Document 1

The rise of the sharing economy

Before the internet, renting a surfboard, a power tool or a parking space from someone else was feasible, but was usually more trouble than it was worth. Now websites such as Airbnb, RelayRides and SnapGoods match up owners and renters; smartphones with GPS let people see where the nearest rentable car is parked; social networks provide a way to check up on people and build trust; and online payment systems handle the billing.

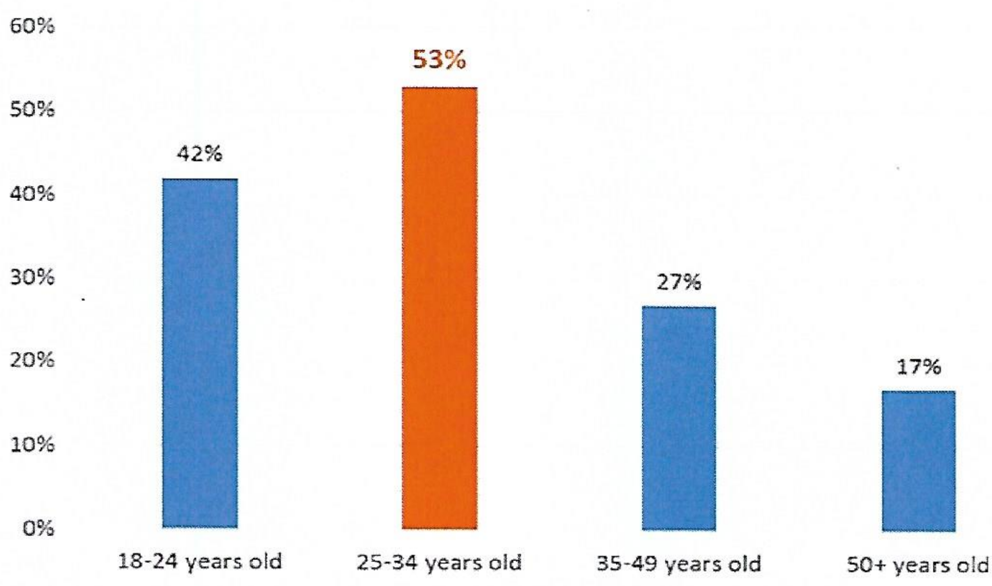
Just as peer-to-peer businesses like eBay allow anyone to become a retailer, sharing sites let individuals act as an ad hoc taxi service, car-hire firm or boutique hotel as and when it suits them. Just go online or download an app. The model works for items that are expensive to buy and are widely owned by people who do not make full use of them. Bedrooms and cars are the most obvious examples, but you can also rent camping spaces in Sweden, fields in Australia and washing machines in France. As proponents of the sharing economy like to put it, access trumps ownership.

Such "collaborative consumption" is a good thing for several reasons. Owners make money from underused assets. Renters, meanwhile, pay less than they would if they bought the item themselves, or turned to a traditional provider such as a hotel or car-hire firm. And there are environmental benefits, too: renting a car when you need it, rather than owning one, means fewer cars are required and fewer resources must be devoted to making them.

from: *www.economics.com,* March 9th 2013

Document 2

Usage (%) of travel sharing economy services – Variations per age



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