



Dear reader

Sharing is one of the first things we learn to do as children. But as we grow up, we somehow forget all about it and let our houses fill up with things we own (and use, in the best case). Sharing for grown-ups, it might be one of the biggest trends of the past years, with innumerable peer-to-peer sharing platforms having seen the light. In this e-update, we will discuss some of the recent evolutions in mobility-related sharing initiatives. We will also have a look at the larger societal movement they are part of and at the role that cities can play in this movement.

Sharing our mobility



Bitlock lets you share your bike with your smartphone - copyright Mesh Motion Inc

Since our last e-updates on [car sharing](#) and [bike sharing](#), several new sharing initiatives were developed in the field of mobility. In the Netherlands, a combination of traditional company-owned-car sharing with peer-to-peer car sharing was born with [MyWheels](#). [Spinlister](#) has successfully created a market for peer-to-peer bike sharing, with 10,000 users and 2,000 bicycles listed around the world. And the technology to open cars with your smartphone is now also available for peer-to-peer bike sharing with [BitLock](#), and for peer-to-peer car sharing with systems like [Keyzee](#). And more sharing technology is being brought inside the car, as Robin Chase, the founder of [ZipCar](#) in the USA and [BuzzCar](#) in Paris, is now working in Portugal on [Veniam](#), a project that turns individual cars into wifi hotspots, creating a low-cost and resilient wireless network for everyone.

Even public transport, which basically is a form of shared mobility, does not escape the sharing hype. Much to the dismay of the national railways, Dutch train passengers have started to hide their unstamped train tickets on platforms and share them with other users through the Facebook page '[Treinkaartje delen](#)'. Meanwhile [treinbuddy.nl](#) helps railway passengers find someone with a discount card to travel together at discount prices.

A new economy?



Indeed, mobility sharing platforms seem to be doing very well, but they are only a small fragment of the huge amount of platforms and services out there. Probably anything you can think of can be shared with your online community: your books, clothes, meals, spare rooms, tools, and even your spare time (for doing chores for other people, like on [Taskrabbit](#) or [GoodGym](#)). The companies behind these platforms even have a supporting organisation, called [Peers Incorporated](#).

Sharing things with friends and neighbours is not new, but modern information technologies have made the practical organisation of sharing so much more convenient and have also made it possible to expand our circle of trusted people to complete strangers. As Rachel Botsman from [Collaborative Consumption](#) points out in her [TED talk](#), trust will become the currency of the sharing economy, and our online reputation might very well be the single most important asset that we own.

How much sharing do we need to prevent climate change?



Photo by [Luca Volpi \(Goldmund100\)](#) / CC BY-SA 3.0

Sharing is big, and in the USA it already represents a billion dollar industry (see this [video](#) for some figures). But when we compare the number of people who share to the number of people who don't, or the number of car sharing trips with the number of solo car trips, the equation probably results in disappointment. Does this mean the sharing economy is just a hype? Or is it just the start of an entirely new economic model? It may be too early to tell, but even hypes usually reach a certain level of productivity in the long run (see [Gartner's Hype Cycle](#)), so in any case technology-enabled sharing is probably here to stay.

If the trend is developing rapidly enough to help prevent severe climate change impacts, is another question. Whatever the answer is, Robin Chase believes that the sharing economy exercises our "community muscle" and builds the community resilience that we will need in times of need (read the [full interview here](#)). She is not the only one to connect the sharing economy to larger societal advantages. This [video](#) from the US Center for a New American

Dream explains the inverse relationship between materialism on the one hand, and happiness, pro-social values and engagement in ecologically beneficial activities such as bike riding on the other hand (sources are listed here). To reverse this societal trend, the Center developed a [New Dream Community Action Kit](#) to help local communities take action and set up sharing initiatives.

Power to the cities



Cities and other authorities have an active role to play in the sharing economy. Sharing economy businesses often do not fit in the existing regulations. Services like air bnb, where you rent out a room in your house, are bordering illegal practices in several places (e.g. [New York](#)), while the city of [Amsterdam](#) explicitly chose to support it. The tricky part is that these services often incite so-called micro-entrepreneurs to make big money outside of the regular economy. In the USA, already one third of the workforce is made up of freelancers and peer-to-peer platforms start to become a primary source of income for many.

The US Conference of Mayors has signed a [resolution](#) urging support for the establishment of “shareable cities”. One of the ambitions of [shareNL](#), the national platform for the sharing economy in the Netherlands, is to have the Amsterdam mayor sign a similar resolution and make Amsterdam [Europe's first 'Sharing City'](#). [Research](#) has demonstrated that despite the rapid growth over the last two years, there still is a significant consumer potential in the city. Read more about shareable cities on the [Collaborative Consumption website](#). The EU is also exploring the sharing economy model, which gave rise to the launch of a [European Sharing Economy Coalition](#).

An economy of communities?



Photo by [Kevin Simpson](#) / CC BY-SA 2.0

To sum up: sharing is becoming big businesses, but it could also be the key to strengthen our sense of community. To fully realise the latter, we should not forget about the numerous people who do not have a smartphone or who do not regularly surf the Internet, and these do not all belong to low-income groups (see for instance <http://www.poverty.ac.uk/>).

Do you want to learn more? Follow the sharing economy on twitter or on the internet:

- [@instigating](#) (Lisa Gansky, author of The Mesh) – <http://meshing.it> (with a [mobility section](#)) - see also Lisa Gansky's [TED talk](#) about “the mesh”
- [@peoplewhoshare](#) - www.thepeoplewhoshare.com
- [@shareable](#) - www.shareable.net
- [@sharingeconomy](#)
- <http://sharingsolution.com>

Upcoming events

- **Cycling connects Conference**
22-23 May 2014 - Rostock, Germany
www.abcmultimodal.eu
- **ECOMM 2014**
6-8 May 2014 – Florence, Italy
www.ecomm2014.eu

For more events, please visit the [EPOMM Calendar](#).

Co-funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme of the European Union

ECOMM 2014 | allinx | feedback | subscribe | unsubscribe | fullscreen | news archive