



The State of the Sharing Economy

May 2013: Food Sharing in the UK

Tracking the State of the Sharing Economy: It is here to stay

The Sharing Economy is here to stay. **People all over the world are driving this emerging marketplace** which includes all sharing of resources, mostly facilitated via online platforms. There are a **multitude of ways** this is happening, be it buying and selling second hand goods - thus sharing the lifecycle of products -, swapping goods, group buying, renting items and even borrowing and lending money between peers.

- At [The People Who Share](#) we have made it **our mission to make more people aware of the benefits of the Sharing Economy and to make sharing mainstream**. Owning was yesterday, in tomorrow's world everyone is a supplier of goods, services and experiences and can **access the goods and services** they need when they want them – **on demand – at a price they can afford**.
- This research report, based on representative UK consumer research carried out by [Opinium Research](#) and featuring additional supporting data, is the **first in a series reporting on the State of the Sharing Economy**. The aim of this series is to document how the Sharing Economy evolves.
- Just like the [Global Sharing Day](#) campaign will put a **spotlight on a different topic in each report**, so will the questions put to UK consumers, asking them about their involvement with this people-driven economy. Global Sharing Day 2013, taking place on 2nd June, will focus on food sharing. We have chosen this issue to make people aware of how every year **tonnes of edible food which could be shared**, go to landfill, yet there are millions globally living in food poverty. In this report series, we'll identify the **easy steps everyone can take to help and to benefit from the Sharing Economy**.
- The following stats and facts show that **the Sharing Economy is becoming an addition to the traditional, non-circular economic system** and is having considerable impact on the way we think, live and do business. With this report and the following ones **we track its impact for you**.

Sizing it up – the Sharing Economy in figures

A sizable market

- The **global Sharing Economy** is a new and emerging market already **estimated to be worth over \$533 billion** (£330 billion) p.a. In the UK it is valued at £22.4 billion which is 1.3% of GDP and predicted to rise to 15% within 5 years.¹ Economists and academics have predicted that this new sector will have **the biggest impact on society since the Industrial Revolution.**

An increasing openness to share grows the market

- Asked about their attitude towards sharing, **78%** of participants in the 2010 Latitude study “The New Sharing Economy” **feel that sharing online has made them more open to sharing in the real world.** The Cooperatives UK report “The Great Sharing Economy 2011” found that **80% of people say sharing makes them happy** and **70% would share if they knew how.**
- In the last two years **52% of Americans have rented borrowed or leased the kinds of items people usually own**, a study by Sunrun found. More than 8 out of 10 Americans (**83 percent**) **said they would do this if it was easy to do.**
- Across categories and activities, the UK Sharing Economy has gained momentum with a 5% increase since last year amongst those sharing. **64% of UK adults**, or 32.4 million, **now participate in the Sharing Economy.**

The Sharing Economy consumer market size in the UK

- **UK sharers** who have done at least one sharing activity and given us an estimate of their earnings **saved or made an average of £416.16 last year.** Our research indicates that some sharers benefit as much as £5,000 a year, and case studies by sharing platforms confirm that ‘super sharers’ can earn that and more per year.
- Based on our results, for the adult population of the **UK consumer earnings totalled £4.6 billion in the past year.** For comparison, US sharers are estimated to make \$3.5 billion in 2013, with growth exceeding 25%.²

¹ [Collaborative Consumption](#)

² [Forbes](#)

What we share, when we share

The Top 3 sharing activities

- UK adults most commonly participate in the Sharing Economy by selling or buying second hand goods, sharing a ride and sharing food.

(Base: all respondents)	I have already done this
Selling OR buying second hand goods	51%
Sharing a ride to work/ other destinations and for one-off journeys	36%
Sharing food	29%

Trading and swapping goods set to increase

- **The most common form of sharing goods and services is selling or buying second hand goods** (in charity shops, online, on street markets, etc).
- More than half (51%) of UK adults have bought or sold second hand goods, **with a further one in three (31%) who would consider it** and only 13% who are unlikely to or would never do this.
- A higher proportion (**57%**) of **females have bought or sold second hand goods** compared to males (44%).
- Swapping goods either online or at a “swapmeet”, though so far tried by just under 1 in 10 UK adults (9%), seems to be one to watch: a stunning 56%, **almost 6 out of 10 Britons could see themselves swapping goods in the future.**

Sharing a ride tops transport sharing options

Increase of 11% more ride sharers

- Amongst the different forms of sharing transport, sharing a ride to work/ other destinations and for one-off journeys is by far the most common, and it's seen a staggering increase of 11% more ride sharers compared to last year.

(Base: all respondents)	I have already done this
Sharing a ride to work/ other destinations and for one-off journeys	36%
Using a car sharing scheme	4%
Using a bike sharing scheme	3%

- More than one in three (36%) UK adults have already done this. That is an equivalent of **17.9 million Britons, with a further 17.7 million considering using this transport option.**
- In comparison, so far one in twenty-five UK adults (4%) or 2 million have used a car sharing scheme. There is a **big potential uptake** though with **almost one in four (39%) or 19.6 million Britons considering using a car sharing scheme**, up by a notable 5.7% compared to last year's results.
- **Using a bike sharing scheme is less common**, with 3% of UK adults having done so. **More than one in four (29%) consider it as a transport option now**, up from 25% last year.

Strong motivations for sharing – money & social good

72% of people who share do it to save or earn money, to help people in their neighbourhood or because it benefits the environment.

(Base: all who share)	Thinking about the 'sharing' activities you have done, please indicate your primary motivation for sharing:
I am saving money with this activity	36%
I'm helping people in my neighbourhood with this	19%
It benefits the environment	9%
I am earning money with this activity	8%

Lots of people already share food - potential to make a big difference

Sharing food among top 3 most common sharing activities

- As mentioned earlier, **sharing food** (e.g. at a picnic, pot luck dinner, street party) is **one of the three most common forms of sharing**.
- Three in ten (29%) UK adults have done it, and **more than four in ten (44%) would consider sharing food**.

(Base: all respondents)	Sharing food e.g. at a picnic, pot luck dinner, street party
I have already done this	29%
I intend to do this in near future	2%
I would generally consider doing this	20%
I would consider doing this if I had more information	10%
I would consider doing this if this were easy to do	10%
I would consider doing this if there were technologies / apps to help do this	2%

Want to dine with a celebrity? – love to laugh

The celebrities Brits would choose to share a meal with

- Almost as many Britons would like share a meal with **Kate Middleton** (7%) as those who'd like to share one **with the Queen** (8%).
- Both of them were **outrun by US president Barack Obama** (10%). **David Cameron and Ed Miliband each only have 2% of British people** interested in taking a meal with them.
- 'The Queen' actress **Helen Mirren** came out closely behind Kate and HM the Queen. However, **comedian Miranda Hart is the nation's favourite fellow diner**.

(Base: all respondents)	On a lighter note...Which of the following figures, if any, would you most like to share a meal with?
Miranda Hart	12%
Barack Obama	10%
The Queen	8%
Kate Middleton	7%
Helen Mirren	7%
Jessica Ennis	6%
David Beckham	5%
Jamie Oliver	5%
Angelina Jolie	4%
Adele	4%
Brad Pitt	4%
David Cameron	2%
Ed Miliband	2%

What meal to share with a celebrity? – ‘British’ meals favoured

Come to dine British with me

Asked about what meal they’d choose to share with their favourite celebrity Britons favoured ‘British’ meals: a roast dinner (24%), steak and chips (14%) and fish and chips (11%) are ahead of Italian dishes and Chicken Curry (6%).

(Base: all who would share a meal with a celebrity)	What meal would you most like to share with them?
A roast dinner	22%
Steak and chips	14%
Fish and chips	11%
Pizza	8%
Thai stir fry	7%
Chicken curry	6%
Paella	3%
Risotto	3%
Spaghetti	3%
Shepherd’s pie	3%
Bangers and mash	3%
Sushi	2%
Chill con carne	2%
Other meal	7%
Don’t know	5%

Sharing food with those in need before sharing with friends

A nation of food sharers

- **Giving food to food banks comes top (38%)** when Britons are asked what best to do to avoid food wastage.
- **75%** of respondents opted for one of the offered sharing options confirming that **sharing behaviour is high on the agenda**.
- Offered other options only **4% would share a meal with a celebrity** over **dining with a friend (28%)** or throwing a party (5%).

Food management is dreaded by few Britons

- **Few people mind managing the contents of their fridge and cupboard (5%)** compared to other chores. They'd find doing that a lot easier than going to work (15%).

(Base: all respondents)	Which of the following do you least like to do?
Clean the house	26%
Go to work	15%
Tidy the garden	15%
Empty the waste bins	11%
Do the laundry	8%
Manage the contents of your fridge and cupboard	5%
Don't know	4%
None of these	15%

More Britons need food help now - a massive amount of food could be shared

4 million in food poverty

- It is **encouraging to see the high willingness (38%) in Britons to share food with those in need by giving it to food banks** (charitable organisations providing emergency food to people in need), because a growing number of people in the UK need food help.
- Currently 4 million people are affected by food poverty with **malnutrition costing the NHS an estimated £13 billion each year**.³
- **Trussell Trust foodbanks have given food boxes to 170% more people** between April 2012 and April 2013 compared to the year before, the biggest rise in numbers given emergency food since the charity began in 2000. A **76% increase in the number of foodbanks** launched since April 2012 stands against the rising need.⁴ This is just the **tip of the iceberg** since the Trussell Trust and its rising number of branches represents just a fraction of the growth in emergency food aid in the UK, as the Guardian reports.

There's a massive amount of food that could be shared

- The Institute of Mechanical Engineers states that **30-50% of all food produced globally**, or 1.2-2 billion tonnes, **is lost between farm and consumer through wasteful practices**. Up to 30% of crops are not even harvested due to them not meeting consumers' aesthetic expectations.⁵ This amounts to the equivalent of about **\$200 billion annually wasted in the food supply chain in industrialised regions**.⁶
- **In the UK 7.2 million tonnes of food and drink gets thrown away in private households every year**, most of which could have been consumed. This costs £12 billion a year, harms the environment and wastes resources. In the UK food industry, waste is estimated to cost £5 billion per year.^{7,8}
- According to WRAP the wastage amounts to **"4.4 million tonnes of perfectly edible food** that, if not thrown away, **could save the average family £50 per month" equating to £600 per year**.⁸
- Those figures amount to a huge amount of food that - **if properly managed, shared and redistributed - could alleviate poor people's need for food and save people some money**.

³ [FoodCycle](#)

⁴ [Trussell Trust](#)

⁵ [Institution of Mechanical Engineers](#)

⁶ [Love Food Hate Waste](#)

⁷ [gov.uk](#)

⁸ [WRAP](#)

3 Steps to sharing food, help alleviate food poverty and reduce food wastage

1. Share a meal with a friend, family or neighbour

Join a street party near you on [Global Sharing Day](#), 2nd June with [Meal Sharing](#) or [The Big Lunch](#).

2. Share your time by cooking a meal for someone in need or volunteering

- [Casserole](#) lets people share extra portions of home cooked food with others in their area who might not always be able to cook for themselves.
- Help food reach those in need: [Fareshare](#) redistribute food to vulnerable people.
- [FoodCycle](#) combine volunteers, surplus food and a free kitchen space to create nutritious meals for people affected by food poverty.
- Join [Waste Watch](#)'s Revaluing Food community programme to reconnect with food and its impact on individuals, society and the environment.

3. Share your spare food that might otherwise be wasted

- Donate to a food bank like those operated by the [Trussel Trust](#).
- Join [Plan Zheroes](#) and help them inspire food businesses to donate their surplus food.

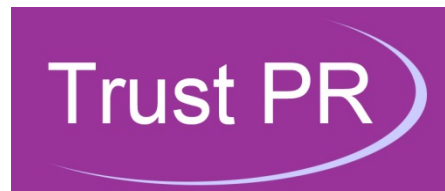
Learn more about how to best manage food and avoid wastage visit [Love Food hate waste](#).

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MEAL SHARING



Special thanks to Consumer Research & Press partner [Opinium](#), Marketing Research Support partner [Marke2ing](#) and Press partner [Trust PR](#) for their support in commissioning, writing, publishing and promoting the report.



About this report

- The People Who Share commissioned Opinium Research to conduct a Consumer Survey on the State of the Sharing Economy.
- Opinium Research carried out an online survey of 2,005 UK adults aged 18+ from 30th April to 2nd May 2013. Results have been weighted to nationally representative criteria.