

UK sharing economy usage rises by 60 per cent

July 3 2018

Users of the sharing economy in the UK have grown by 60 percent in 18 months, a new survey has found.

Warwick Business School academics also found that 23 percent of the UK population use sharing economy services more than once a month and that the more educated you are the more likely you are to be paying for the likes of Uber and Airbnb.

In their report, "[Who Shares and Who Doesn't? Results of the Sharing Economy Consumer Survey 2017](#)," Pinar Ozcan, Professor of Strategic Management, Mareike Möhlmann, Assistant Professor of Information Systems & Management, and Chandy Krishnamorthy, a doctoral researcher, surveyed a representative sample of 1,220 UK residents as a follow-up to their 2016 report.

The sharing economy includes places to stay (e.g. Airbnb, Beds on Board), rides (e.g. Uber, Liftshare), rental cars (e.g. EasyCar, Zipcar), parking (e.g. JustPark, Your Parking Space), services (e.g. Parcelly, TaskRabbit), meals (e.g. MealSharing, Eatwith), pre-owned goods (e.g. eBay, Gumtree) and funding (e.g. Justgiving, Crowdfunder).

Professor Ozcan said: "The rise of the internet and an ever-connected world has empowered individuals and enabled companies to create disruptive business models which are transforming economies, businesses, industries and even the public sector.

"This cannot be truer than in the case of the sharing economy, which has increased in popularity, from being a minor phenomenon just a few years ago, to becoming a sizable business today and projected to become a substantial industry in the coming decade.

"The majority of public knowledge on the topic is derived from media and controversies surrounding certain platforms. This does not shed light on how people use the sharing economy. The dramatic pace at which the sharing economy is growing and the potential effects on society merit the need to understand the phenomenon in more detail."

The researchers found that for more than 70 percent of ride sharing and accommodation-sharing users, convenience and saving or making money are top motivations to engage in the sharing economy.

Who uses the sharing economy in the UK?

Selling pre-owned goods on eBay or Gumtree is the most popular category with 47 percent of the UK population using them, while accommodation, ride-sharing and crowdfunding are used by 50 percent.

Dr. Möhlmann said: "As expected Greater London is the most popular region in the UK for the sharing economy with 67.6 percent of respondents using it, but it is also high in Scotland (67 percent), and Wales (66.2 percent).

"Ride-sharing is the most popular service used in Greater London, but for the rest of the UK it is places to stay that tops the list of activities.

"Usage also increases with education, with around 68 percent of those with a Masters using the sharing economy compared to 49 percent with only O Levels or equivalent."

Interestingly, once consumers start to use sharing platforms more, it becomes a lifestyle, with more than 73 percent of those who use sharing platforms at least once a month using multiple platforms.

Mr Krishnamorthy added: "Given the high penetration of smartphone usage among the younger population, it is not surprising that they are also heavy users of sharing applications.

"More than 70 percent of survey respondents in the age group 18 to 34 have used sharing platforms at least once. Participation is lower for higher [age groups](#), falling to 54 percent for the 45 to 54 age group, and to 39 percent among the 55 plus age group."

Richard Laughton, Sharing Economy UK Chair and CEO of easyCar, said: "The sharing economy is becoming a lifestyle choice, with this detailed survey from Warwick Business School showing that 73 percent of people who engage more than once a month are using multiple platforms. Alongside the convenience the sharing [economy](#) brings, people realise that there are great deals to be had.

How many people use the sharing economy in the UK?

"The main reason for people not to take part is that they don't know about the [sharing economy](#), so we clearly have work still to do. But it's very encouraging to find that more than 90 percent of people think schemes like Sharing Economy UK's TrustSeal bring valuable reassurance."

Provided by University of Warwick

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