Overview of accommodation sharing platforms

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Why did we select this case?

The supply of accommodation sharing platforms is diverse, both when looking at business models and when looking at how the types of transactions occurring. It is important to know about the diversity of accommodation sharing platforms because it may keep you from tarring them all with the same brush. If you are aware of the differences you will be better able to shape accommodation sharing in your city.

About the case:

There has been a significant rise in short-term rentals through platforms such as Airbnb, Homestay, Love Home Swap and many others. These sharing platforms became very popular, as they offer tourists cheaper accommodation and allow tourists to stay outside the hotel district and explorate different neighborhoods. Travelers seek to live like locals, and the cheaper accommodation makes them stay longer, while in turn residents get the opportunity to gain more economic value out of their property. We'll briefly discuss the most popular accommodation sharing platforms:

The regulars
The typical online platform facilitating accommodation sharing operates with a rental model, with the platform taking a percentage of the rent. Good examples are Airbnb (market leader), OneFineStay (luxury homes), Wimdu (budget) and 9flats , Homeaway (including VRBO), Houstrip and Waytostay . In addition, long existing accommodation platforms such as Booking.com , Expedia and organizations like Tripadvisor are expanding into accommodation sharing.

The money free platforms
“Home Exchange ” and Love Home Swap are platforms, in which people can swap homes for short breaks or longer holidays after enabling users to upload pictures and descriptions of their homes. The direct swap between different people encourages a high level of trust. The platforms’ business model is a membership fee from the users. Couchsurfing has been connecting travellers, who share their couch/spare bedrooms for free, since 2004. Being active in 200.000 cities and with 14.000.000 users it is of considerable size.

Broadsabroad.net/ is women only Couchsurfing type of platform. One out of many variants of accommodation sharing that have emerged recently.

The aggregators

Tripping screens most of the platforms mentioned above and provides an overarching search engine for consumers to find to best deal.

Alternative organizational models

Even though the largest accommodation platforms are commercial entities there has been an uptake in alternative business models. Most initiatives are still small and the bulk of new activities is coming from the world of ‘platform cooperativism’ with new accommodation sharing platforms like Fairbnb .