



## **DIGITAL SHARING PLATFORMS - SUCCESSFUL DESIGN**

UX analysis of successful digital sharing platform market leaders

Lappeenranta–Lahti University of Technology LUT

Software Engineering and Digital Transformation - Master's Thesis

2022

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Examiner(s): Prof. Jari Porras

Assoc. Prof. Ari Happonen

## ABSTRACT

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Digital sharing platforms have become widely more popular during the last century as smartphones have become an everyday gadget for almost everyone around the world. Digital sharing platforms have taken a lot of inspiration from different types of e-commerce marketplaces that have already existed for a long time. They have spread to almost all e-commerce sectors, ranging from platforms offering 2<sup>nd</sup> hand marketplaces to vehicle and space renting. Some of the largest platforms such as apartment rental platform Airbnb have a huge impact on the whole accommodation sector. Most platforms have adapted many design principles from classical e-commerce services and transformed them to match their own needs. The platforms have also needed to develop new ways of tackling problems around digital trust and user acquisition. The thesis researches the different business sectors that have taken the direction of forming digital sharing platforms around them to compete with existing classical businesses. Thesis discusses key components that the different digital sharing platforms have implemented on their platform to improve the UX for the customers in hopes of more conversions and better user acquisition. The analysis of different platforms and sectors and their key UI components gives insight for future platform development.

## TIIVISTELMÄ

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### **JAKAVAN TALOUDEN ALUSTAT- ONNISTUNUT SUUNNITTELU**

Käyttökokemus analyysi jakavan talouden alustojen markkinajohtajista

Tietotekniikan Diplomityö

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Älypuhelinien yleistyvyyden myötä digitaaliset jakavan talouden alustat ovat nousseet suosiossaan merkittävästi viimeisen vuosi kymmenen aikana. Alustat ovat ottaneet reilusti mallia klassisten verkkokauppojen suunnittelusta sekä toiminnasta, ja ne ovat levinneet jo lähes kaikille eri toimialoille. Jakavan talouden alustat ulottuvat käytettyjen tavaroiden myynnistä ja vuokraamiseen kulkuneuvojen sekä asuntojen vuokraamiseen. Suurimmat jakavan talouden alustat ovat saaneet aikaan suuria muutoksia toimialojen toiminnassa, esimerkiksi globaalisti suosituin asunnon vuokraus alusta Airbnb on vaikuttanut pysyvästi majoitusalaan ja sen kuluttajien käyttäytymiseen. Suurin osa alustoista on hyödyntänyt useita käyttäjäkokemuksen- ja käyttöliittymäsuunnittelu periaatteita klassisista verkkokaupoista ratkaistakseen omia haasteita käyttäjäkuntien kasvatukseen sekä digitaalisen luotettavuuden rakentamisessa. Diplomityö tutkii eri esimerkkejä siitä, miten klassisia bisnesmalleja on kehitetty ja muokattu toimiviksi jakavan talouden alustoiksi. Tutkimus paneutuu siihen, miten alustat ovat hyödyntäneet suunnittelussaan ydin komponentteja parantaakseen käyttäjien sitoutumista sekä konversioiden määrää. Tutkimuksen tavoitteena on helpottaa alustojen suunnittelua keräämällä tietoa eri toimialojen toimintaperiaatteista sekä käyttöliittymä komponenteista.

## SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

### Abbreviations

DSP Digital Sharing Platform

UI User Interface

UX User Experience

P2P Peer to peer

SSO Single Sign-On

eBay E-commerce platform

ResQ Food waste saving platform

Uber Ridesharing platform

21<sup>st</sup> 2000-century

2<sup>nd</sup>-hand Second hand

E-commerce Electronic commerce

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## 1. Introduction

Since the dawn of time-shared economy has existed between humans. In-general, even animals and insects share resources with each other in situations when it benefits both sides or when it is beneficial for the community. Even way before digital times, humans have shared their resources such as tools, housing and living spaces with each other. Sometimes sharing happens with a monetary benefit in mind, or within corporate operations, through asset sharing at fleet level (Kortelainen et al., 2016; Kinnunen et al., 2019), and sometimes from pure altruism. During human history, the sharing economy has changed its nature multiple times. With the invention of money, the sharing economy started to change a lot closer to its modern form. The largest leap shared economy has taken has to be cause of the modern-day digitalization and new wave of more sustainable thinking (Kortelainen, Happonen and Kinnunen, 2016) about the limited resources we have available, in our society and the need to reduce the waste we generate (Santti et al., 2019). While the sharing economy used to consist of the altruism of the sharer, the modern form of sharing economy focuses increasingly more on turning a profit for the thing you own by renting out the stuff you no longer have a use for (Bradley and Pargman, 2017, p. 2). With the rise of digitalization, many different platforms have arisen with the goal of being the middleman of the transactions in the sharing economy. As the sharing economy transforms more towards a commercial exchange of goods, the question of trustworthiness of both sides of the transaction starts to emerge (Rahimi, Taheri and Buhalis, 2022).

While some companies have turned their sharing economy platforms to industry changing players (SLEE, 2015), others have gone through grand scale failures and faded away. The most known success stories of the digital sharing platforms (from now on DSP) include companies from many different sectors (Sanasi et al., 2020). The most known DSP's, Airbnb and Uber have a major role in the direction that their business sectors are heading towards. Even though the platforms have had a huge impact on their market sectors they haven't done that easily (Rahimi, Taheri and Buhalis, 2022). Multiple companies behind popular sharing economy platforms have run multiple years on large losses when building their customer base (Taeuscher and Kietzmann, 2017).

The thesis aims to discover the factors that play a part in the success of DSPs in the modern shared economy marketplace. The thesis analyses the literature around DSPs and investigates what types of elements are found important for the DSP to attract a sustainable user base for the business to operate successfully. The research question that the thesis aims to answer is around what are the factors that lead into the success of a digital sharing platform. Sustainability's role will still be examined while investigating if it provides value for customer acquisition. While marketing has without a doubt a key role in the success of any business, we will not include it in the scope of the thesis.

The second chapter of the thesis will focus on covering the basics of what the digital sharing economy is about. Chapter will examine the brief history of how DSPs have evolved during the recent decade and how their role in modern-day life has increased exponentially. The third chapter describes the largest factors considering the design of DSPs. In the third chapter these factors will be examined in popular DSPs and see how they have implemented these features for their platforms.

In the third chapter the thesis discusses the topics around different key components that are used in almost all digital sharing platforms around most of the business sectors. These topics involve discussion around the methods of user acquisition, digital trust, recommendation systems as well as search functionality inside the platforms. The chapter lays down the basic structure of which is used in the chapter 4 when analysing the UI/UX design the platforms have implemented on their user interfaces

## **2. Digital sharing economy**

The term digital sharing economy comes from the enabled efficiency in coordinating sharing practices among a large number of users (Pouri, 2021). In principle, these users could be either a large set of people inside global corporations / enterprises, when they are enhancing internal operations and transforming towards digital service providers (Kortelainen, Happonen and Hanski, 2019) as well as private customers who are participating in open digital sharing platforms. As Pouri (2021) states, the way the sharing economy is acted in digital platforms wouldn't be possible in a traditional smaller-scale sharing. Chen and Wang (2019) also point out that as the sharing economy itself has existed for a long time, it is the digitalization of this sharing economy that is changing the nature of the sharing economy

itself (Chen and Wang, 2019). The number of users for the digital platform is always one of the main points of its success. With the fast spread of modern smartphones, the digital sharing economy can be visible almost everywhere and almost every smartphone owner is a user of some digital platform that partakes in the sharing economy as well (McLaren and Agyeman, 2015). Some digital platforms are globally widespread while some only gather an active localised user base inside a certain country.

DSPs cover a wide sector of different businesses and provide services to millions of people around the world (Sanasi *et al.*, 2020). Sharing platforms have brought innovation to the tourism business by offering new accommodation services as well as new ways of more flexible transportation (Mont *et al.*, 2020). Sharing platforms are also quite useful, for example when applied to non-tangible resources like sharing of knowledge. Either in community wisdom collection context (Palacin *et al.*, 2019), Sharing of knowledge and safety related data and information (Palacin *et al.*, 2020) and intangible assets (Görög, 2018). Besides offering great opportunities for both customers and sellers, the sharing economy itself has been a focus of a lot of criticism as well. There are arguments and debate over the sustainability of the sharing economy, research on the sustainability of sharing economy concluded by Pouri and Hilty says that “digital sharing can provide an energy-saving potential while outweighing the life-cycle impacts of running ICT” (Pouri and Hilty, 2018).

Digital sharing platforms are usually viewed as tools to bring more opportunities for both the sellers and the customers but it has also been criticised for sometimes for users facing inequality while using the platforms (Eichhorn, Jürss and Hoffmann, 2022). Digital discrimination is one of the other focuses of criticism that sharing economy has brought upon itself. As sellers can usually decide on a personal basis who they accept as a customer it is common that sellers might treat some groups of people unequally. Studies around apartment sharing platform Airbnb the discrimination happening with the hosts choosing guests have found out that discrimination is definitely taking place on the platform (Cheng and Foley, 2018). Some research on platform regulation has even suggested removing profile pictures and names from the platform with the goal of more equal experience between users (Edelman and Geradin, 2015). A lot of criticism has also been directed on the economical side of sharing economy as it is generating enormous amounts of wealth for its investors, Frenken and Schor raise the question on their article if the platforms will later expand their businesses and share their wealth with users or change their ways to predatory business practices when

locking their users to the platforms as they have become large enough (Frenken and Schor, 2017). This kind of an attitude of keeping the platforms responsible for their power in the public society is greatly beneficial for the consumer in the long run. Research has also been done on studying the impacts that sharing economy platforms are having in the more disadvantaged communities, by research on how DSP's can offer opportunities for unemployed or underemployed people (Dillahunt and Malone, 2015).

## **2.1 Origin of DSPs**

The main goal of a digital sharing platform is to work as the middleman in connecting two parties, the buyer and the seller together (Acquier, Daudigeos and Pinkse, 2017). Besides connecting the buyer and seller together, the middleman must make sure that it is trusted by both sides of the exchange. The methods of offering digital trust to users vary from platform to platform. Most of the time trust is established by reputation and review systems (Bolton, Katok and Ockenfels, 2004; Sundararajan, 2016; C. Köbis, Soraperra and Shalvi, 2021). Having a higher reputation on DSP platforms is beneficial for the renter as it allows them to increase their prices as better reputation increases demand (Proserpio, Xu and Zervas, 2018). Different platforms also focus more on features that are necessary for their business model. For example, some platforms require a more specific search functionality while other platforms are more based on the user's personal location.

During the last two decades different business models involving renting unused resources has risen by a large margin (Bradley and Pargman, 2017). Sharing economy business models include shareable e-scooters, carsharing services, apartment renting and food waste reducing services where expiring food is sold with discounted prices. Sharing economy business models can also focus on crowdfunding, coworking (Bouncken *et al.*, 2020) or different types of knowledge and talent-sharing services (Wirtz *et al.*, 2019). Most of the business ideas that are built around the sharing economy aren't innovating on the outer level but have usually struggled with handling the negative prejudice against them. For example, the idea of renting an apartment from a third-party might sound strange the first time the user is given that option to them. They might have doubts about trusting a stranger for the first time. How could they be sure that they aren't getting scammed for instance? This is partly why the new generation of people have been the trailblazers of the development of digital trust as it is fairly known that older people have a lot less trust in the internet as younger generations.

The main architectural goal for a DSP is to answer the 3 questions around the goals of the service (Koponen, 2019). First core question, “Who are we bringing together?”, means that the platform needs to decide which two parties are the platform looking to connect with an exchange. For example, this can be the carpool driver and the customer looking for a ride. In another case it can simply be the seller and the buyer of a product. The second question, “Why are we connecting the parties?”, aims to describe the reasoning of what value does connecting two parties together provide for them? The value can describe both the value of the service by how the platform makes the connection process better and easier for the customer and the provider. Without the generated value for the customer and the service provider it is impossible to build a sustainable platform as there is nothing keeping the two parties interested in the long term. The third question, “With what terms?”, means that the platforms need to have set filters and terms on what the exchanges are about. The job of filters is to give the users the right types of tools to find the service they are looking for. Without well-built filtering systems the platform would have problems to scale as users would struggle to find the services they are looking for. For example, the filtering system of Uber automatically aims to send the closest driver to the user so that the service is as fast as possible.

## 2.2 Different types of DSP’s

In this thesis we will categorise the sharing economy platforms by their business sector as the platforms from the same business sector usually share many of the key features between the competitors in that sector. The design of the platforms inside the same service types usually shares many of the features with each other as they operate as a straight competitor with each other. The key service types found around the sharing economy are listed in the table below with some of their most popular platforms (Table 1.).

**TABLE 1. SERVICE TYPES**

<b>P2P FINANCE</b>	<b>P2P-Lending:</b> Mintos, Bondora <b>Crowdfunding:</b> Kickstarter, IndieGoGo, GoFundMe
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<b>APARTMENT RENTING</b>	AirBnb, Tujia, TripAdvisor Rentals, Booking.com, Tripping.com
<b>SPACE RENTING</b>	<b>Storage Renting:</b> StashBee, Neighbor <b>Parking:</b> JustPark <b>Coworking:</b> Wework
<b>RIDESHARING</b>	<b>Carpool:</b> Uber, Yango, Bolt, BlaBlaCar, Didi
<b>VEHICLE RENTING</b>	<b>E-Scooter:</b> Voi, Tier, Lime, <b>Car Renting:</b> GoMore, ZipCar <b>Boat Renting:</b> Boatsetter <b>Bike Renting:</b> Spinlister
<b>ITEM RENTING</b>	<b>Tool Renting:</b> SpareToolz
<b>WASTE REDUCTION</b>	<b>Food Waste:</b> ResQ <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Hand Resale:</b> Tise, Zadaa, eBay, Tori.fi, Facebook Marketplace, Xianyu

### 2.3 Material platforms

The platforms that deal with durable materials originally started as a way for people to reduce their vehicles or apartments usage downtime (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012). When people were away from the city for example, they could rent out their apartment or a room for a traveller against a fee. These material services are viewed as durable as they don't lose their value rapidly during the renting period. Platforms that work with consumable materials usually revolve around waste reduction by trying to limit excess food or other resources that lose their value when they expire.

Leading market participants include apartment sharing platforms such as Airbnb, many other services such as SpotAHome and Tujia have also started to offer the same type of service where users can list their own apartments as accommodations on the service (Oskam and Boswijk, 2016). Also, more classical booking service sites such as Booking.com have also started their own service that include apartment accommodations listed by the site users.

In 2008 Airbnb started offering a platform for renting their unused rooms for travellers online. Before Airbnb, the online accommodation space was mostly filled with regular hotel and motel services, so it has changed the way people view home sharing in general. During the rise of Airbnb many other apartment renting platforms have also popped up to take their cut of the large sector. For example, China's own Airbnb, Tujia, is the leading player in the Chinese apartment renting space. Many different companies in the travelling space have also adapted the rental marketplace features to their own platforms. Well-known names such as TripAdvisor and Booking.com have both started to offer their users a way to list their own apartments to their platforms with the goal of staying up with the trend where the online booking sector is going. Similar platforms with their own twist also have been built to offer different space renting opportunities. For example, space renting platforms have offered chances to rent out multiple diverse types of real-estate ranging from coworking spaces and storage to parking as well as coworking spaces for freelancers and entrepreneurs. Coworking spaces have also increased in popularity in the larger corporate world and they have been linked to a growth in work satisfaction (Bouncken *et al.*, 2020).

Other renting services in the material durable sector are vehicle renting platforms (Cohen and Kietzmann, 2014) that work similarly to their apartment renting counterparts. Vehicle renting sector includes services such as Turo and GoMore. On these platforms, users are both allowed to list and rent vehicles with a simple “Airbnb” like user interface that includes search filters to find the right vehicle for the user’s needs. GoMore offers users a way to rent a vehicle from a large pool of different choices. Vehicle options range from e-scooters to bicycles as well as from trucks and cars to even boats (Guyader and Piscicelli, 2019). Some rural areas even have tried building their own platforms for renting out tractors when they are idling.

Not all the vehicle renting platforms operate at the same principles. For example, e-scooter platforms are always responsible for the scooters on the market. There isn’t currently any widespread e-scooter platform that would work mainly as a P2P market for renting and riding e-scooters. So, while most of the car rental platforms work with a P2P principle this isn’t the only model that sharing economy platforms can operate with.

The platforms such as ResQ app that deal with expiring food products are an example of a consumable item platform. ResQ offers a way for companies to reduce their food waste by allowing the restaurants and shops to list expiring food items with a lower price on the

platform. Users can then search and look for different close to expiring foods from the application. ResQ also offers users an option to reserve their items upfront and pick them up later during the day (Nguyen, 2018).

2<sup>nd</sup> hand resale platforms are another way to minimise the waste of consumable resources. Many platforms have risen with the goal of reselling clothes and other items that would otherwise be unused or thrown away. The 2<sup>nd</sup> hand platform sector consists of more classical takes on the P2P e-commerce as well as more modernised versions of e-commerce platforms that are formed around social media platforms or resemble one. The classical sites such as eBay or Tori.fi are online marketplaces that function only as a way to connect sellers and buyers with each other. The platforms won't take a part in the logistics or the payment processing side of the transaction. The increase in maturity of the Internet has led to the development of trust-based 2<sup>nd</sup> hand platforms (Luo *et al.*, 2020). As the 2<sup>nd</sup> hand platforms are highly dependent on user-to-user communication and trust, the platforms are aiming to integrate social media accounts into the platforms in the goal of creating a more "trustworthy" feeling for the customer (Casaló and Romero, 2019). These more modernised platforms such as Zadaa or Tise are more involved in the transaction of the items sold. Zadaa for example takes care of the logistics of the item sold and works as the middleman in the payment processing.

## **2.4 Immaterial**

Immaterial platforms usually offer a platform for different types of services. It brings together the service provider and the customer and usually offers a trusted exchange with the large existing user base inside the platform. On the platforms, people can offer their own freelancing services straight to the customer, the platform only plays the role of a middleman that connects the two parties with each other as a giant marketplace for work

Like all other sharing economy sectors, platforms around durable immaterial services have gone through a major increase of use during the last decade. The rise of the modern-day trend of "gig economy" is mostly pushed forward by these Talent Sharing platforms. Some platforms offer employers a way to recruit workforce for part-time jobs without taking part in the recruiting process, while some of them only offer niche jobs as freelancers. The workers aren't employed by the platform companies but are operating and viewed as independent contractors (Dugan, 2016). This has changed the work life of many part time

workers that have turned into using gig platforms as their full-time jobs. In 2020 Uber itself is estimated to have over 5 million drivers using its application, this however has taken a quite large hit during the covid-19 pandemic (*Uber Statistics 2021: How Many People Ride with Uber?*, 2021). The gig economy services have gone through a major increase in popularity during the last decade where they've become the new normal way of ordering food or getting a ride to somewhere. The gig economy has also been viewed as the largest development in the way people work since the early days of industrialism and capitalism and has even been called the “21<sup>st</sup> Century Industrial Revolution” (Ungureanu, 2019).

## 2.5 Timeline of different DSP sectors

From Figure 1. We can see the different types of DSP sectors and their platforms release dates placed on a timeline of the last decade. The platforms are colour coded to match different DSP sectors to visualise when the different sharing economy sectors started to gain popularity. As we can see the early days between 2007 and 2012, multiple sharing economy sectors gained wind on their growth. All the largest ride sharing platforms (purple in Figure 1.) started operating during this 5-year window as well as most of the largest crowdsourcing platforms (dark brown in Figure 1.). We can also see how the apartment renting space (blue in Figure 1.) started to develop with the founding of Airbnb back in 2008. The modern-day 2<sup>nd</sup> hand resale platforms, Tise and Zadaa were founded during the years 2014 and 2015 which can be viewed as a completely new type of a platform even though they can include similar features as the e-commerce P2P platforms found decades ago. The way these new 2nd-hand-resale platforms (beige, Figure 1.) have designed their platform to operate as

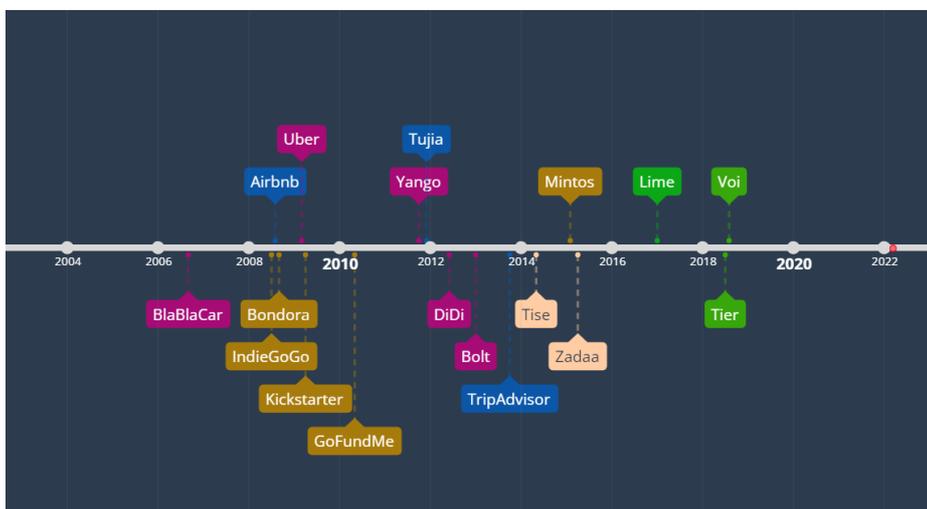


Figure 1: Platform launch timeline

social media-like platforms where users can grow a following based on their social media

presence is something totally different from eBay's ecommerce auctions. The latest sharing economy sector found on the timeline is the e-scooter sector that started gaining popularity during 2018. The platforms started expanding their operations during 2019 and 2020 and they have become an important part of public transportation in multiple large cities.

### **3. Platform design key points**

As the vast amount of sharing economy platforms around business sectors keep growing, we can start analysing which UX/UI elements are repeating on the platforms that find a way to succeed and grow a sustainable user base. As almost all different business sectors have usually clear market winner platforms, we will choose them as the prime candidate and analyse their choices for the UX/UI decisions that they have made for the platform. This can help future competing platforms streamline their design to answer to the right kind of a customer they are wishing to attract. In the data collection, example platforms are chosen by the listing of different types of sharing economy sectors. Inside the sharing economy sectors, the most used platforms of different geographic areas are analysed to see what types of UX, and UI elements are found repeatedly across the platforms.

In this chapter we analyse the different ways that sharing economy platforms have implemented strategies in their UI / UX for user acquisition. We will represent examples on how registration processes are optimised for fast customer enrolment as well as how user loyalty can be maintained with premium loyalty programs. Analysis also focuses on how platforms with millions of products and listed items can efficiently offer ways for users to find the content they are most likely to be looking for by analysing the filtering and search design used on the platforms. After this the analysis also sees how the browsing and recommendation design is used on the sharing economy platforms to increase user acquisition and conversion rate.

#### **3.1 Data collection and selection methodology**

The data collection started with analysing what different sectors does the current sharing economy space already spread to. It seems that almost all classical types of renting businesses have tried already to set up a sharing economy platform but some of them being too small of a niche, ending up closing after short amounts of time. By this conclusion the decision was to delimit the selection to only include sectors that have reached large success in the consumer markets by attracting thousands of monthly users and that have existed for at least 3 years on the market by the time of writing this thesis. This left us with the final selection template regarding the sharing economy sectors: P2P finance, Apartment renting,

Space renting, Ridesharing, Vehicle renting, Waste reduction. Inside these sectors the selection of platforms for our design analysis was done by choosing the most popular platforms of the sector. Also, platforms that had an abnormal design compared to the other platforms of the sector were analysed and compared to the other platforms.

After the selection of the sharing platforms, the design analysis was completed by user testing the platforms and comparing their features and design side by side. By this the differences of the platforms were easy to spot and write down. The observations were tracked especially on the UX and UI components that had repeated use across multiple different platforms. By the consensus of the platform's designers these components seem important in the factor to determine to have a part of the platform's success from the UX design perspective and can be viewed as key design points for building a successful design for a sharing economy platform.

### **3.2 User acquisition**

From the UX standpoint, the number one thing to consider is to make the main user flow as seamless as possible. Make sure that users flow from the registration to finding the right product or service as fast as possible. If the platform is about renting an accommodation, the questions of the main user flow are as easy as “Where? When? Who?” (Koponen, 2019). With the user answering these questions we are ready to list them fitting accommodations. Besides the main user flow, the site users will consist of multiple different user groups. For users that just want to look and browse available listings, we can offer an explore page that shows all kinds of listings from different categories that are available on our platform.

Like with any other business, the first thing all platform creators should ask themselves is “what is the customer value proposition of the platform they are creating?”. How does this service differ from the multiple other services that have already been built? What is the competitive edge that the new platform has on the existing ones? As the user acquisition is by far the most important thing for a platform to get right, we can only wonder what are the things that create attraction for the new users?

### 3.2.1 Fast registration process

When it comes to platforms usually it is mandatory for the user to create a profile of their own, this can turn away potential customers and users if the registration process isn't simple and fast enough. In the past platforms and websites required users to create their own profiles to each service alone and the accounts were not usable on any other service. During the last century multiple platforms have adapted new login and registration methods offered by tech giants such as Google, Facebook and Apple that allow the user to use their existing profiles for registering on the platforms. The platform will then use the available personal information from your existing profile and let you continue the use of the platform instantly

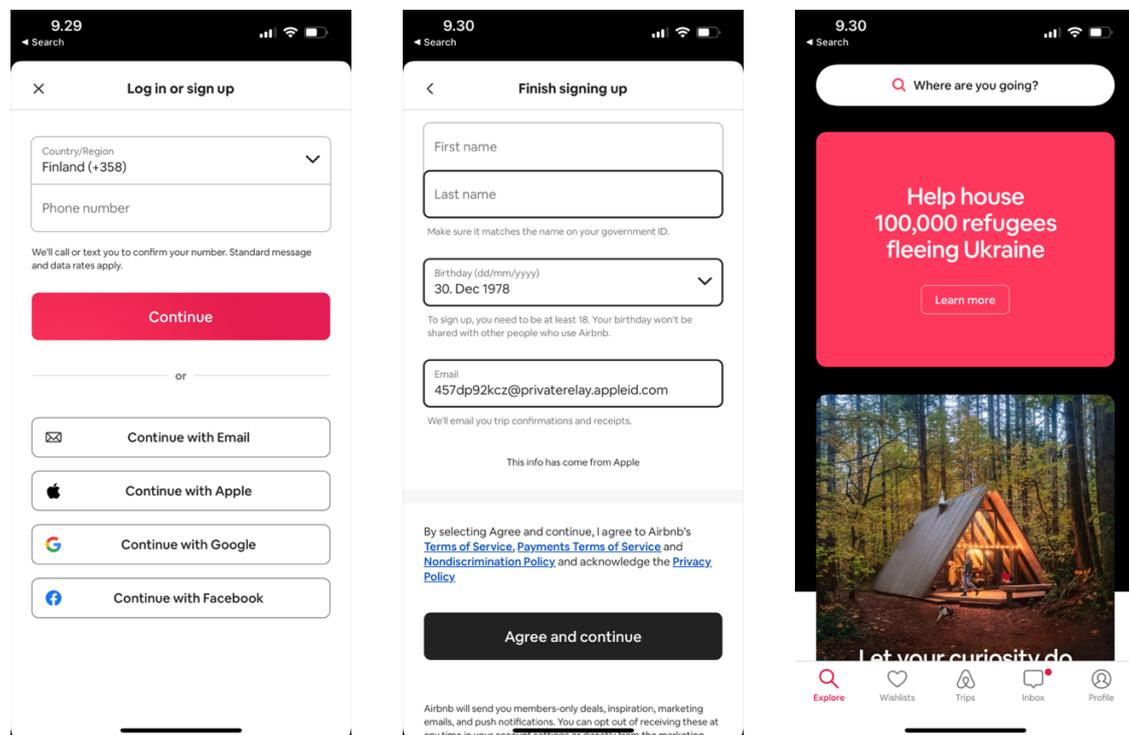


Figure 2: Airbnb registration flow

without the need of rewriting all your personal data to the platform. This type of single sign-on (SSO) registration system also makes it easier for the user to be in control of their own data because the access to it is removable straight from one place alone. SSO reduces interruptions between switching between multiple platforms and apps as the same account can be used to login to each service alone. Positive relationship between user satisfaction and SSO implementation has been found to increase conversions and the positive feelings of the user experience (Hope and Zhang, 2015).

### **3.2.2 Loyalty systems**

Loyalty systems have been a part of multiple businesses and e-commerce sites from the beginning of commercial markets. Businesses want customers to centre their purchases into one business as all businesses compete over customers. In the past almost every market business has implemented their own loyalty systems in the form of a loyalty card. Loyalty cards usually offer loyalty rewards, campaign discounts or percentage bonuses for loyalty program customers. Loyalty systems can also involve coupons for one-time purchases or discounts for new customers to spark interest in trying the service for a first time. Positive word-of-mouth has been viewed as a top way of gaining loyalty with new users. People are persuaded by their friends recommending a platform for them and view it with higher confidence and trust. Therefore, most platforms also have applied a referral system where both the previous user and the new registered user get credits to spend on the platform as a reward for recommending the platform for their peers.

As most sharing economy platforms are still making their way into the large mainstream adaptation, they seem more ready to invest a lot of investors' funds into campaigns that offer discounts for the new users making their first purchases. The pricing of various ridesharing platforms has been criticised as unsustainable in the long term. The prices are said to be pushed down with the goal of gathering a large user base by transferring customers from old fashion taxi companies that don't have the luxury of operating at a loss with investor funding. Sharing economy platforms have taken advantage of these same classical marketing methods, as well as come up with some new strategies to turn the first-time users to a loyal customer on their platform.

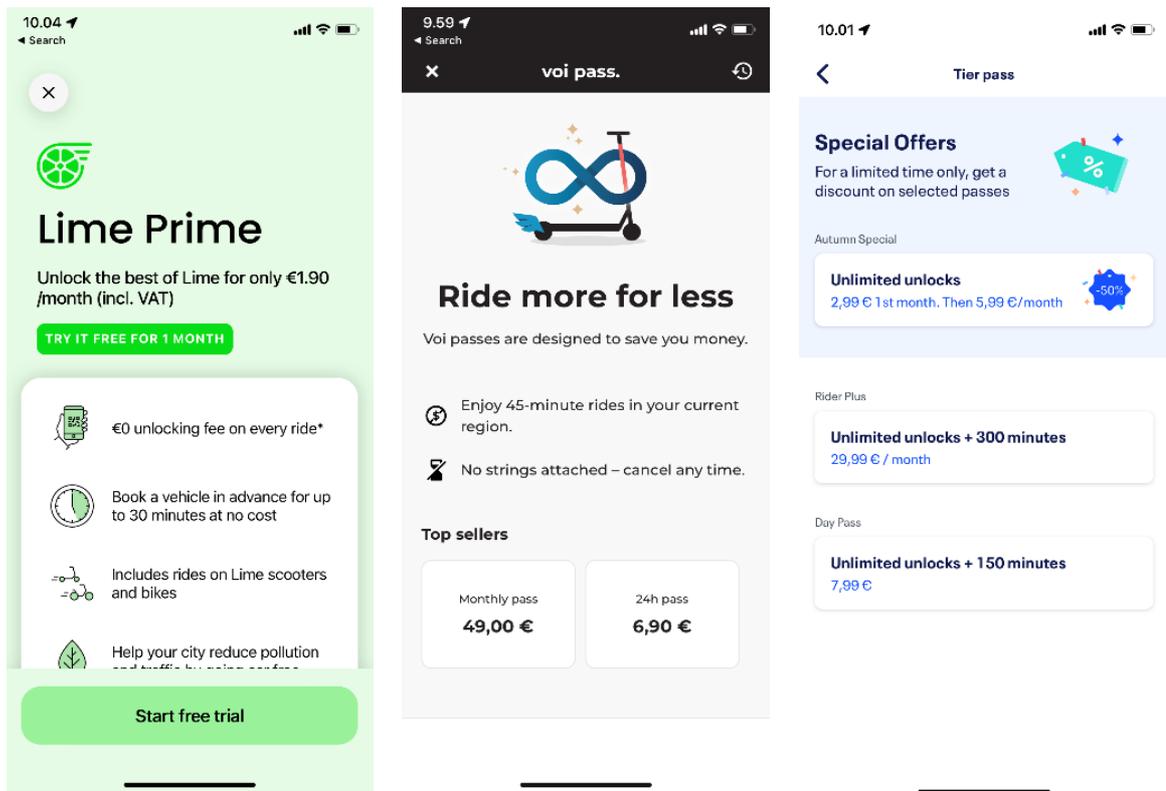


Figure 3: Loyalty programs for e-scooter platforms

In the beginning, E-scooter platforms operated mostly on a pay as you ride pricing model. This kind of a business model is great on building an user base but lacks the motivators for keeping the user to stick to using only one platform. As the most critical factor on a success of a sharing economy platform is the ability to gather and retain a critical mass of users (Barnes and Mattsson, 2016) the loyalty of a customer is increasingly important for sharing economy platforms. As e-scooter platforms are mostly competing with a heterogeneous product and service they have started offering monthly passes and subscriptions that offer users chance to ride any e-scooter available on the platform for a month with a fixed fee (Figure 3.). This reduces the overlap with users that use the platform that's scooters are just at the most convenient location to them and builds loyalty for using just one e-scooter platform.

### 3.3 Consumer trust in digital platforms

As with any marketplace or P2P transaction, both parties involved in a transaction are questioning the trustworthiness of the other party as well as the trustworthiness of the platform operating as the third party organising the transaction. Can the buyer receive the goods as promised? Will the payment arrive as the two parties discussed? These kinds of doubts and distrust can easily prevent new users from committing to a use of a platform and drive down the sales (Akhmedova, Marimon and Mas-Machuca, 2020). Marketplaces in the past that operated in the physical world had the transactions happen in the same location where the cash and item switched owners during the transaction. In the digital world however, the transaction usually involves shipping, and the listed product or service isn't observable in the real world for the buyer. This was a concern of distrust in the early history of e-commerce as many people were sceptical of e-commerce websites. As digital platforms have become mainstream in their adaptation during the last century, the way people view their trustworthiness has also increased significantly. The main functionality and role of the sharing economy platform is to offer and process the transactions between the buyer and the seller or in some cases being just the centralised middleman of the transaction. It is important that the platform reaches a certain level of credibility so that the first-time users also trust that the platform fills their side of the promise. As the platform grows and gathers more users the word of mouth starts to build more natural trust besides the users. If more people talk about the platform in a positive way. However, before this maturing of the platform digital trust can also be built with a clean UI that gives the user a feeling of trust. People can visualise themselves walking into a bank that looks poorly operated. They probably don't feel like handing out their personal wealth to a bank operating in such rural conditions. The same feeling of distrust can also happen on digital platforms if the UI is poorly designed or outdated. This is why it's mandatory for the platforms to focus on the UX and UI of the service from day one. (*Building User Trust In UX Design, 2021*) Multiple studies have also stated that the platform's design has an impact on the trust and satisfaction of the user (Akhmedova, Marimon and Mas-Machuca, 2020).

Platforms also face another challenge considering the digital trust. Even if the platforms themselves are viewed as trustful, how can the user be sure that the seller is also operating in good will? It is found out that users that are quite unfamiliar with the platform are also

less trustful against other peers using the platform and are less likely to use the platform (Möhlmann, 2021). Users are most often given a chance to write out their personal information on their profiles, making it easier for other users to engage with profiles that have truthfully given out their information so that the transactions aren't performed out of blind trust. (Zloteanu *et al.*, 2018) Users' longevity, participation and contributions on the platform are also visualised as a trust building component. Also, different incentive models for gain and pain sharing, used in platforms, can add a lot of trust between the partners, who are exchanging resources and/or services with each other (Happonen and Siljander, 2020). Reputation of the users is a fundamental part of the platform's success in building trust between its users. (Zloteanu *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, most sharing economy platforms have implemented a rating system between the users that rate the transaction experience. When users' complete transactions with each other, they rate how the interaction with the other user went. Both of their reviews are later visible in the profile scoring for other people to see. In this rating system people that have generated positive ratings are also more likely to gain visibility for their future listings. Platforms have also developed the rating systems to work so that the reviews of both parties are hidden until both submit a review, this has solved a problem with retaliation in the reviews and improved the trust aspect of them (Benoit *et al.*, 2017).

### **3.4 Search and Filters**

Design of search engines and listing filtering systems has been Search and filter systems are the most important functionality considering usability of the sharing economy platform. For example, most listings on Airbnb are heterogeneous with each other, meaning that multiple accommodations are quite like each other with only minor differences. This leaves us to decide on what metrics the platform should use to give its users the best search experience and find the most relevant search results from our hundreds of listings. Airbnb states that it uses multiple metrics such as users search and booking history as well as ratings from previous users to determine how high up a listed accommodation will show in the search rankings. The metrics also include hidden ratings on how often a search led into a booking in the past (*How Airbnb search works - Resource Center*, 2021). According to a study Airbnb is also finding it important to make sure that the search results are crafted so that it prevents from possible double bookings from happening, users that are initially rejected from a

booking are 51% less likely to make a booking following the rejection than those users that are accepted (Fradkin, no date). Fradkin also states that even the design of accommodation availability trackers can make a substantial difference in the number of transactions completed on the platform. When a booking is completed, the accommodation is removed from the search results, so it won't give false hope to other users for its availability.

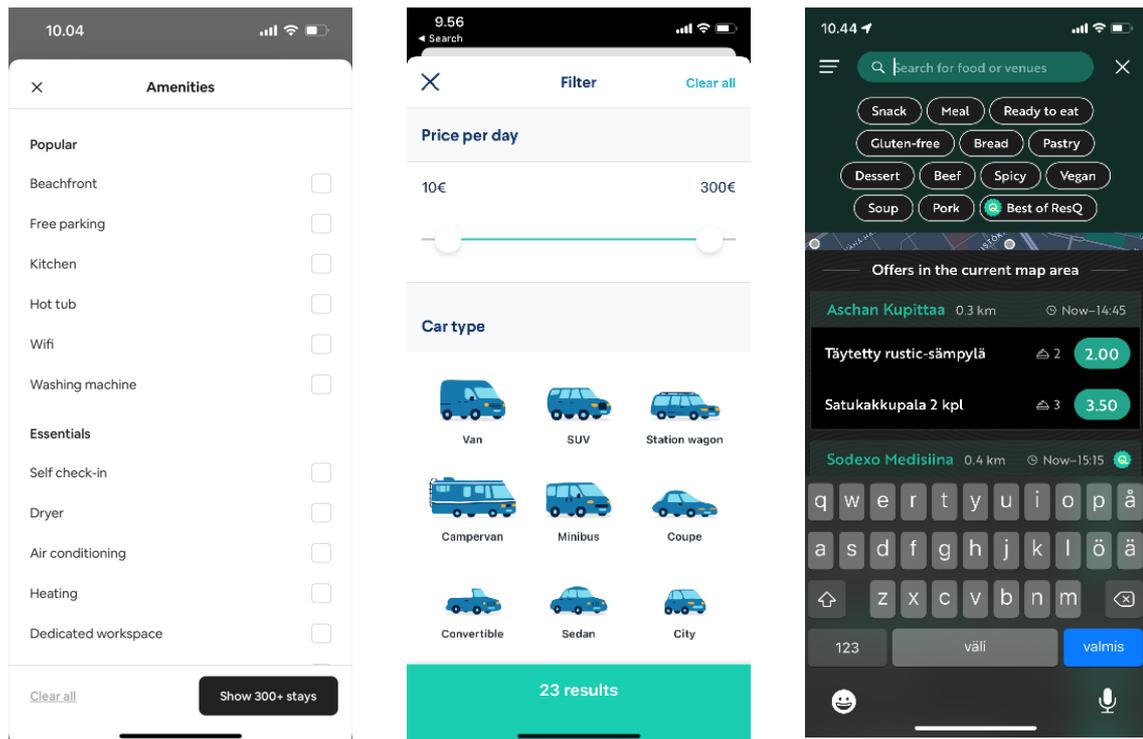


Figure 4: Filter views of different sharing economy apps, from left to right: Airbnb, GoMore, ResQ

As successful platforms usually have millions of listings the filtration of the search is always important to be built to suit the exact service the platform is providing. The basic filters though most often include filtering the listings by price, dates, and locations. Accommodation renting platforms usually have the possibility to filter the listings with also the type of accommodation the user wants ranging from skiing houses to basic apartments. Specific filters for accommodations may also include pet friendly accommodations or different accommodation specific extras. Car rental services offer the same types of filtering systems with exceptions to specific filters that apply to vehicles such as year model of a car or the vehicle's size (Figure 4.). Search functionality often also recommends searchable terms for the user that isn't quite sure what they are looking for. This type of predictive

search makes the UX of the search faster when the user isn't certain what types of listings they are looking for.

Even though search functionality may seem critical for all sharing economy platforms, some of them are so users' location based that it is unnecessary for them to include wide search functionality. It is completely irrelevant for the user to search a single fitting e-scooter for them as all of them are identical, meaning that the only factor user is interested about is the near location of their own current location. E-Scooter renting platforms consist solely of a map view around the user's own location with plotted available e-scooters.

### **3.5 Browse and recommend**

Platforms with tens of thousands of listings should also evaluate their design on what their listing browsing experience feels like. The recommendations system should captivate the user to browse and explore the listings with a mindset of turning them into a future user later even if they aren't ready to make a booking just yet. The way users like to browse listings differ from each other widely as some people only browse listings when they are ready to make a booking, some users on other hand love to just browse around and do window shopping with all the different listings and products. The more time users spend on browsing the platforms listings the more likely they are to turn into a regular user.

Most recommendation systems are based on machine learning algorithms that predict the users' interests based on how other users with similar interests have behaved in history. As earlier mentioned, Airbnb's way of dealing with their recommendation system includes multiple different metrics such as pricing, number of reviews, rating of reviews, distance, facilities and check in/check out times (Jeong, 2021).

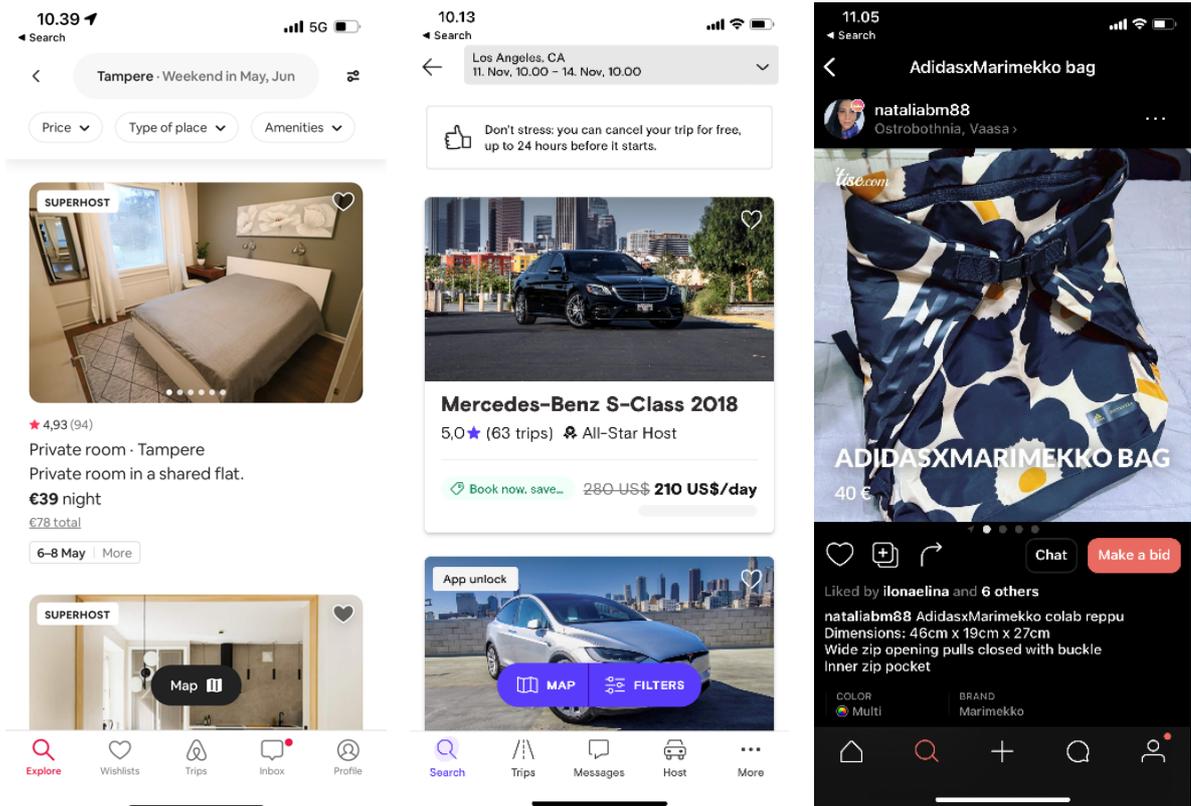


Figure 5: Similarities in browsing feeds of different platform sectors, from left to right Airbnb, Turo, Tise

Platforms have multiple angles they can take for the design of the recommendations. For example, the main page of the platform could be tailored differently for new users. New users could see a listing of accommodations located widely at multiple different cities and countries as an older user could get more recommendations based on their past trip behaviour as they might want to book a room again that they had a great experience last time. Besides browsing listings generated by recommendation systems, it's also common for platforms to categorise the listings and make each category browsable by its own. This is also a great way to serve a different type of user that is more into browsing and comparing the same types of listing with each other. Categories usually include categorizations that are wide enough to have an appropriate number of listings inside them as too specific categories only make the browsing experience more tedious.

Browsing experience on platforms that list thousands of items are fairly similar with sharing card layout views of the products that give the user clear visual representation of what is being offered and with what price. Browsing views usually consist of an infinite

scroll component that loads new items as you scroll down the view, creating an endless loop of items until you finish all the items (Figure 5.).

### **3.6 Summary of UX elements**

The UX and UI of sharing economy platforms consists of multiple different areas that go beyond the previously discussed examples. Features and user flows that occur outside of the application affect the user experience of the complete service possibly even more than the application itself. If the service outside of the application won't match the user's needs, they are likely not to return just because the application UX was pleasant for them. Features, such as payment processes and shipment times can make or break the user experience of a sharing economy platform. However, the chosen examples on the previous chapters highlight the most impactful areas that the application side of the sharing economy service is responsible for as it is the first point of contact that a potential user has with the service itself. Poor UX of a platform can work as a bottleneck for growing a large user base as it can repel away potential customers that rather use a competing platform that offers better UX for their application.

## **4. Most occurring UX design practices**

As the vast amount of sharing economy platforms around almost all business sectors keep growing, we can start analysing which UX/UI elements are increasing the chances of the platforms to succeed and grow a sustainable user base. As almost all different business sectors have somewhat clear market winner platforms, we will choose them as the prime candidate and analyse their choices for the UX/UI decisions that they have made for the platform. This can help future competing platforms streamline their design to answer to the right kind of a customer they are wishing to attract. The focus of the analysis will be on finding the key components of the platforms that increase the functionality of the platform. We can also compare different platforms from the same sectors and look for differences in their design decisions.

The chapter analyses the key components of the three largest and trending business sectors on sharing economy and compares their UX design patterns that are repeatedly used on competing platforms. The analysis points out the certain elements that can be found on almost all the platforms competing on the same domain of sharing economy. The three sharing economy domains the analysis focuses on are space renting, e-scooter renting, and 2<sup>nd</sup> hand resale.

### **4.1 Data Collection and Methodology**

In a similar way to the data collection in chapter 3. The occurrence of UX design practices was analysed during the one-by-one analysis of selected sharing economy sectors and platforms. The data itself and the methodology of the data collection was the same as in chapter 3. In this chapter we focus the analysis on the occurring UX design practices inside the scope of a certain sector of the sharing economy, rather than the overall sharing economy space. By grouping the analysis to more focused on singular sectors we can analyse what UX practices or components the different sharing economy sectors views as important on their UX design success.

## 4.2 Case: Space renting

The term category “space renting” describes the sharing economy platforms that are designed as marketplaces for renting any type of real-estate, storage space or even parking slots as most of the platforms resemble each other closely with only minor differences. The key UI components of the platforms as well as the decisions around the UX made by the designers are fundamentally similar. The platforms are found to take a lot of inspiration from each other so the overlap in the designs is unquestionable.

### 4.2.1 Key components

On accommodation rental platforms, the users are often greeted with a main view involving a large search bar that allows the user a fast path to find the exact destinations the user is looking for (Figure 6.). Below the search bar platforms usually start to list inspiring recommendations of new locations the user should visit. The more important view for the user is the search results view that is split in two parts. The most relevant search results are

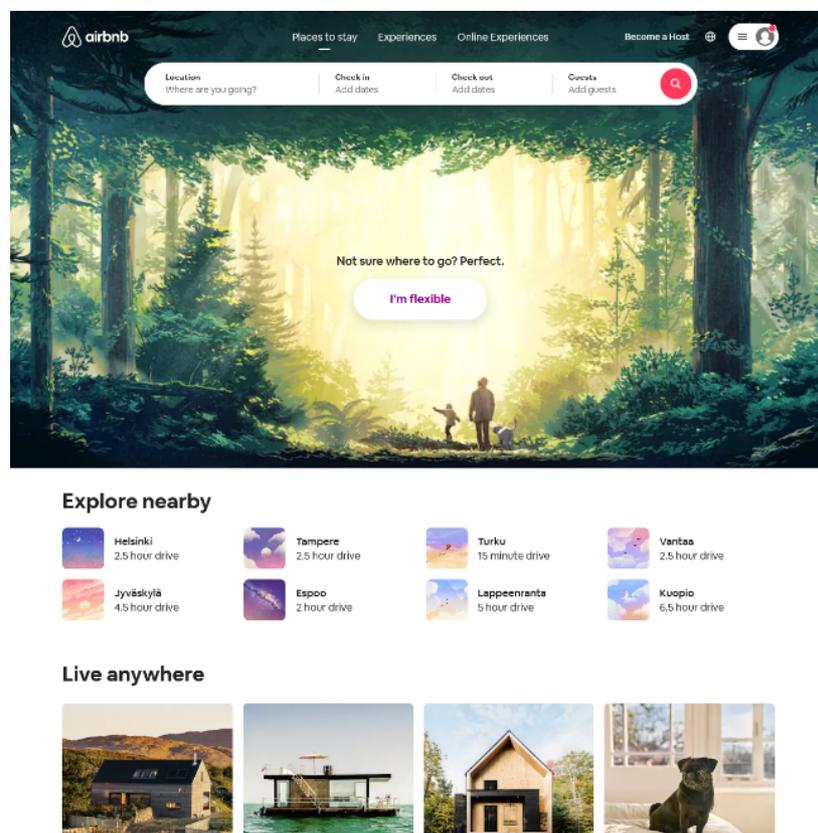


Figure 6: Airbnb home view

on the left side of the split. The list of results includes information for each listing from the location address and price to the dates available for booking. Also, ratings from the reviews left from past visitors are shown as a star rating system. Users are also available to favourite listed apartments so they will be easier to find later if the user wants to keep browsing the destinations further.

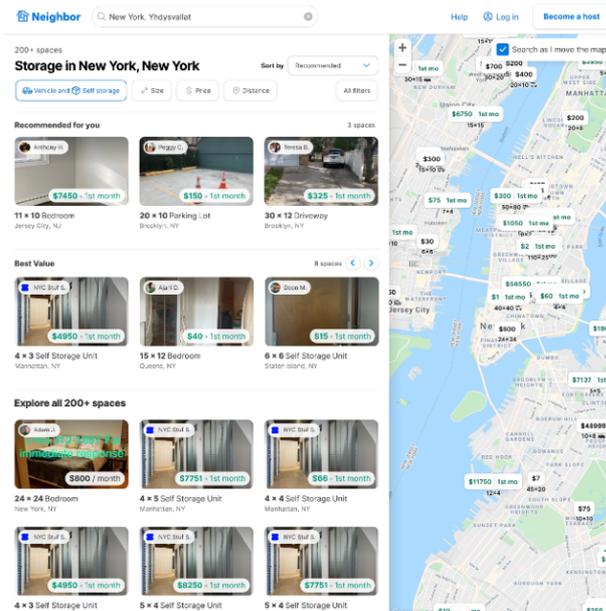
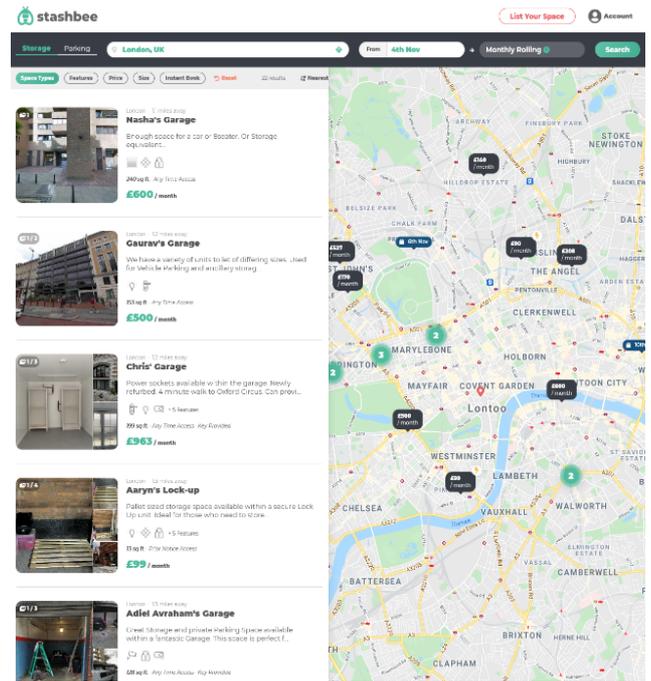
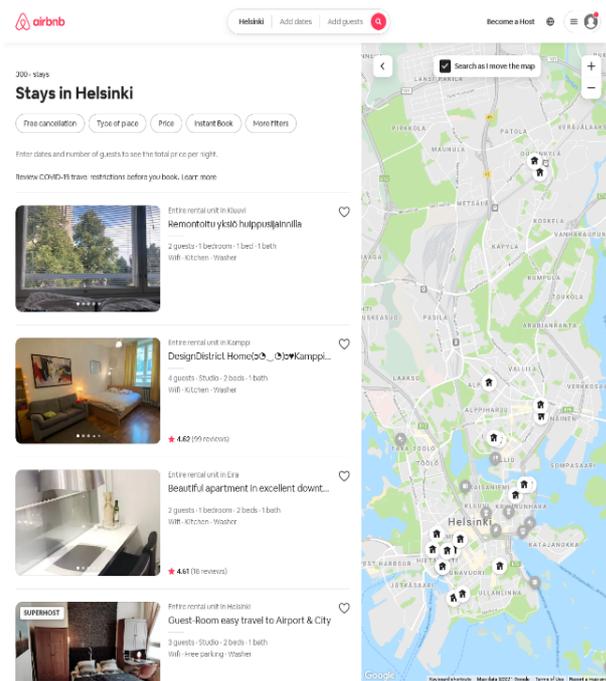


Figure 7: Space renting platforms map view elements side by side bring up a lot of similarities

The right side of the split view consists of a map view cropped to the location the user searched for. The available destinations are then plotted on the map so that the location of the accommodation is easy to see. The plotted dots also include a price tag of the nightly price of the accommodation. Users can move the map to a new location by dragging and the new accommodations are then listed as the map moves (Figure 8).

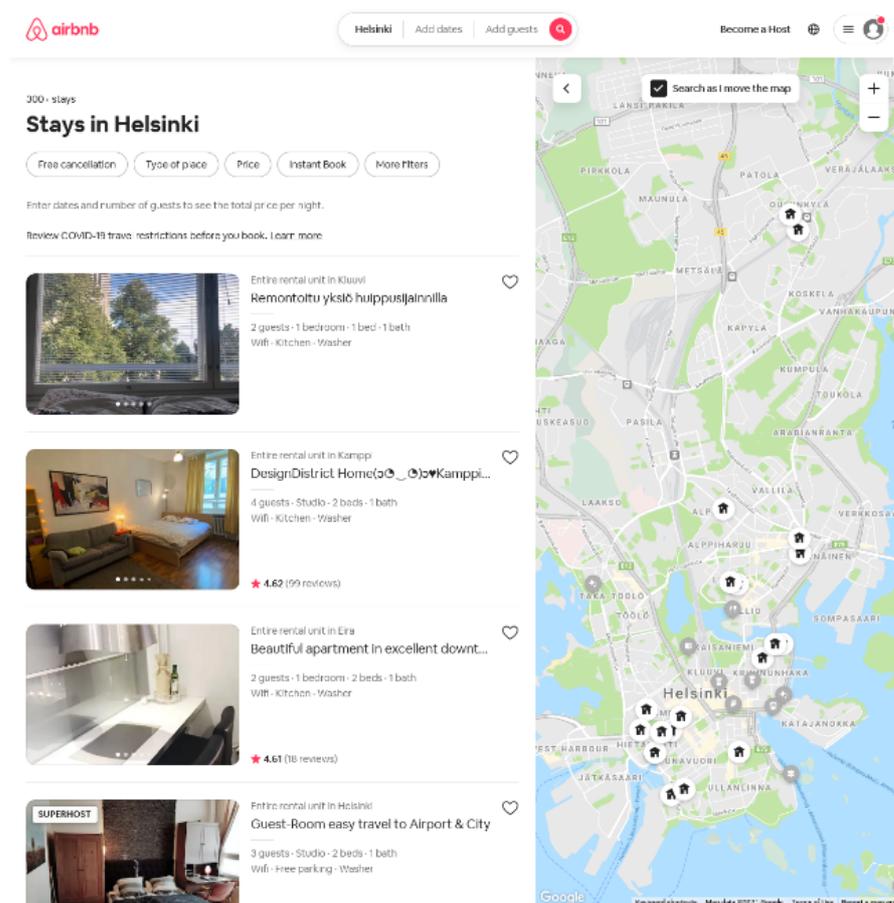


Figure 8: Airbnb map view

The single accommodation page that lists more detailed information about the accommodation consists of multiple images portraying the accommodation's living spaces. Below the images a description of the property is shown with some of the most valuable information regarding the accommodation. It is often also shown a more detailed booking calendar that reveals the pricing of the accommodation for the given time range. From the calendar the user can complete the booking or change the dates from the ones they gave during the search. On each accommodation page the renter's own profile is shown with the

total rating score calculated from each previous visitor's review. Besides the rating score, also the detailed testimonials of previous visitors can be browsed and read.

When a user is ready to complete their booking, they fill a short form with the range of dates they are planning to stay and some extra information about the size of the group. If the user isn't logged in, a login modal is presented with multiple different ways of either registering a new user or logging in with an existing account. Most accommodation platforms allow the users to login and register with existing accounts from big tech companies' platforms such as Google, Apple, or Facebook. On some platforms users can also complete bookings with just a phone number and an email. This can lead to user not gaining a reputation of their own on the platform and may be a reason for renters to turn down your bookings as they may decide to only rent accommodations for verified users with a history of other bookings.

Features on the platforms on the surface seem quite similar, however there is a clear advantage for the market leader Airbnb. Airbnb has clearly made changes for their UX to offer more fitting apartment options for people who aren't even sure where they would be travelling to or even when. Airbnb offers a feature "I'm flexible" that lists the user multiple different destinations all over the world with more affordable prices. As other platforms have mostly followed the classical user flow that is aimed for customers that already know what they are looking for, Airbnb's way of finding new potential customers in the "window shopping" user group is different from most of the other platforms in the space renting domain.

**TABLE 2. REPEATING ELEMENTS OF SPACE RENTING DOMAIN**

<b>KEY COMPONENTS</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>USE OF COLOUR</b>	White main colour scheme with branding accent colours found on all analysed platforms.
<b>MAP VIEW</b>	Map view between space renting platforms was really similar with all the analysed platforms. Map with location markers on the right and listing of the visible destinations on the left

**FILTERS**

Price, size, location, and features were the filters found on each platform. Functionality of the filters was also similar and made with slider and checkbox components.

**REGISTRATION**

All analysed platforms offered options to sign in with third-party accounts from large tech companies, such as “Sign in with Google” and “Sign in with Facebook”

### 4.3 Case: E-scooter platforms

From all the research around different sharing economy platforms and their designs the most uniformly designed sector we came across were the E-scooter rental platforms Lime, Voi, and Tier. As the e-scooter platforms are quite simple in their functionality, with the main goals of making the payment and unlocking process of the e-scooters fast and linear, the platforms can solely focus on this user path.

#### 4.3.1 Key components

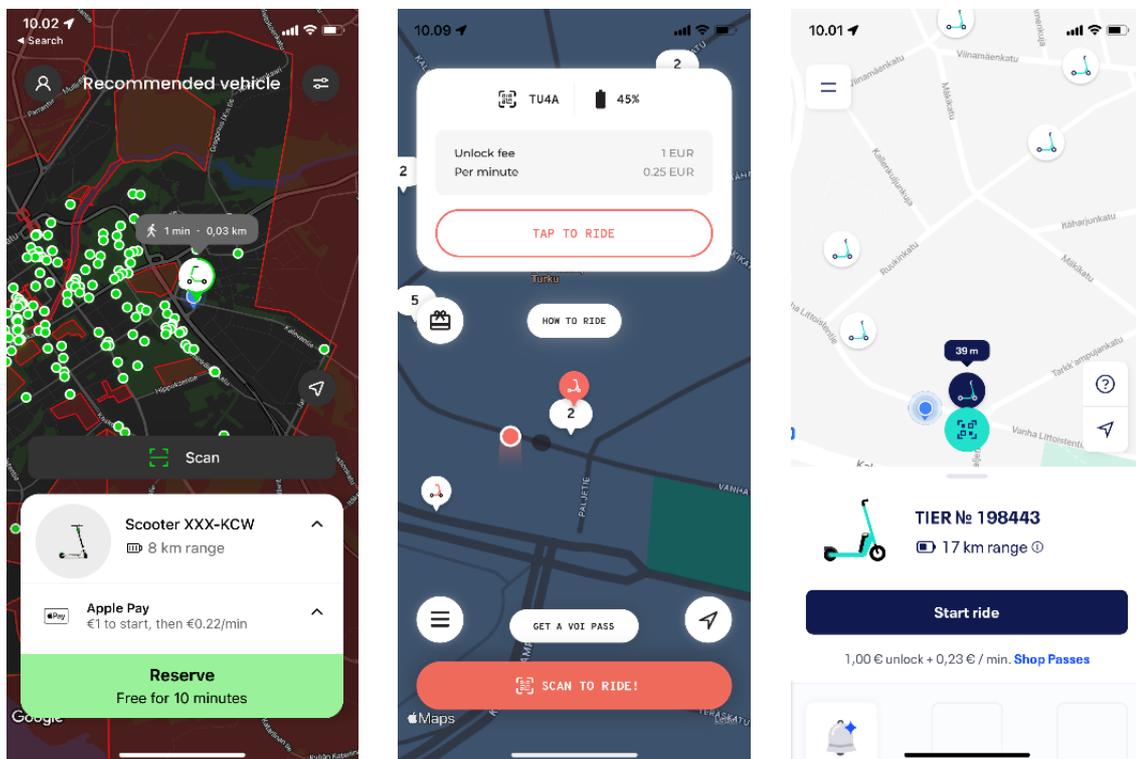


Figure 9: E-scooter platforms map views, from left to right: Lime, Voi, Tier

E-scooter main view consists of a map that is focused on the users' current location with the plotted e-scooters locations and battery percentages (Figure 9.). The map also gives information of different types of considering the functionality of the e-scooter platforms service, for example some areas are forbidden e-scooter, and some areas have lower speed limits that automatically slow down the scooters as they enter the area. With the map's information, users can easily locate the nearest e-scooters for them using the map and reserve them for a short time that it takes for them to walk there. When the user arrives at the e-

scooters location, they can unlock the scooter with the application and start their ride. The ride is then automatically billed with the chosen payment method that the user can choose in their profile.

As earlier mentioned in chapter 3, the sharing economy platforms with heterogeneous services are competing on generating the critical mass of users for their platform. This seems to be the reason why especially E-scooter platforms are a determined user of the free ride vouchers

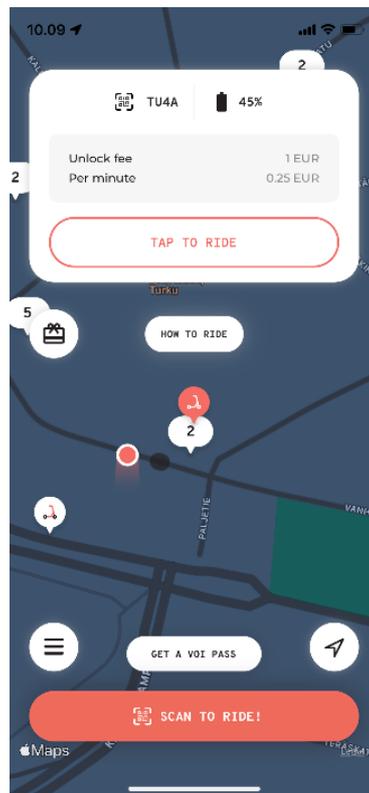


Figure 10: Voi home view

strategy of attracting and gaining their loyal user base. Each app listed has their own version of referring friends to join the service for exchange of free rides and credits. The platforms have also started to widen their available subscriptions from free ride unlocks (where the user still pays for the time, they use the scooter) to a fixed monthly payment plan where the user can ride the e-scooters for any number of rides and distance during the subscription time with the goal of attracting more customers to stick to one e-scooter platform.

**TABLE 3. REPEATING ELEMENTS OF E-SCOOTER RENTING DOMAIN**

<b>KEY COMPONENTS</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>USE OF COLOR</b>	Multiple colours of branding were used on e-scooter platforms, with the goal of stick out from the multiple competing brands. Both dark and white backgrounds were used with the small branding accent colours.
<b>MAP VIEW</b>	Map element being the most important part of the e-scooter services was similar in functionality in all the analysed platforms. However, the styling had multiple different implementations across the platforms.
<b>LOYALTY PROGRAMS</b>	Premium loyalty programs were found on all e-scooter platforms with the goal of user retainment on sticking to the one platform they subscribe to.
<b>REGISTRATION</b>	All analysed platforms offered options to sign in with third-party accounts from large tech companies, such as “Sign in with Google” and “Sign in with Facebook”
<b>SCAN TO RIDE</b>	All analysed platforms included a barcode scanner that let you book a scooter next to you and start riding.

## **4.4 Case: 2<sup>nd</sup> hand resale**

2<sup>nd</sup> hand resale platforms are one of the oldest platform sectors that can be categorised as a sharing economy. One of the most known and oldest running companies in the P2P marketplace sector is originally an online auction website eBay founded in 1995. Since then, multiple different competitors have joined the space with their own P2P marketplace platforms. P2P marketplace platforms face the same problems as accommodation rental platforms around issues with generating digital trust as well as generating enough different types of buyers and sellers. The more modern approach these 2<sup>nd</sup> hand platforms have started to embrace is to form them around a large social media site such as Facebook or generate a completely new kind of an environment where the marketplace itself behaves as a social media site with all the users having a personalised profile to list your own products to sell and communicate with possible buyers with your own identity. On the platforms you can follow certain personalities or celebrities and get notified always when they post new items to sell on their profile.

### **4.4.1 Key components**

From the research around different 2<sup>nd</sup> hand resale platforms it is shown that multiple different approaches can work depending on which type of items are planned to be sold on the platform. Most of the largest platforms such as Facebook marketplace and eBay are widely inspired by the design of traditional e-commerce websites (figure 11.) with a wide range of categories for all different types of products. With the categories the user flow is also improved with more specific filters to have a more precise listing of products. Product listings take the largest portion of the UI as the good product images give the most information to the customer about the product. Besides the image, the second most important information the user looks for is the price of the product which is always clearly visible next to the product image. The purchase process is usually done by the two parties of the transaction contacting each other and deciding in which way the payment and shipment take place. Individual product pages on the traditional marketplace platforms consist of more detailed information of the product

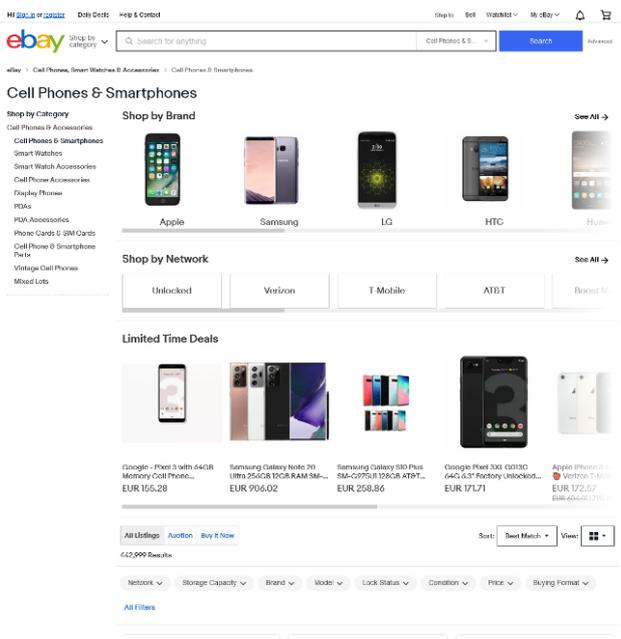
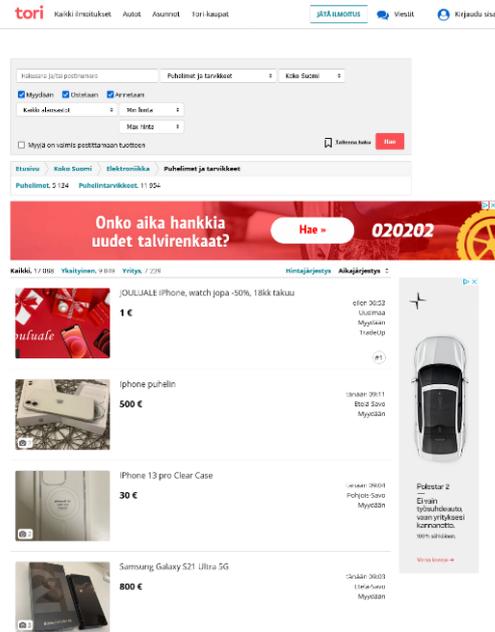
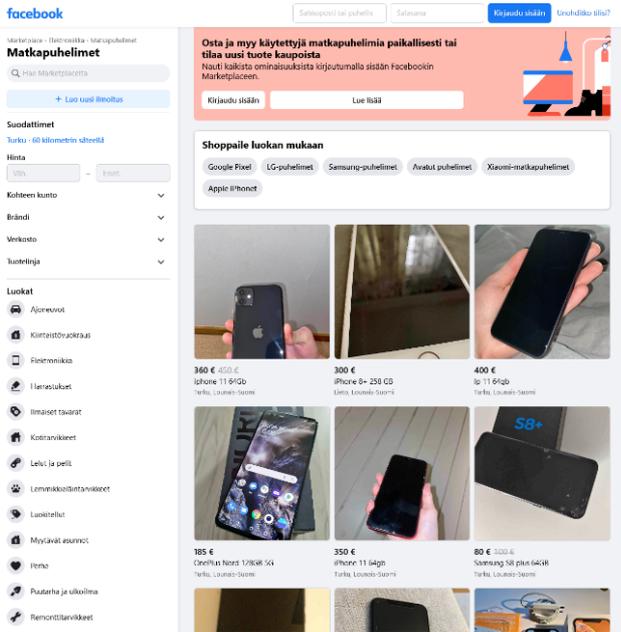


Figure 11: Traditional 2nd hand resale platform product listings, from left to right: Facebook Marketplace, Tori.fi, eBay

As discussed previously, the more modern approach that the new 2<sup>nd</sup> hand resale platforms have taken is to develop the UX to look and feel like a social media platform. For example, Tise has taken a lot of inspiration from Instagram to make their core audience familiar with the platform’s behaviour from the get-go as they are very used to using social media platforms. The main page of Tise consists of different “Influencer Wardrobes” that let you

see what different social media influencers have put on sale on their profiles. Also, different editor picks of the trendiest categories are listed for users to browse (Figure 9.). Users are also encouraged to follow other users on the platform in a similar fashion to traditional social media platforms. By following users, your home screen is filled with products from the following sellers.

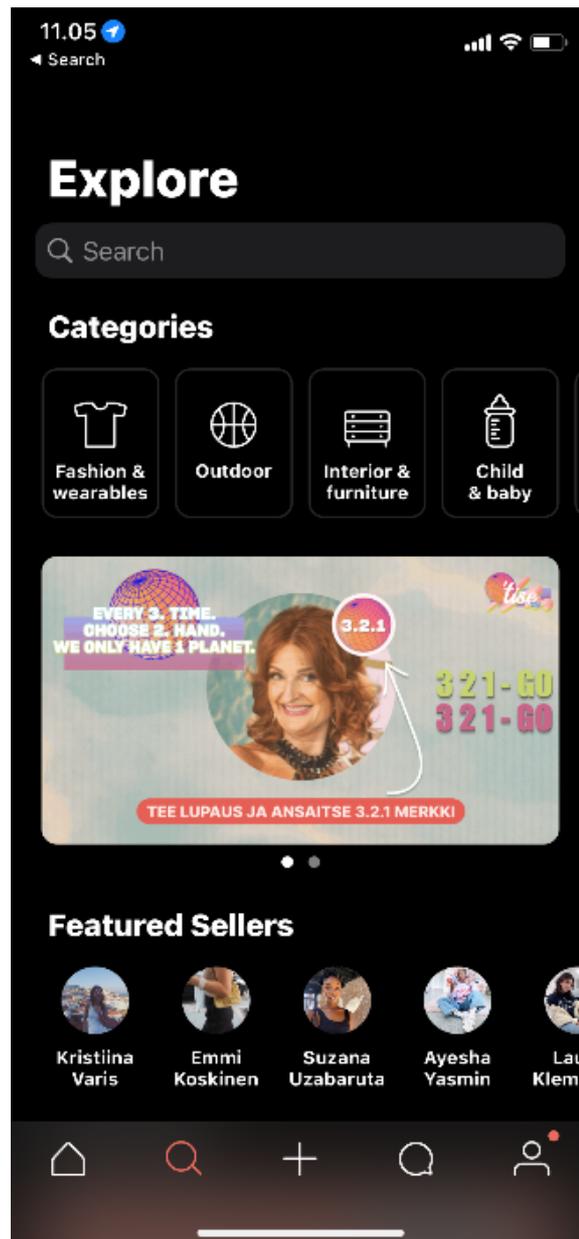


Figure 12: Tise home view

The listed products are very similar to Instagram posts that consist of product images and a description (Figure 6.). Tise lets the seller create their own product image by adding customised text over their photos as well as apply different image enhancing filters. With

these functionalities users can make their own products pop out more if they know what types of product image designs work best for attracting buyers. After the product is posted to the marketplace, users can then like the posted items or share them forward with their friends. The description is also followed up with more detailed information about the product itself with information around the colour, size, and brand of the product. Buyers on Tise are also allowed to make a lower bid than the asking price of the product. The sellers can then either accept the lower price or decline it and wait for other offers. The products are always purchasable if the user commits to pay the full asking price of the product. In the bid making process, the user chooses the delivery method of their choosing. With Tise it is possible to either pick up the item by yourself or let Tise take care of the shipment process for you.

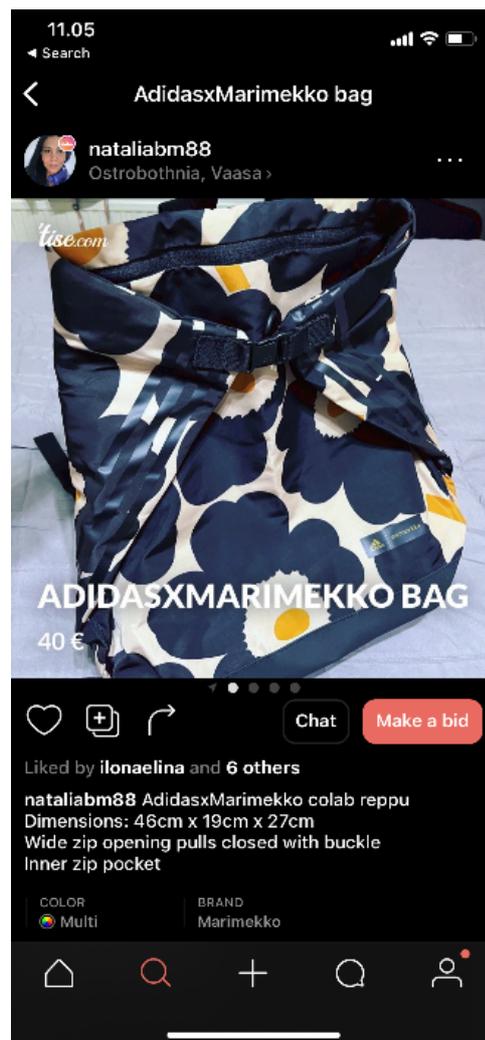


Figure 13: Tise product view

All the researched 2<sup>nd</sup> hand resale platforms included a chat functionality inside the platform so that users don't have to share their personal phone numbers with random people online. This makes the communication a lot easier inside the platform and misbehaviour is more easily trackable and handled by the platform moderators.

**TABLE 4. REPEATING ELEMENTS OF 2<sup>ND</sup>-HAND RESALE DOMAIN**

<b>KEY COMPONENTS</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>USE OF COLOR</b>	All traditional types of 2 <sup>nd</sup> hand resale platforms used white as their background colour; the accent colours were also mild with only the logo of the company being the colourful element on the platforms besides the product pictures.
<b>PRODUCT LISTING</b>	Product listings on all analysed platforms were grid-like lists that include the basic information about the product, such as name, price, and location of the product.
<b>CATEGORISATION</b>	Analysed platforms showed a quite similar way of categorising their products, apart from platforms specialising on clothing having more detailed clothing categories.
<b>PRODUCT PAGE</b>	Great differences were seen on the most classical ecommerce site eBay that had its product page filled with huge amount of information which made the site look very outdated. Other platforms listed only the vital information without cluttering the view too much.

## 4.5 Summary of analysed cases

Analysis of the three largest sharing economy domains shows a large amount of repeating patterns in the UX design of the platforms. This however can't be viewed in a bad light as the familiar patterns help the user to complete their tasks more efficiently as there is no need to relearn all platforms basic usability features. It is a sign of good intuitive UX if the users feel themselves comfortable in a similar platform that they have used in the past. The table below summarises all the previous conclusions of the repeating elements as a whole in the sharing economy space.

**TABLE 5. REPEATING ELEMENTS OF PLATFORM UX**

<b>KEY COMPONENTS</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>USE OF COLOUR</b>	The main colour scheme of most platforms currently feels to be either white or black. Platforms often use 2 to 3 accent colours to bring their own look to the platform. Light and dark appearances have gained a lot of popularity with the way people started adapting the use of dark mode on their devices operating systems.
<b>SPACING OF CONTENT</b>	The trend to more spacious feeling applications has been adapted on closely all platforms examined. This is mostly due to the more easing feeling the UX gives when the elements are well spaced out, as well as giving better ease of use for touch devices as they are already making up over 50% of the users
<b>ANIMATIONS</b>	Animation usage has been climbing during the last 10 years as even the lower end devices are starting to be capable of performing UI transitions smoothly. This can improve the responsive feeling and ease of navigation on the platform.
<b>TYPES OF COMPONENTS</b>	The UX components of each similar platform are often repeating. Almost all platforms have a similar way how their basic

	<p>components work. The list of components usually consists of filters, search bars, card-alike buttons, navigation menus and so forth.</p>
<b>USER FLOWS</b>	<p>Most platforms had a very similar user flows with each other's from the login page to the confirming the order. Platforms usually let you browse the features and offerings of the platform before logging in or registering. The registration flow often includes option of signing in with third party social media accounts lowering the barrier of ordering.</p>

## 5. Conclusions

Almost all different business sectors have slowly been filled with companies that are changing the classical business model of the business to work as a sharing economy platform. Classical businesses are also adapting their old business models to keep up with the new wave of sharing economy companies. Multiple platforms share same types of key UX components and copy UX features and improvement ideas from each other as the competition is tough between the platform sharing the same business sector. Just as when social media platforms started to become popular, most new platforms used to copy the look and feel of the most popular social media site Facebook, to feel familiar to the new user from the get-go. The modern day UX design of the platform heavily leans on the principle of idea of building designs that keep the functionality familiar to the user by sticking with the ways that similar platforms and applications have been built in the past and then spicing up the design with platform branding that makes the platform to pop out from the rest. As we saw in the comparisons of the space rental platforms, the same method of copying the largest platform Airbnb. Most of the other large sharing economy sectors also share a clear design pattern, and the platforms can appear almost identical with their functionalities with some interesting exceptions found on especially inside the 2<sup>nd</sup> hand resale platform sector. The research question “What UX components drive better user engagement for sharing economy platforms” can be visible analysed from how often the same UX decisions are appearing on different competing platforms as they indicate that the different platforms agree with the value, they bring on user engagement. Just as the design trend of most other applications as well, the current visual design trend of the sharing platforms seems to lean on clean card elements with either dark or white backgrounds. There is a clear reason for this, e.g. to have uniform look, one has to use uniform colour palette, and this usually leads to designs that are commonly seen everywhere (Gatsou and Farrington, 2021). Platforms then customize their feel of the app with different accent colours that match their own branding. All different sharing economy platforms and sectors are dealing with the same fundamental challenges that most P2P marketplace face. The problem around digital trust is always present when a platform is responsible between transactions between two users. The analysis of different sharing economy sectors showed that the ways platforms are building users trust were the

methods that were advised in the previous studies regarding Digital Trust and the methods of improving the customer trust in the sharing economy platforms.

Existing studies around the topic of sharing economy and platform design have usually been limited around the design of a single platform and studies around the similarities with the sectors similar platform design hasn't been analysed widely. Further studies with a wider angle around the topic of sharing economy platform design and user engagement is needed and will give a clearer starting point for future research around sharing economy and platform design.

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