

Buy, borrow or lease: Can we rethink how and when we access household products to tackle climate change?

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The public is supportive of emissions reduction strategies that are likely

to bring significant changes to the way we own and use everyday items such as clothing, cars, appliances and furniture, finds a new study led by Cardiff University.

The team, which also includes researchers from the Centre for Industrial Energy, Materials and Products, and the Universities of Leeds and Manchester, found significant public support for a range of resource efficiency strategies that when combined could see a 39% reduction in the carbon emissions used in making a range of common household items.

Professor Nick Pidgeon, from Cardiff University's School of Psychology, said: "Current mitigation measures, which focus primarily on emissions directly produced within the country, are failing to achieve the carbon reduction levels required to prevent dangerous climate change.

"If we want to stay within safe carbon limits we need to consider emissions produced by the goods we consume, whether they are manufactured inside or outside the UK."

The three main strategies identified include making products more efficient by using less materials and packaging, which would mean more modular and repairable designs; reusing, swapping and sharing products such as cars, electrical goods and household/garden tools; and increasing product lifetimes through extended warranties, increased maintenance services and hiring schemes.

Dr. Catherine Cherry, from Cardiff University's School of Psychology, said: "As a nation, we have become highly dependent on manufactured household goods so any strategies that target them depend on the support of the public. While we found that most strategies were perceived positively, acceptance was however dependant on goods still meeting

other important conditions such as safety, affordability and convenience, as well as demonstrating a fair distribution of benefits and responsibilities."

The groups interviewed in the study were particularly positive about the redesign of packaging, with current packaging for most products considered extremely wasteful. The idea of a shared library of products where items can be borrowed cheaply instead of bought or hired was also well received and seen as a route to increasing social interactions. Participants were also generally in favour of increasing product lifetimes and avoiding premature disposal, although some commented that this still wouldn't stop people from wanting new things.

Professor Pidgeon concluded: "While it is good news that the public is positive about potential changes to everyday goods, acceptability doesn't necessarily equate to levels of adoption. However, it nonetheless represents a critical component of decision making that is likely to be important in successful policy development and implementation."

The study 'Public acceptance of resource efficiency strategies to mitigate [climate change](#)' is published in *Nature Climate Change*.

The study was carried out by combining analyses of the technical emissions reductions potential and public acceptability of strategies for reducing emissions from the manufacture of material-intensive goods.

More information: Public acceptance of resource-efficiency strategies to mitigate climate change, *Nature Climate Change* (2018).

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