spend four to five hours per week doing chores – tasks that could be outsourced for minimal fees so you have more time for the more important things in life.

Plus, if you have a skill, you can earn cash too. According to Airtasker, many users earn \$1000 per week. ••



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TRICKS OF THE TRADE

If you’re thinking of hiring out your items, here are some practical tips to help you out.

1 Be clear with your description.



If you’re renting out your bedroom or home, be as detailed as you can about what is included. Is there Wi-Fi? What about the use of the common areas? If you’re posting something on Airtasker, make sure you detail exactly what it is you want done and how quickly.

2 Set a competitive but reasonable price.



When it comes to sites like Airbnb, you may want to consider setting a weekend price, weekly rate or monthly rate (discounted on the nightly rate of course) as a way of attracting customers.

3 Keep your responses quick.



Whenever you receive communication from a potential customer, make sure you respond in a timely manner. Not only does this show you’re polite, it also means that you’re keen for their business.