

Researchers test green shopping scheme

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Experts at The University of Manchester are to assess if ride-sharing could be a key weapon in the fight to make shopping more environmentally friendly.

The team from the University's Sustainable Consumption Institute (SCI) will trial how shoppers at three Tesco stores take up and use the first scheme of its kind designed to encourage customers to share cars.

Dr Steve Moxey and Professor Chris Easingwood will be working with a new service provided by Tesco and Carbon Voyage which connects local minicab firms to enable shoppers to ride-share to and from three North London Tesco Extra supermarkets.

The service - called Tesco Carbon Voyage - connects 'riders' as 'sharers'

efficiently and provides incentives for environmentally friendly behaviour.

Tesco Clubcard customers at the three stores will be able to sign up to the scheme by registering online at www.tescocarbonvoyage.com - details of the scheme can also be found in participating stores.

Once the shoppers have registered, they can book journeys online, over the phone or by [text message](#). They will be matched with other shoppers and picked up by local minicab firms that already work with these stores.

According to Carbon Voyage, sharing can result in cost savings of around 30% for individual users; by travelling with other people, it also means that the carbon impact of a trip can be halved.

The SCI was established in 2007 with up to £25 million of funding from Tesco over 5 years.

Dr Moxey, who is based at Manchester's Business school, said: "The car is a valued and essential feature of modern society, but ways must be found of using vehicles more efficiently with less impact on the environment.

"One approach is increase the amount of ride-sharing when traveling to and from the [supermarket](#) as the greater the vehicle occupancy, the greater the environmental benefits.

"But successful ride-sharing schemes are few and far between at the moment - so our aim is to find ways to make ride-sharing a more attractive service for ordinary shoppers through the use of modern technology.

"If we can increase ride sharing, it will be of great benefit to local

communities in terms of less congestion and less pollution. And retailers will of course gain if their customers are happier."

He added: "Undoubtedly there will be difficulties in persuading some shoppers to surrender their privacy and control offered by the car in return for the benefits that come from ride-sharing.

"So we'll be assessing the effects of attitudes to the environment on ride-sharing and the extent to which customers will change their behaviour to help the environment.

"That includes the trade-offs people may be prepared to make between helping the environment and minimising travel costs and inconvenience."

Professor Easingwood said: "By understanding the different ways in which shoppers react to this initiative, we will better understand how to motivate this and eventually other types of green behaviour in shoppers."

James Swanston, of Carbon Voyage said: "According to a variety of UK government sources, transport in the UK is responsible for over 25% of overall carbon emissions and over 80% of all passenger car trips only have a single occupant.

"So any opportunities to understand how we can get people to share vehicles can have a tremendous impact on reducing emissions, congestion and costs at the same time.

"The technology built by Carbon Voyage not only allows customers to make informed decisions about cost and carbon when booking transport, but also seeks to find low carbon transport through sharing, filling empty return journeys and using different modes of transport."

The team from Tesco is led by Mike Yorwerth, Group Technology and

Architecture Director, he said: "The benefits for Tesco [shoppers](#) extend beyond money saved, eco-friendly prizes and Green Clubcard point rewards to the satisfaction of making a contribution to a greener world, with Tesco Carbon Voyage quickly and simply showing customers the amount of CO2 saved per journey to our stores.

"Tesco is providing a dedicated web-site where customers of the trial stores in North London can register and then arrange their travel either on-line, by phone and by text.

"In essence it is a facilitation service allowing our customers to share their shopping journeys to and from our stores.

"By providing a dedicated service we hope to make this simple and easy for our customers to use, and through promoting the service in our trial stores, encourage more people to try a new and greener way of getting to our shops."

Provided by University of Manchester

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