

Clothes and shoes gathered to share

PEERS.ORG

2013 Nominet Trust 100 Winner

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A NEW GRASSROOTS ORGANISATION TO SUPPORT THE FLEDGLING SHARING ECONOMY.

By Peers

Project URL: peers.org

Project Twitter: [@peers](https://twitter.com/peers)

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Sharing economy start-ups like Airbnb, Streetbank, Zipcar and Freecycle are slowly edging their way into the mainstream. With its dual focus on building positive social connections and reducing environmental waste, everyone wins from the sharing economy – everyone except those with vested interests in the capitalist status quo.

Take Airbnb, the room and flat sharing service that has quickly grown into a global phenomenon. Its success can be measured another way by the growing nerviness and aggression it is facing from the hotel industry. In New York last year, Airbnb was declared illegal because individuals renting out their flats were seen to be contravening a law designed to protect the hotel industry, banning people from renting out their homes for less than 30 days. The same case is now being made in LA. The sharing economy is suddenly exposing grey areas in regulation, pushing politicians and bureaucrats to take a view on the matter.

Enter Peers, a new grassroots organisation set up to support the fledgling sharing economy with a broad base of citizens from around the world who are pledging to grow, mainstream and protect it. In the case of LA, Peers stepped in to help the local Airbnb host post and distribute an online petition – since signed 5,000 times. Getting the word out also led to high levels of anti-banners at the local decision-making meetings.

Although Peers is still in its infancy, and we are yet to see if and how it will grow

and reach scale, what is certain is that if the sharing economy is going to weather the storms thrown at it from the powers that be, it is going to need a networked, political force behind it. The promise of Peers is that involving citizens in fighting for the sharing economy can really influence decisions. Will Peers become the organised political force behind the sharing economy, pushing for the right regulation that will be so key to ensuring the flourishing of the sharing economy over the status quo? Watch this space.

Image 'Voucher codes UK blogger swap shop party' courtesy of Sally

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