



Offer Networks

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18 Oct 2015

OFFER NETWORKS

Objective

The following is list of organizations and/or communities operating within, displaying the potential for, or gradually approaching a “collaborative commons” mode of socioeconomic interaction. The purpose of such a list is to better conceptualize and understand the emerging range of “post-capital” “post-market” socioeconomic phenomena that, if their development were supported and cohesively integrated, could aid in the active construction of a new international societal paradigm built around “offer networks”. Here “offer networks” will be tentatively described as: fields of social exchange facilitating self-organization of goods/ services built on the foundation of trust and reputation as primary bonding mechanism.¹

Distinct modes of economic exchange identified below:

Market economy: offer for monetary compensation (\$)

Barter economy: offer for an offer perceived to be of a comparable use/exchange value by persons involved

Gift economy: offer with no expectation of a return offer (i.e. the “selfless offer”, or a gift!)

Sharing economy: offers made accessible to common distributed network of prosumers (producers/ consumers)

Organization/ Community	Good/Service “offered”	Bond mechanism (“trust”, “reputation”)	Other information	Website
	Hospitality/ accommodation exchange (travel, community building)	Social references, verified accounts (\$), personal vouching (discontinued)	Gift economy, for-profit,	https://www.couchsurfing.com
	Hospitality/ accommodation exchange (travel, community building)	Social references	Gift economy, non-profit,	http://www.bewelcome.org
	Hospitality/ accommodation exchange (travel, community building)	Social references	Gift economy, non-profit,	http://www.hospitalityclub.org

¹ In contrast to capitalist market dynamics where the primary bonding mechanism can be found in the exchange of standard monetary units. For an introduction to a futurist theoretic perspective on “offer networks” see: Goertzel (2015).

COMPANY NAME

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	Hospitality/ accommodation platform (travel, rent)	Social references, shared user connections, house specific rules/ details/prices (\$)	Market economy, for-profit, distributed facilities, for listing/finding/ renting lodgings, vacation-centric,	https:// www.airbnb.com
	General giving platform (news, social media, food, clothing, etc.).	Volunteers design, implement, and administer various community projects	Gift/sharing economy, non- profit, distributed facilities, open- function design	http:// www.servicespace. org
	General tools and resources for local community organizing	Volunteers design, implement, and administer various community projects,	Gift/sharing/barter economy, non- profit, focused on building local community events, social play, local knowledge, general socio-creativity, resilient authentic communities, etc.,	http:// www.givetakeprojec t.com http://givetake.eu http://give-take.org
	Ride sharing platform (transportation)	Social references (multiple dimensions), passenger/driver sharing transport costs (carpool) (\$), verified accounts (\$)	Market economy, for-profit, geared towards long- distance travel,	https:// www.blablacar.com
	Rental car platform (transportation)	Verified users, low- cost rent (\$), renter/ rentee information,	Market/sharing economy, for-profit, peer-to-peer car sharing, rental car for various durations, provides road side support	https:// relayrides.com
	Taxi platform (transportation)	Centrally-regulated price depending on speed and distance travelled (\$), driver and user rating systems	Market economy, for-profit, on- demand service, intra-city trip demand matched to local-driver supply network	https:// www.uber.com

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	Automobile parking platform (transportation)	Users browse centrally-regulated network of available parking spots, pre-paid request of parking spaces (\$)	Market/sharing economy, for-profit, matches drivers with available parking spots (either commercial or private), advanced parking, eliminate risk of municipal violation	https://www.justpark.com
	Automobile sharing platform (transportation)	User membership (monthly/annual) (\$), fee per reservation (\$),	Market economy, for-profit, car rental/sharing personalized depending on user needs (time/location, etc.),	http://www.zipcar.com
	General e-commerce platform (small-independent entrepreneurs: art, photography, clothing, food, bath/beauty, home, toys)	Social references, verified users/stores, financial transactions (\$)	Market economy, for-profit, peer-to-peer distributed commerce,	https://www.etsy.com
	General crowd funding platform (creative projects: shows, comics, journalism, video games, technology, food, films, music, books)	Creator project pitch/reward offers/history, supporter funding (\$), supporter collaboration	Gift/barter/market economy, supports independent creative activity, peer-to-peer funding support, for-profit,	https://www.kickstarter.com
	General crowd funding platform (creative projects: shows, comics, journalism, video games, technology, food, films, music, books)	Creator project pitch/reward offers/history, support funding (\$), supporter collaboration,	Gift/barter/market economy, supports independent creative activity, peer-to-peer funding support, for-profit	https://www.indiegogo.com

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	Energy sharing platform (renewables)	Contracts of various durations (1-3 years) (\$) based on personalized energy needs, producer self-advertising and customer reviews,	Market economy, peer-to-peer, harness power of distributed energy grids,	https://vandebron.nl
	Health care technology sharing platform	Hospitals integrated via central verification into common sharing network	Sharing economy, enables networks of hospitals to pool resources that are rarely used/not immediately necessary, reduce costs/redundancy, improve efficiency of patient care	http://cohealo.com
	Financial loan platform (small-to-medium size business funding)	Investors browse centrally-verified small-to-medium size businesses,	Market economy, for-profit, lower interest rates for small business loans, less risk for investors	https://www.fundingcircle.com/uk/
	Financial investment platform	Central mediator offers equity/bonds in registered businesses in exchange for investment (\$),	Market economy, for-profit, focused on raising funds from general public (micro-investors) for entrepreneurs,	https://www.crowdcube.com
	Financial loan platform	Borrower-investor synergy determined via algorithms to ensure lowest interest rates for borrowers and highest returns on investment for investors (\$)	Market economy, for-profit, peer-to-peer loans (without central bank as intermediate),	https://www.lendingclub.com

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	Financial loan platform	Borrower-investor synergy determined via algorithms to ensure lowest interest rates for borrowers and highest returns on investment for investors (\$)	Market economy, for-profit, peer-to-peer loans (without central bank as intermediate),	https://www.zopa.com
	Money transfer platform	Transfers routed between sender and recipient via central mediator that overrides currency conversion and international costs losses (\$)	Market economy, for-profit, peer-to-peer international currency transfer (without central bank as intermediate),	https://transferwise.com
	Community-based small/odd jobs platform	Certified users centrally verified (testing, video interview), centrally assigned local tasks/jobs (\$), user reviews,	Market/barter/sharing economy, for-profit, employees labour is “gamified” in online network, focused on neighbours helping neighbours (community building),	https://www.taskrabbit.com
	Online skills courses platform (learning, education)	Industry experts offer courses to anyone who wants to learn, monthly membership (\$), courses also for free with best teachers emerging from user ratings	Market/sharing/gift economy, for-profit, learning-by-doing approach to various practical skills (entrepreneurship, branding, marketing, design, creative arts), interaction over lectures	https://www.skillshare.com

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	Online skills courses platform (learning, education)	User ratings on micro-lectures (YouTube), system rates user progress and automatically personalizes future course material/direction	Sharing/gift economy, non-profit, free internationally available lectures on standard academic subjects, personalized progress tracking, generates problems based on skills and reputation	https://www.khanacademy.org
	Online skills courses platform (learning, education)	Monthly user membership (\$), interactive games built utilizing computer algorithms	Market economy, for-profit, online interactive games/lectures focused on learning languages at various levels, personalized reviews directing future learning	https://www.babbel.com
	Food service aggregator platform	Common pool of local and independent food services, customer user ratings, pre-payment for food/delivery (\$)	Market economy, for-profit, pick-up or delivery options,	http://www.just-eat.co.uk
	Land sharing platform (property, community)	Common pool of users who either A) have land they want to share, or B) need land for growing/cultivating food (user rating systems),	Sharing/barter/gift economy, non-profit, community building via connecting those passionate about gardening and home-grown foods, sharing tools/resources/land related to growing food	http://www.landshare.net

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	Goods sharing platform (property, community)	Common pool of users who share household stuffs with other users in local community network (user rating systems),	Sharing/barter/gift economy, non-profit, community building via connecting locals via supply/demand for certain objects, neighbour sharing over market consumption,	https://www.peerby.com
	Used goods selling platform (property)	Users credit systems for giving and obtaining used objects, used goods advertising (photos/description),	Market/sharing/barter economy, for-profit, built on “pay-it-forward” principle (debt forwarded to a “third person/party”), local-to-global (not just community trading),	https://yerdle.com
	Used goods gifting platform (property, community)	Volunteer moderators of local self-organized community groups, multilevel volunteer network (ultimately centralized by Free Cycle) for certifying new local chapters/groups	Sharing/barter/gift economy, non-profit, people can offer unwanted goods, community focused and designed to encourage recycling and reusing used goods and creating a “gifting culture”, organizes gifting events,	https://www.freecycle.org
	Used goods gifting platform (property, community)	Volunteer moderators of local self-organized community groups, (originally hosted on Yahoo! groups, now have started to move to Freegle direct),	Sharing/barter/gift economy, non-profit, people can offer unwanted goods, community focused and designed to encourage recycling and reusing used goods,	http://www.ilovefreegle.org

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	Used goods gifting platform (property, community)	User profile peer rating system, transaction calendar, automated reminders, wish list alert system, private messages	Sharing/barter/gift economy, non-profit, people offer/share unwanted goods, focused on helping people save money and resources, sharing within community, etc.	http://neighborgoods.net
	Used clothing platform (retail)	Used clothing advertised (photos/description), user profile (social references/feedback),	Sharing/market economy, for-profit, peer-to-peer network for second hand clothing,	https://www.thredup.com
	Community goods and services platform (property, community)	User profile rating system, post offers (goods/services) (photo, description),	Sharing/barter/market economy, for-profit, peer-to-peer network for community goods and services,	https://nextdoor.com
	Used goods gifting platform (property, community)	User profile peer rating system, common pool of goods/services offered by local community members,	Sharing/gift economy, non-profit, people offer/share unwanted goods, skills, tools, and hold community events, focused on building community sharing ethos, resilient communities etc.,	http://www.streetbank.com

Offer networks, thoughts and notes:

The Internet and supporting technologies are forming a distributed planetary interaction channel with qualitatively new societal properties (Heylighen 2015). Consequently, this interaction channel is increasingly enabling individuals to redefine how we can use and exchange goods and services, and thus, offering us the potential to redefine the foundation of our personal relationships, our communities, and our lives. As listed above, various online “offer mechanisms” (in contrast to “market mechanisms”) have emerged since the development of Web 2.0. (~2005-present). Many of these offer mechanisms can effectively enable the self-organization of goods and services via trust and reputation grounded in humanist values of solidarity and equality as a primary bonding mechanism. This is true whether you need a place to sleep for the night, a ride

to a nearby city, a household object for gardening/cooking/cleaning, wanted to learn about economics/physics/chemistry, or to learn a new language.

As a result, offer mechanisms present us with the opportunity (although not the guarantee) to solidify personal exchanges with a real humanist use value, and consequently, to construct a society that transitions away from modes of interaction built on a foundation of monetary value, which can often times lead to divisive and unequal human interactions and bonds (Rifkin 2014). In other words, if the development of emergent offer mechanisms were actively supported and integrated into a global system of “offer networks”, we have the potential to design a society that goes “beyond money” as foundational bonding mechanism for the use and exchange of goods and services (Goertzel 2015).

Offer mechanisms potentially enable us to envision a world “beyond money” or “beyond the market” because humanist bonds of trust and reputation in socioeconomic exchange can be precisely recorded in a multidimensional and qualitative nature. For example, without offer mechanisms it may be dangerous to sleep at someone’s house whom you have never met, or it may be impossible to know what goods or services are both locally available in your community and willing to be shared by neighbours or complete strangers. Thus, where there is an absence of dependable interpersonal relations, the market finds its functional utility. But with well-developed offer mechanisms (e.g. Couchsurfing, AirBnb for overnight accommodations; or NeighbourGoods, Freecycle for sharing used goods, etc.) you have access to a persons history within the community (reputation), and all of a sudden a total impersonal unknown becomes someone who can provide you with a personal service (trust) at a low cost or at no cost (an offer).

Thus, the forms of humanist bonds that can be maintained via trust and reputation mechanisms in offer networks allows for new dimensions of accountability and solidarity within and between communities. In such networks people are able to assess and reward the value of an individual in a way that is simply impossible with the one-dimensional nature of monetary units (Helbing 2013). Consequently, this allows for efficient and intelligent connection between people who have specific needs and desires (e.g. wanting to learn new arts or skills, need new space for gardening, want to borrow a car for a trip) and those who are capable and willing to satisfy those needs and desires (e.g., organizing community skills workshops, offering unused or under-utilised space, offering unused or under-utilised equipment/tools). Without offer mechanisms these forms of supply and demand would require market mechanisms solidified by monetary mechanisms for their practical realization.

The long-term potential for offer mechanisms to become transformed into a globally integrated offer network is possible. Ultimately, this is possible because, over the past few years, offer mechanisms appear to have displayed both general and universal practical application. They have demonstrated their potential generality due to successful application within a broad range of societal functionality. For example, the same basic principles of design have enabled offer mechanisms to flourish in transportation (e.g. Bla Bla Car), energy (e.g. Vandebron), health care (e.g. Cohealo), retail (e.g. Etsy), hospitality (e.g. Couchsurfing), to community development (e.g. landshare) and so forth. Offer mechanisms have also demonstrated their potential universality as they function on a local-to-global scale efficiently and intelligently with effective implementation at local community levels (e.g. Freecycle), international global levels (e.g. Khan Academy), and at various intermediate levels of interaction (e.g. Yerdle).

Thus, the Internet as a global medium has qualitatively changed the field of human social co-ordination (O’Reilly 2005). We now live in a world where our personal interactions, as well as the interaction of the goods and services we use and exchange, can be stored and organized in common integrated databases. This allows for organizations and communities founded on distributed and transparent human participation as well as functional optimization with intelligent algorithms. Such mechanisms reduce the need for centralized hierarchies in organizational design, and instead enables a multi-local experimentation process with peer-to-peer networks, where our fundamental relationship to labour (work), property (ownership), and the nation-state (personal identity) are also transformed at a foundational level.

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