



Aalto University
School of Business

Growth strategies of Sharing Economy Platforms

A multiple case study

Master's Thesis
Miikka Kataja
30 May 2019
Information and Service
Economy

Approved in the Department of Information and Service Economy

___ / ___ / 20___ and awarded the grade

Author Miikka Kataja

Title of thesis Growth Strategies of Sharing Economy Platforms: A Multiple Case Study

Degree Master of Science in Economics and Business Administration

Degree programme Information and Service Economy

Thesis advisor(s) Virpi Tuunainen

Year of approval 2019**Number of pages** 143**Language** English

Abstract

Sharing Economy has gained increasing importance in both academia and the managerial world, as some of the field's pioneers have delivered on earlier expectations of success. During the past decade, a handful of Sharing Economy start-ups have grown into well-established businesses with true market power in their respective industries, massive financial valuations and large user bases. Despite the popularity of the field in public discussion, previous research still lacks theoretical understanding and empirical evidence on how Sharing Economy Platforms evolve from a start-up to a competitive, sustainable business in the long-term.

The gap in research is addressed by conducting a detailed case study on evolution of two Sharing Economy Platforms which both have a successful business track-record during the past ten years. The case companies are ride-sharing platform Lyft and errand-service TaskRabbit. As a result of studying their evolution, common patterns in successful strategic decisions during the evolution of a Sharing Economy Platform are identified. The study builds on findings of an earlier research on evolution of Airbnb, an apartment-sharing platform, with an aim to validate and extend the existing research framework of Sharing Economy Platform evolution.

After a review of earlier scientific literature from the fields of Sharing Economy, Platform Economics, Information Infrastructure theory and Platform Strategy, a new research framework with a holistic view on Sharing Platform growth from initiation until long-term business sustainability is proposed. In conjunction with building the framework, a grounded case study analysis of the two case companies is conducted using over a thousand public technology blog entries as secondary- and tertiary research data. From studying the blogs, a timeline of strategic actions made by both case platforms is created and the effect of these actions to company growth is analysed, in terms of amounts of users and robust financial metrics.

Findings of the thesis indicate strong support for the proposed framework. Three steps of Sharing Economy Platform evolution are identified: successful Sharing Platforms first create a two-sided network of users, then augment the platform with value-added services, and finally sustain the platform business by integrating with platform complements and successfully competing with rivals. Findings from both case studies support this view but provide different narratives when it comes to the exact timing or content of some key strategic actions. The findings contribute to existing research by providing an extended framework for Sharing Platform evolution, and empirical evidence to support its claims.

Keywords Sharing Economy, Sharing Platform, Growth Strategy, Platform Evolution, Platform Economics, Platform Strategy, Information Infrastructure

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Research goal.....	2
1.2	Methodology.....	5
1.3	Key findings.....	6
1.4	Structure.....	7
2	Theoretical background	7
2.1	Sharing Economy.....	8
2.1.1	Definition of Sharing Economy.....	8
2.1.2	Dynamics of Sharing Economy Platforms.....	13
2.1.3	Critique on Sharing Economy.....	18
2.1.4	Managerial perspective.....	21
2.2	Platforms.....	23
2.2.1	Platform Economics.....	24
2.2.2	Information Infrastructure Theory.....	31
2.2.3	Platform Strategy.....	33
2.3	Theoretical framework.....	45
2.3.1	Synthesis of theories for evolution of Sharing Platforms.....	45
2.3.2	Research framework for evolution of Sharing Platforms.....	51
3	Research approach	56
3.1	Case selection.....	57
3.2	Data collection.....	60
3.3	Analysis.....	62
4	Findings	67
4.1	Case 1: Lyft.....	68
4.1.1	Creating a network of users.....	70
4.1.2	Augmenting the platform.....	74
4.1.3	Sustaining the platform business.....	77
4.2	Case 2: TaskRabbit.....	84
4.2.1	Creating a network of users.....	86
4.2.2	Augmenting the platform.....	88
4.2.3	Sustaining the platform.....	90
5	Discussion	93
6	Conclusion	101

References	104
Books and reports	104
Articles	104
A separate part of a collection, handbook, or conference proceedings	107
Internet-references	107
Appendix A: Sharing Platform evolution - relevant theories	109
Appendix B: Overview of coding process, adopted from Strauss and Corbin (1990)...	110
Appendix C: Timeline of Lyft’s evolution	111
Appendix D: Timeline of TaskRabbit’s evolution	132

List of Figures

Figure 1: Framework for evolution of Sharing Platforms	52
Figure 2: Lyft - second order category findings	65
Figure 3: TaskRabbit - second order category findings.....	65
Figure 4: Lyft – number of rides and drivers 2010 - 2019.....	69
Figure 5: Lyft – amount of funding and revenue 2010 - 2019.....	70
Figure 6: TaskRabbit – number of clients and taskers 2008 - 2018.. ..	85
Figure 7: TaskRabbit – amount of funding and revenue 2008 - 2018.	86

List of Tables

Table 1: Lyft, TaskRabbit and Airbnb compared to Sharing Economy frameworks	18
Table 2: Overview of reviewed literature areas	48
Table 3: Lyft - first order category findings	63
Table 4: TaskRabbit - first order category findings.....	63

1 Introduction

During the last decade, multiple Internet-mediated services that enable sharing and peer-to-peer trading of goods, services and information have entered several industries with a great impact. These start-up companies are challenging existing industry leaders and are becoming the new normal as an alternative to traditional consumption, services, rentals and investments. As a result, a term “Sharing Economy” has emerged to describe this new phenomenon (Knote and Blohm, 2016). According to a vast definition, the complete Sharing Economy market was estimated to encompass 100 billion (BN) U.S. Dollars of value in 2011 (Sacks, 2011). In a more recent study, the global revenue of Sharing Economy from only five industries, including travel, car sharing, finance, staffing, music and video streaming was projected to increase from \$15BN in 2015 to a total of \$335BN in 2025 (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2015).

As such, sharing between individuals and businesses is an old phenomenon (Belk, 2014). When accompanied with developments of the Internet age, the so called *Sharing Economy* has emerged (Belk, 2014). Alternative names for Sharing Economy are numerous – *Collaborative Economy, Gig Economy, Peer Economy, Access Economy and On-Demand Economy* all describe the same phenomenon but with a slightly different aspect (Belk, 2014; Knote and Blohm, 2016). The definition has not yet reached general consensus among the scientific community, nor the managerial world (Schor, 2014; Knote and Blohm, 2016).

The Sharing Economy has both a profit- and a sustainability-driven approach to business. The rise of Sharing Economy started after the financial crisis of 2011 in the U.S, as Internet-enabled businesses based on peer-to-peer sharing appeared as a more economical, ecological and socially beneficial alternative to traditional exchange-based commerce (Schor, 2014). Mainly hailing from the U.S, the most renowned companies operating in the Sharing Economy have already changed the logic of how some traditional industries operate. For example, in the transportation industry, Uber, Lyft and Didi have made ride-sharing a commodity, whilst Airbnb and 9Flats have popularized the concept of sharing your own home to strangers as an alternative to the Hotel industry. Instead of only start-ups, the success of peer-to-peer sharing business models has woken up the interest of more established companies as well. For example, IKEA entered the Sharing Economy by acquiring the peer-to-peer handyman operator TaskRabbit in 2017 (Swisher, 2017), whereas Amazon has operated its own task-sharing platform “Mechanical Turk” since 2005 (Barr, 2005).

One of the most successful Sharing Economy start-ups, peer-to-peer apartment-sharing platform Airbnb, was founded in 2008. The company turned profitable in late 2016 and was valued at a staggering amount of \$31BN a year later (Lundgren, 2017). To study the reasons for the company’s success, Constantiou et al. (2016) studied Airbnb’s growth path from 2011 until the end of 2014. Building on the findings of the study, the aim of this thesis is to unveil the success factors for a prosperous growth- and evolution strategy for Sharing Platform businesses. The research is conducted through two case studies on companies operating in Sharing Economy: ride-sharing service Lyft and TaskRabbit, a service for various peer-to-peer errands. The results are compared to the earlier case study on Airbnb (Constantiou et al., 2016).

In this thesis the following three definitions are applied to better understand the topic of Sharing Economy. Firstly, Hamari et al. (2015) describe Sharing Economy as “*peer-to-peer activity of obtaining, giving, or sharing the access to goods and services, coordinated through community-based online services*”. To take the definition further, Hagi (2014) defines community-based online services as “*a platform that connects two or more participant groups to an online market place, provided by a company which acts as a market-mediator for sharing*”. Thirdly, Lamberton and Rose (2012) define commercial sharing systems as “*marketer-managed systems that provide customers with the opportunity to enjoy product benefits without ownership*”. In this study, the terms Sharing Platform and Sharing Economy Platform are used interchangeably to illustrate companies operating online platforms that facilitate sharing of products or services in a manner described by these definitions.

1.1 Research goal

In order to discuss the concept of Sharing Platform growth, the objective of this thesis is to extend the understanding of Sharing Platform evolution researched by Constantiou et al. (2016). Continuing in the footsteps of the earlier study, a more comprehensive review of several literature fields is required. The need for this view stems from the fact that Sharing Economy as a term is underdeveloped and lacks general understanding in the Information Systems research discipline (Knote and Blohm, 2016). In other words, Sharing Economy literature alone does not provide theories that fully explain the life cycles of Sharing Platforms. Earlier literature does not fully answer how Sharing Platform businesses are started, how the business grows and how to sustain it for longer term. In order to tackle the

ambiguity of the research field, theoretical background from three additional areas of research literature is sourced. In addition to Sharing Economy, this study draws background literature from the fields of Platform Economics (Rochet and Tirole 2003, Boudreau and Hagiu, 2008; Evans, 2003; 2009, Hagiu 2014), Information Infrastructure theory (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010; Grisot et al., 2014) and Platform Strategy (Eisenmann et al., 2006, Rysman, 2009; Cusumano 2010; Van Alstyne et al., 2016). Based on a vast review of theory from the respective fields, a new research framework for understanding and analyzing the evolution of Sharing Economy businesses is proposed.

Based on the review of background literature, the following contributing factors for the framework are found. Earlier research made on Sharing Economy has mainly focused on some of the specific features of Sharing Platforms, namely business models, services, shared assets and exogenous influences (Knote and Blohm, 2016). Furthermore, Sharing Economy research has made a distinction between platforms that facilitate sharing of assets that are either physical or digital in nature (Lamberton and Rose, 2012). Some of the most extensive studies of the Sharing Economy in general have been conducted by Sundararajan (2016) and Gansky (2012). For instance, Sundararajan (2016) studied the differences in Sharing Platforms' offerings, as well as the differences in how they organise supply. Gansky (2012) studied the assets exchanged through Sharing Platforms and the evolution of Sharing Platforms.

Adding on the Sharing Economy literature, the Platform Economics research covers a variety of business tactics and -strategies that successful platforms use to overcome problems related to gathering an initial user base, and how to grow it (Rochet and Tirole 2003, Evans, 2003; 2009, Hagiu 2014). Moreover, the Information Infrastructure theory explains platform growth from the perspective of obtaining more users, and defines key dilemmas and design strategies in technological development of complex platforms (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010; Grisot et al. 2014, Constantiou et al., 2016). Finally, relevant findings from the field of Platform Strategy are reviewed in order to describe strategic decisions of Sharing Platforms, that have an effect for the long-term sustainability of their business, including competitive positioning against rivals, strategic alliances, integrations with other platforms and development of industry-wide platforms (Eisenmann et al., 2006, Rysman, 2009; Cusumano 2010; Van Alstyne et al., 2016). Despite findings made in various areas of research, the definition of a successful Sharing Platform evolution strategy still lacks academic evidence, especially in the later stages of platform evolution (Constantiou et al., 2016). Earlier research has not identified a single theoretical lens for understanding the success factors of building a

Sharing Economy business from the early beginning until reaching a sustainable market position.

The objective of the thesis is to fill the research gap by validating existing research, and by extending it with new findings. The aim is to build on the findings made by Constantiou et al. (2016) in their study of evolution of Airbnb, by providing empirical validation on the identified evolutionary steps for a Sharing Platform, from a point of initiation to a state of established business. In their study, Constantiou et al. (2016) found two steps to explain the growth of Airbnb: first, *creating a network of users* and then *augmenting the platform* services. In addition to validating the existence of the same steps in the evolution of other case companies, the theoretical framework created by Constantiou et al. (2016) is extended with an additional step.

Two case platforms, Lyft and TaskRabbit, are carefully selected, examined and compared with the findings made on AirBnb by Constantiou et al. (2016) in order to conduct a sound multiple-case study (Eisenhardt, 1989). The case study focuses on Sharing Economy Platforms that have a physical- and digital product element (Lamberton and Rose, 2012, Constantiou et al. (2016), operate market-oriented commercial business models (Sundararajan, 2016) and are local in terms of geographical location of users (Sundararajan, 2016). The case companies have experienced a similar life cycle, from a start-up to reaching long-term business sustainability: Lyft was founded in 2010 and conducted an Initial Public Offering (IPO) in 2019 (Hawkins, 2019), whereas TaskRabbit was founded in 2008 and was fully acquired by IKEA in 2017 (Swisher, 2017). The aim is to find similarities between the strategic actions made by the case companies regarding their interaction with users, developments in technical features of the platforms, and interaction with other platforms and industry incumbents. The ultimate goal of the study is to find common success factors for the evolution and growth of a Sharing Economy Platform business. More specifically, the study aims to create findings to answer the following research questions:

1. *What are the common components for successful evolution of Sharing Economy Platforms, from a start-up to an established business?*
2. *How does a Sharing Economy Platform sustain its business after establishing it, and what are its successful components?*

1.2 Methodology

Based on case study theory described by Yin (2009), an explanatory, embedded multiple case study approach was adopted in order to explain the evolution of two case companies from a start-up to an established platform business. This case study approach enables comparison of several units of analysis for multiple cases (Yin, 2009). Building on the chosen approach, a grounded case study process described by Eisenhardt (1989) was conducted to analyse the selected companies. The grounded case study method generates findings inductively instead of traditional deductive research approach. In other words, the theoretical findings of the thesis are generated with constant iteration between key background literature and emergent theory from the case study data. The method enables creation of sound theories even though the field lacks earlier empirical evidence, supports the sequential nature of the research problem and enables new theory to emerge by comparing the case companies with earlier research (Eisenhardt, 1989). In practice, the methodology gives the means to validate existing theories and create new theory not only based on background literature, but on emergent findings of the case studies as well.

The evolutionary stories of Sharing Platform companies have been widely covered in online media focused on high technology industries and start-up companies, or “tech blogs” (Constantiou et al, 2016). This makes these online sources a lucrative source for secondary- and tertiary research data (Bar-Ilan, 2005; Davidson and Vaast, 2009). One of the online portals, CrunchBase, is considered as one of the most popular start-up databases and tech blog aggregators in the world (Mannes, 2016). CrunchBase maintains an online start-up company database which includes basic data about start-ups, such as their product, industry, funding and news feed aggregated from hundreds of online tech blogs (Mannes, 2016). The CrunchBase news feed of TaskRabbit and Lyft are used as the main source of secondary- and tertiary qualitative data for the study. All available blog entries that mention either of the case companies in their headline during 2008 – 2019 are gathered and used to analyse the case company life cycles.

Inspired by earlier studies of technological evolution around organisations conducted in a similar manner (Eaton, 2015, Constantiou et al., 2016), the study aims to reveal patterns in the technological and organizational change of two case companies by analysing a sample of 1055 blog posts retrieved from the aforementioned source. Using the blog posts, a storyline of critical decisions and events of both companies is created to describe their evolution, and to identify patterns that have had an effect on it. A three-step coding process described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) is applied in order to implement the grounded case study method

in practice. The process includes three steps: “open coding” classifies blog entries into first-order categories, “axial coding” finds relationships between the initial categories, and finally “selective coding” identifies core categories that embody key narratives in storylines of the case companies (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

1.3 Key findings

Based on a review of key literature from four different fields, a new theoretical framework to understand the evolution of Sharing Platforms in three evolutionary steps is proposed, including respective sub-constructs for each step:

1. *Creating a network of users*
 - 1.1. Building the supply side
 - 1.2. Building demand
2. *Augmenting the platform*
 - 2.1. Incremental improvements in the platform
 - 2.2. Extending the value of the platform
3. *Sustaining the platform*
 - 3.1. Integrating with complements
 - 3.2. Competing with rival platforms

Each of the steps is affected by two theoretical sub-constructs, derived from key theory. The first two evolution steps and their sub-constructs are adopted from the framework created by Constantiou et al. (2016), whereas the third step (*sustaining the platform*) is a contribution of this thesis.

In conjunction with building theory based on background literature, a grounded case analysis of empirical data on Lyft and TaskRabbit is conducted. The findings show clear proof for the existence of the same two stages of Sharing Platform evolution as in the Constantiou et al. (2016) study. In addition, the results indicate a third step of evolution for both case companies, which prior research has not yet found. However, the findings of Lyft and TaskRabbit highlight different core passages in each of the steps of evolution.

For Lyft, two meaningful core passages for each stage of evolution were identified. The core passages are “*building the supply side*” and “*building demand*” in relation to *creating a network of users* (2012 – 2014), “*incremental improvements in the platform*” and “*extending*

the value of the platform” in relation to *augmenting the platform* (2014 – 2015), and *“integrating with complements”* and *“competing with rival platforms”* in relation to *sustaining the platform* business (2016 – 2019). The findings on the Lyft case study are found to have strong fit with the theoretical background. For TaskRabbit, only one core passage for each stage is found: *“building demand”* in relation to *creating a network of users* (2010 – 2012), *“combining platform services in new ways”* in relation to *augmenting the platform* (2013 – 2014) and *“competing for survival”* in relation to *sustaining the platform* (2015 – 2018). The findings on TaskRabbit case study follow the same three-step structure as the theoretical framework but indicate a difference between core-passages found in the case study and the sub-constructs of the theoretical framework.

1.4 Structure

The thesis follows a certain structure; this chapter gives an overview of the study, the research goal it aims to cover, the methods and its key findings. In the second chapter, relevant background literature on Sharing Economy, Platform Economics, Information Infrastructure and Platform Strategy are covered and synthesized to form a research framework for the study. In the third chapter, the research approach and key methods are first described. The chapter continues with a description of case selection, data collection and analysis methods. The findings of the study are presented in chapter four and discussed in depth in chapter five. Finally, the most relevant insights and findings are concluded in the sixth chapter.

2 Theoretical background

Theoretical background for the thesis is derived from four different streams of literature: Sharing Economy, Platform Economics, Information Infrastructure theory and Platform Strategy. In the following chapters each of the fields are discussed and their relevance for this study is evaluated. In addition, a synthesis of relevant findings from each of the literature areas is presented. Based on the synthesis, a framework for Sharing Platform evolution is formed to support the empirical part of the thesis.

2.1 Sharing Economy

The concept of Sharing Economy has not been fully defined in academic literature. Sundararajan (2016) explains that the term Sharing Economy emerged in the beginning of 2010's, after which the concept has been under continuous development and discussion. Schor (2014) argues that the phenomenon itself is hard to define and that it is still obscure which companies belong under the umbrella of commercial sharing. According to Schor (2014), it is often defined by a public statement from companies itself than by a general understanding on the definition of Sharing Economy. For example, the two case companies (Lyft and TaskRabbit) selected for this study have stated that they are in the business of sharing, but their competitors Uber (ride-sharing) and Amazon Mechanical Turk (sharing small jobs) have not (Schor, 2014). More specifically, Knote and Blohm (2016) state that Sharing Economy lacks a generalized definition in the ISS field. In this chapter, the aim is to clarify the term and provide a suitable definition for it based on the most relevant findings found from academic literature. In addition, the foundations of sharing -based commercial activity are discussed to create a context for the modern Sharing Economy.

2.1.1 Definition of Sharing Economy

In order to provide a comprehensive view of Sharing Economy, it is noteworthy to present a few alternative definitions for it. The definition that is used as a guideline in this thesis is provided by Hamari et al. (2015): *“peer-to-peer activity of obtaining, giving, or sharing the access to goods and services, coordinated through community-based online services”*.

Previous research points out several other definitions as well. For example, Sundararajan (2016) describes the Sharing Economy as a broad range of commercial activity somewhere in between a continuum of giving gifts (gift economy) and traditional seller-buyer transactions (market economy). According to the author, both forms of economy have already been present for centuries in societies and communities. To provide context for Sharing Economy, Sundararajan (2016) points out: *“Today's sharing economy is scaling behaviors and forms of exchange that used to be among such close-knit communities to a broader, loosely knit digital community of semi-anonymous peers”*.

Currently, Sharing Economy constitutes of a variety of companies in different industries. Highlighting the diversity of different embodiments of Sharing Economy, Sundararajan (2016) further explains that *“Sharing economy is thus diverse not just in its industries, services and business models, but on the market-gift spectrum as well”*. In other

words, not only the companies and industries in the Sharing Economy are many, but also the products and services they offer. Their nature is somewhere between a traditional market-transaction and a gift. (Belk, 2010; Sundararajan, 2016).

As discussed earlier, the fundamentals of Sharing Economy, including the business of sharing, giving gifts and doing business in a close community of people is nothing new. Benkler (2004) paved the way for future research on Sharing Economy by studying the nature of sharing as economic activity. The author argues that industrialization and its economic benefits on productivity of physical goods have weakened sharing activity in the past, as buying and owning things has been the preferred option. According to Benkler (2004), Sharing was not an economically feasible option for consumers in the industrial era, but digital networks fundamentally changed the economics of sharing. Benkler (2004) correctly predicted the rise of sharing activity due to the re-organisation of capital investments into digital networks and the empowerment of consumers to sell, buy and share online. Commercial sharing systems could thus even become the center of economic activity in modern economies (Benkler, 2004).

According to Belk (2010), sharing is a fundamental topic in consumer behavior, which is often overlooked in the current marketing literature. Belk (2010) states that the lack of discussion around sharing as a consumer research topic exists because sharing contradicts with the individualistic mind set, materialistic values and strict personal privacy of today's world. One could argue that it comes down to customers attitudes, whether sharing can gain more popularity. For example, increased sense of collaborative ownership, increased interdependence and utilitarianism of sharing among customers are factors that affect sharing activity (Belk, 2010). Belk (2010) argues that sharing should be researched as a completely separate phenomenon, not just as a component of the market – gift spectrum that Sundararajan (2016) described. However, Belk also points out an important fact: increased sharing activity is mostly driven by the rise of Internet-mediated platform businesses, rather than customer behavior that has been found to be restricted by the attitudes inherited from the era of Industrialization (Belk, 2007).

Another important aspect of Sharing Economy is how it entails changes in employment, entrepreneurship and ownership. In his book *“Sharing Economy: The end of employment and rise of crowd-based capitalism”*, Sundararajan (2016) discusses the effect that emergent Sharing Economy has had on employment due to the way Sharing Platforms manage the supply of labor. Similarly, as in the case of consumer behavior, the Industrial era has created specific norms for employment and entrepreneurship – you are either an employee of a corporation or an independent entrepreneur running your own business. In

contrast, the new digitally enabled Sharing Economy has blurred the line between employment and entrepreneurship, as Sharing Platforms facilitate economic activity of independent “contractors” or part-time employees who deliver products and services to users of the platforms (Sundararajan, 2016). This is where Sharing Platforms are fundamentally different when compared to traditional industry incumbents: their ability to structure the organisation in a flexible way is one of their key competitive advantages (Sundararajan, 2016; Constantiou et al., 2017). It is exactly these kinds of contractors that lack definition in the legislation of modern societies, up until recently. Due to the competitive edge stemming from innovative orchestration of platform operations, large legal battles have been fought between incumbents and new market entrants, such as Uber or Airbnb (Nerinckx, 2016; Sundararajan, 2016). The way Sharing Platforms operate their workforce has been referred to as “Uberisation” of the labor market, according to the ride-sharing platform called Uber (Nerinckx, 2016; Sundararajan, 2016).

Despite the changes in employment and customer behavior, we can say for sure that the business of sharing has always been there. What is fundamentally new in the so-called Sharing Economy and the Internet platforms that enable sharing at scale? The answer lies in the fact that Sharing Economy connects not only close communities but also total strangers together in an act of high-trust sharing of assets and commercial activity (Sundararajan, 2016). Sundararajan (2016) points out that the ability to connect communities and individuals together is largely due to the development of the ubiquitous Internet connection, mass-market smart mobile devices and online social networks. Due to the popularity of digital interaction, Sharing Economy Platforms have been able to create a whole new level of “digital trust” to ease commercial activity. Sundararajan (2016) explains five aspects that build digital trust: 1. one’s own prior interaction in digital exchanges, 2. learning from the experiences of others, 3. through brand recognition of the platform, 4. reliance on social capital of platform stakeholders and 5. through validation of external institutions.

In addition to the effect of digital trust on the development of Sharing Economy, Sundararajan (2016) emphasizes the fact that digital industries as a whole have shifted more towards consumer-markets from a history of more business-to-business driven trade. As a result, digital industries have “consumerized” (Sundararajan, 2016). For instance, Amazon, Apple and Facebook have paved the way for a more consumer-driven digital industry, after IBM, Microsoft and Hewlett Packard conquered the digital industries focused on business-to-business exchange. According to Sundararajan (2016), recent examples of digital companies operating in the consumer industry are eBay, Alibaba and Craigslist – traditional e-commerce platforms, all of which can be seen as precursors for the emergence of Sharing Economy.

Belk (2010) has a similar approach to the “new era of sharing”. He believes that the likes of Facebook, Flickr and YouTube have popularized the fact that information can be owned, bought, sold and shared online. It is due to the rise of the Internet and especially its continuum, Web 2.0 that has boosted the development on Sharing Economy and made collaborative consumption the new normal (Belk, 2014). This adds up to the traditional offline-sharing that consumers have been used to during the past.

Based on the background of Sharing Economy, it seems that its ever-increasing popularity has been enabled by major technological development, shifts in industry trends and the economics of various industries, such as in the automotive (Uber) or hotel industry (Airbnb). Sharing itself is not new, so what are the more practical reasons for consumers to participate in it in continuously increasing numbers?

According to Constantiou et al. (2017) consumers are shifting towards preferring access to certain products and services over owning them, more prone to engage in peer-to-peer transactions and are well aware of the benefits of sharing idle resources such as cars (Uber, Lyft, BlaBla Car) or their homes (Airbnb, 9Flats), which might otherwise be in very low use. Consumers preferring access to things over owning them, being more used to peer-to-peer economy and willing to share share idle resources are fundamental socio-economic drivers behind the development of Sharing Economy (Constantiou et al., 2017). Quite similarly, Schor (2014) states that consumers are attending in Sharing Economy based on perceived novelty of the services and the pull power created by new technologies, such as Web2.0, social media and mobile devices. In addition, economic, social and environmental factors are considered as strong drivers for consumer participation (Schor, 2014). Interestingly, Schor (2014) also describes the effect of *technophilia* as a driver for Sharing Economy participation – meaning the general enthusiasm for new technology, including more elegant interfaces and quicker service than with traditional models. However, earlier research (Sacks, 2011; Lamberton and Rose, 2012; Schor, 2014; Hamari et al., 2015) seems to be unified on the fact that economic reasons are the most important driver of participation from the consumer behavior perspective. In other words, companies operating a commercial sharing exchange can offer lower prices on average compared to traditional companies with an ownership-based model of transaction.

It is worthy to note that neither the scientific or management communities completely agree if lower prices offered by Sharing Platforms can be solely explained by the innovative employee structure of the companies (Nerinckx, 2016; Sundararajan, 2016). The lack of traditional employee benefits, lower wages, and insurances for Sharing Economy gig-workers has created a negative tone in discussions about Sharing Platforms in various industries

(Nerinckx, 2016; Sundararajan, 2016). However, some researchers point out that the recent financial crisis has had a positive effect on Sharing Economy, and vice versa, as new Sharing Platforms stood out as a cheaper, more socially beneficial and ecological alternative to traditional companies (Schor, 2014). Sharing Economy remains a controversial topic as it has changed traditional, underlying assumptions in industries like transportation and hospitality.

In recent empirical research, the motivations for consumers to participate in Sharing Economy have been studied. For example, Lamberton and Rose (2012) found that inside the category of shared goods, the main driver for consumers to buy shared products was a lower price compared to owning the same good. On the other hand, they found that the perceived risk of scarcity in the pool of shared goods is the biggest driver for both negative and positive effect on attendance. For example, people might fear that getting an Uber is riskier than taking their own car, since they can't rely on Ubers' availability on a specific time of day, even though it is cheaper in total. Continuing on the research made by Lamberton and Rose (2012), Hamari et al. (2015) found that economic reasons and a perceived sustainability of taking part in Sharing Economy are the most important factors driving consumer participation. It is noteworthy to highlight that economic reasons outweighed the reasons based on sustainability in the study by Hamari et al. (2015), thus further validating earlier findings made by Lamberton and Rose (2012). An even more recent study by Bucher et al. (2016), takes a different approach. Where Lamberton and Rose (2012) and Hamari et al. (2015) studied participation in sharing from the consumer perspective, Bucher et al. (2016) studied the motives of the people who share their possessions or services on the platforms. More specifically, the authors studied a dataset gathered from over 500 respondents who had shared on the Amazon Mechanical Turk platform in August 2015. Bucher et al. (2016) find that the motives for people to share are 1. *social-hedonic motives*, 2. *moral motives* and 3. *monetary motives*, in order of importance. According to the author, social-hedonic motives mean the fun of connecting with new people through sharing, playful experimentation and this way using the possession for social activities. Moreover, moral motives refer to the perceived sustainability and ecological aspects of sharing compared to materialistic ownership. Finally, monetary motives, or additional revenue for the sharers of things, were not surprisingly seen as the most important motivator in the study by Bucher (2016), although it was the most important in the perspective of the customer in earlier studies (Lamberton and Rose, 2012; Hamari et al., 2015).

In order to understand the dynamics of commercial sharing activity through digital platforms, previous literature showcases a series of different frameworks to analyse it. Next, some of the most recent, scientifically important frameworks for understanding Sharing

Economy Platforms are presented. Thereafter, the frameworks are integrated into a unified approach for sampling case companies for the empirical study described in chapter three.

2.1.2 Dynamics of Sharing Economy Platforms

Demand-side frameworks

To begin the discussion on theoretical frameworks of Sharing Platforms, it is reasonable to review relevant theories that define the relationship between Sharing Platforms and their customers, or the demand-side of Sharing Platforms. According to Sundararajan (2016), Sharing Economy resembles some aspects of traditional economic activity, most importantly the act of giving gifts and traditional market-mediated exchange. Thus, the author argues that modern Sharing Economy activity lies somewhere between a spectrum of market-based trading to giving gifts, the “market-to-gift” spectrum (Sundararajan, 2016). For example, sharing an apartment on Airbnb includes many instances of a gift, such as the personal touch of the apartment rented, and the reviews given by both the visitor and the renter after the stay. A rent payment for the stay represents the market element. Thus, renting your apartment on Airbnb includes both aspects. On the other hand, on Couchsurfing, a service similar to Airbnb, people share their homes for free to visitors as a pure act of gift giving and for the social cues that follow. Each Sharing Economy Platform could be placed on the market-to-gift spectrum in a similar manner. Similar thinking is expressed in a more recent study by Habibi et al. (2017), as the authors introduce a framework for Sharing Economy, where sharing activity falls somewhere between the “sharing-exchange” continuum. The framework is based on earlier definitions of pure sharing and pure exchange by Belk (2007), describing the both ends of the continuum (Habibi et al., 2017).

In order to define the nature of sharing itself, Hamari et al. (2015) studied a set of over 200 online platforms. They categorized different types of sharing activities in two simple cases: “access over sharing” and “transfer of ownership”. In practice, access over sharing means that a user shares an asset or durable to another user for a limited amount of time but ownership of the product itself is not exchanged. On the contrary, transfer of ownership means swapping, donating or purchasing of products between users. This transfer can include a monetary transaction or not. The authors also note that Sharing Platforms can include both elements: access over ownership and transfer of ownership simultaneously. (Hamari et al., 2015).

Schor (2014) states that activities inside the Sharing Economy fall into four broad categories according to nature of commercial exchange: recirculation of goods, increased utilization of durable assets, exchange of services and sharing of productive assets. Schor (2014) also categorizes different types of platform companies that produce these sharing services based on the profit-orientation of the platform (non-profit, for profit) and the customer-orientation of the platform (business-to-customer, peer-to-peer). In essence, despite the majority of well-known companies in Sharing Economy are profit-seeking businesses offering their platform for consumers, Schor (2014) states that possibilities of Sharing Economy can also be harnessed as public- or community-driven efforts with non-profit goals. These non-profit goals include the positive ecological, social and economic effects of Sharing Economy, which have been demonstrated in different countries already (Heinrichs 2013, Schor, 2014, Hamari et al. 2015). What is more, Sundararajan (2016) describes the non-profit aspect as the original beginning of Sharing Economy – a view that some of the pioneers of the phenomena still hold true.

Sharing-based transactions have become the new normal in customer behavior during the past decade. However, what kind of products and services are shared or traded in the Sharing Economy? What offerings are most successful? In her book *“The Mesh – Why the future of business is Sharing”*, Lisa Gansky (2012), a serial entrepreneur of the Internet industry, presents a framework for analysing the Sharing Economy offerings. Gansky (2012) builds the framework on four basic characteristics of Sharing Economy companies, or the “Mesh business” as she calls them. Firstly, the offering is something that can be shared within a community or a market: in other words, a product, service or raw material. Secondly, the usual Mesh business offers physical products or services which are locally delivered. Thirdly, mobile- and web networks are excessively used to track and condense product information. Finally, social network services (social media) typically has a crucial effect on Mesh businesses, and thus they are an integral part of the offering. *The Mesh Sweet Spot* - framework measures two features of shared assets: cost and frequency of use. (Gansky, 2012). Hence, the most potential Sharing Economy offerings which often encompass all the above features, are the ones which have a low frequency of use and high cost. For example, cars and empty apartments are like this. In the light of Gansky’s (2012) framework, it comes with no surprise that Uber (ride-sharing) and Airbnb (apartment sharing) were the first global success stories for Sharing Economy.

With a slightly broader point of view, Belk (2014) states that the whole Internet is actually a large pool of shared content, information and possibilities. In fact, the Internet is an enabling factor for Sharing Economy. Belk (2014) defines two distinct factors that are

common for all Sharing Economy activities: 1. they facilitate temporary access, without real ownership to products and services and 2. they are heavily reliant on the Internet and especially Web 2.0. To conclude, one could say that the development of Sharing Economy has developed hand-in-hand with the rise of the commercial Internet and social media.

Sharing Economy for durable assets is distinct from the traditional online marketplaces such as Ebay in the sense that they facilitate short, recurring rentals rather than full ownership of a product (Constantiou et al., 2017). It is the temporary access to products and services, rather than the full ownership and the peer-to-peer element of most Sharing Economy services, which makes them different from marketplaces and other rental services (Fraiberger and Sundararajan, 2015; Constantiou et al., 2017). According to Fraiberger and Sundararajan (2015) transactions in Sharing Economy change the consumers' investment behavior in durable goods such as cars, since the shared option is often more economical. Interestingly, Fraiberger and Sundararajan (2015) also found that in the case of cars, the sharing option increases consumer surplus and welfare compared to traditional automotive industry.

Supply-side frameworks

Sharing Platforms operate a supply of goods, labor or other resources to facilitate their business operations. Next, the relevant theories discussing the supply-side of Sharing Platforms are reviewed. Firstly, Sundararajan (2016) elaborates on a framework created by Malone et al. (1987) to describe how digital technologies reorganise market structures. The latter framework fundamentally explains how market structures change from open *markets* to more structured *hierarchies* as a result of increasing use of information technology (Malone et al., 1987). In the context of Sharing Economy, this means that the platform facilitates economic activity between its users either through market-like openness or hierarchical, in-house operations (Sundararajan, 2016). Malone et al. (1987) argue that economic activity favors open markets, when the complexity of the product or service is low and when the specificity of assets used to produce it are low. In contrast, economic activity is more productive within a hierarchy, if the product is complex and if the assets used are very specific. What is more, Malone et al. (1987) found that the use of information technology increases possibilities to organise economic activity inside open markets instead of hierarchies, since developments in information technology make it easier to handle product complexity and asset specificity. The study by Malone et al. (1987) gives food for thought in the context of Sharing Economy and supports the view for increased opportunity in organising major parts of economic activity outside of company hierarchies through

independent contractors. Good examples of this are Uber and Lyft, both of which facilitate a fleet of drivers to operate their ride-sharing services.

Strongly based on the logic provided by Malone et al. (1987), Sundararajan (2016) presents a framework for operating model of Sharing Economy Platforms, called *Platforms: hierarchies, markets or hybrids?* Classifying hundreds of platforms according to several questions about their operations, Sundararajan (2016) describes whether a platform employs a group of contractors or workers inside the company hierarchy, by facilitating independent entrepreneurs or a hybrid of the two models. For example, Airbnb and TaskRabbit were classified as market- oriented, whereas the ride-sharing platforms Lyft and Uber were classified as hybrids. “Hierarchy-like” instances in the classification were related to centralised services offered by the platforms (e.g. payment processing, customer service, logistics and automatic customer – provider selection) whereas “market-like” instances included freedom over entrepreneurial choices (e.g. independent pricing, ease of entrance and exit, direct customer contact). In addition, “hybrid” capabilities consist of vital tasks which only the platform can provide, including feedback systems, provider screening and other trust indicators. (Sundararajan, 2016).

In a recent study, Constantiou et al. (2017) classify four different types of Sharing Economy Platforms according to the “organisational mechanisms” and “market mechanisms” they apply to operate their platform. According to Constantiou et al. (2017), these mechanisms are what separates Sharing Platforms from traditional marketplaces and intermediaries. Organisational mechanisms mean the level of control platforms owners apply over platform participants. The other aspect, market mechanisms, is the level of competition the platform owner wants to facilitate among its participants. Based on these two mechanisms, Sharing Platforms can be categorised into four archetypes: franchisers, principals, chaperones and gardeners (Constantiou et al., 2017). For example, ride-sharing platforms Lyft and Uber would be classic examples of a Franchiser applying strong control over its participants and maintaining a sense of competition among them. Small tasks providers, TaskRabbit and Handy, would fall into the category of Principals – high control over attendees, low rivalry. Airbnb is a typical Chaperone, maintaining a truly entrepreneurial approach for its participants through high rivalry and competition but low control. These mechanisms are put into play through organisational division and coordination of tasks (organisational mechanisms) and the power of price-setting (market mechanism) (Constantiou et al., 2017). According to the authors, the flexibility of Sharing Platforms gives them a competitive advantage over traditional companies.

In addition to the way Sharing Platforms operate, it is relevant to think about how and where they match supply and demand. Sundararajan (2016) points out that some platforms are accessible to a global audience, whereas some are focusing to match a more local supply and demand. For example, in addition to local users, Airbnb attracts international travelers who are looking to stay in cities where Airbnb is available. Furthermore, Airbnb hosts can offer their houses for users in basically anywhere. In comparison, the ride-sharing service Lyft is more tied to the local market in each city, as the service is highly dependent on the number of drivers and users active in a specific area during a given moment. Other studies have found geographic location an important factor for Sharing Economy activity – local Sharing Economy Platforms have been proven to be more actively used in areas of higher socio-economic status (Thebault-Spieker et al., 2017). To conclude, it seems that the geographic dependence of Sharing Economy has an effect on the operative planning and business -strategy of Sharing Platforms.

Analysis of frameworks

A review of Sharing Economy literature described in this chapter creates a comprehensive view on the dynamics of Sharing Platforms. Moreover, the aim of this section is to create a theoretical lens for selecting relevant companies for a detailed case study of Sharing Economy Platform evolution. Five key frameworks are selected to be used in case sampling: the market-to-gift spectrum (Sundararajan, 2016), MYB framework (Sundararajan, 2016), meshyness grid (Gansky, 2012), the four models of Sharing Economy Platforms (Constantiou et al., 2017) and the distinction between local and global Sharing Platforms (Sundararajan, 2016). These five frameworks are used to map out different aspects of Sharing Platforms and to justify the selection of case companies for empirical research. In the below chart, the selected case companies, Lyft and TaskRabbit, are compared based on the five key theoretical frameworks. The case companies are compared to Airbnb which was the subject of the case study by Constantiou et al. (2016). In chapter 3.1, the selection criteria of case companies are described in more detail.

Table 1: Lyft, TaskRabbit and Airbnb compared to Sharing Economy frameworks

	Lyft	TaskRabbit	Airbnb
<i>Demand-side frameworks</i>			
Market-to-gift spectrum (Sundararajan, 2016)	Gift & Market	Market	Gift& Market
Meshyness grid (Gansky, 2012)	Meshy: high cost, low use	Not meshy: low cost, low use	Meshy: high cost, low use
<i>Supply-side frameworks</i>			
MYB framework (Sundararajan, 2016)	Hybrid	Market	Market
Four models of Sharing Economy Platforms (Constantiou et al., 2017)	Franchiser	Principal	Chaperone
Local and global Sharing Platforms (Sundararajan, 2016)	Local	Local	Global

2.1.3 Critique on Sharing Economy

So far, this chapter has discussed the definition and background of Sharing Economy, as well as different frameworks for supply- and demand side dynamics of Sharing Platforms. Next, this chapter continues with diving into critique on Sharing Economy.

Sharing Economy has emerged as a disruptive force in several industries during the past decade, mainly because of the way the platforms re-organise supply and labor markets (Bucher et al., 2016; Nerinckx, 2016; Sundararajan, 2016; Constantiou et al., 2017), as well as how they compete on customers (Lamberton and Rose, 2012; Hamari et al., 2015; Constantiou et al., 2017). The aggressive growth of the platforms has not come alone: it is noteworthy to discuss critique on Sharing Economy. In the context of this study, relevant critique on the topic can be classified into four themes: definition of sharing, effects on employment, market-economic problems and social consequences.

It is generally known that Sharing Economy lacks definition and understanding on a general level (Sacks, 2011; Schor, 2014; Knote and Blohm, 2016). Habibi et al. (2017) argue that due to the loose definition of Sharing Economy and its rising popularity, new companies have entered the market, claiming to be a Sharing Platform, although the criteria of pure sharing described by Belk (2014) are not met. Instead, Sharing Platform companies fall somewhere into a broad spectrum of “gift-to-exchange” spectrum which is quite close to the description of market-to-gift spectrum described by Sundararajan (2016). Habibi et al. (2017)

present Zipcar as an example platform that has more exchange features than sharing features, whereas Couchsurfing is an example of pure sharing activity. What is relevant about Habibi et al. (2017) findings, is the fact that a more exchange focused platform companies can create a similar customer experience than a Sharing Platform and promote sharing activities, although they are not true to the real philosophy of sharing. Some platforms might do this just for the sake of attracting more customers who presumably have a positive attitude towards Sharing Economy in general. The authors claim that this fact makes Sharing Economy also difficult to understand for managers of traditional industries (Habibi et al., 2017).

Employment on a Sharing Economy Platform is different than in traditional companies. As discussed earlier in previous chapters, the way Sharing Platforms organise their labor supply is what fundamentally separates them from other platforms or companies in same industries. In addition to the benefits of the “contractor” or “micro-entrepreneur” model that Sharing Platforms apply, also the downsides have been widely recognized. Sundararajan (2016) and Schor (2014) emphasize negative scenarios the modern Sharing Economy could have on employment. As the current legislation in for example U.S. is still undecided on whether Sharing Platforms’ supply-side users should be counted as contractors, part- or full-time employees or entrepreneurs, it is possible that this uncertainty leads to exploitation of supply-side participants of Sharing Platforms. This would lead to a dystopian view of the future of these platforms, which Sundararajan (2016) calls “share the scraps economy”. In that scenario, Sundararajan (2016) tells that market leading Sharing Platforms such as Uber or Airbnb could potentially yield high profits based on the low cost of on-demand contractors, with low salaries and a low level of freedom to decide on their working hours. Schor (2014) dives deeper into the causality of why Sharing Platforms are being unfair to the contractors. Schor (2014) argues that the modern for-profit Sharing Platforms have nowadays a different nature compared to their origins, as venture capitalists have poured large investments into the companies to support their growth. Sharing Economy is thus more contested, profit-seeking and potentially more economically risky for the contractors participating in the platforms (Schor, 2014). In a sense, the effect of Sharing Economy on employment can be compared to similar phenomena in the near history, such as offshoring or automation (Sundararajan, 2016). The authors have also imagined possible ways to tackle these questions. Sundararajan (2016) suggests a fundamental re-creation of a new digitally enabled workforce, meaning sharing marketplaces with higher salaries and less information asymmetry, generalisation of workforce skillsets, immediacy of labor supply and the increase in micro-task sharing services. Schor (2014) on the other hand, emphasizes the need for Sharing Platform workers to organise and even unionize into communities through which

they would have more power to negotiate with the platform owners. This kind of movement has gradually started by an organization called peers.org that started to encourage its participants to organise in groups of hosts, guests and employees of Airbnb (Schor, 2014).

Market-economic consequences of the growing Sharing Economy are well described by Malhotra and Van Alstyne (2014). The authors argue that Sharing Economy business models are competitive for two reasons. Firstly, the platforms are utilizing loopholes and arbitrage in the current market-economic environment, such as with innovative employment models and tax avoidance. Secondly, Sharing Platforms compete with a unique value proposition. (Malhotra and Van Alstyne, 2014). According to Malhotra and Van Alstyne (2014), it will take time for Sharing Economy to adjust its operating model into a sustainable economic activity – the platforms cannot only rely on the market loopholes for competitive advantage. In the light of these findings, it is fair to ask: how much of the potential Sharing Platforms hold come out as actual value to consumers, not the platform owners only? In order to facilitate sustainable business and foster the future of Sharing Economy, the platforms should internalize some of the costs which are now carried by the other market participants: costs such as taxes, insurance, customer training, community policing, fair reviews for services and other trust building systems (Malhotra and Van Alstyne, 2014). It is interesting to note that in the classifications of Sharing Platforms created by Sundararajan (2016) and Habibi et al. (2017) most of these details are taken into account, when measuring platforms on the market-to-gift spectrum and sharing-exchange continuum.

Social consequences that Sharing Platforms produce are frequently discussed in Sharing Economy literature. In her comprehensive debate over Sharing Economy, Schor (2014) points out that Sharing Platforms can re-produce or even amplify negative social behavior in the marketplace, such as racism based on gender, ethnicity or socio-economic class. As an example of this, Schor (2014) refers to a recent working paper where Airbnb users were studied. The research found out that non-black users were able to have 12% more income from similar properties than their Afro-American peers (Edelman and Luca, 2014). In addition, a recent study points out that geographic location creates a bias in some cases of Sharing Economy activity (Thebault-Spieker et al., 2017), as the authors found that for Uber and TaskRabbit, demand and supply are greater in areas which have higher socio-economic status.

2.1.4 Managerial perspective

After reviewing the background, theoretical frameworks and earlier critique on Sharing Economy, it is relevant to take a more practical perspective into the topic. Sharing Platform start-ups such as Airbnb or Lyft have emerged during the last decade, but traditional industry players have only recently started to adopt similar business models (Botsman, 2014). How should a manager of a traditional industry player study the business opportunities and threats which Sharing Economy poses? Is it possible to find patterns in usual life cycles of Sharing Platforms? This chapter focuses on viewing Sharing Economy from a perspective of larger, established companies and to discuss the theories to understand life cycles of Sharing Platforms.

One of the earliest pioneers of Sharing Economy research, Rachel Botsman (2014) emphasizes the threats which new Sharing Platforms pose for traditional companies but also points out relevant opportunities. In her study of over 500 Sharing Platform start-ups, she found five common problems that Sharing Platforms usually tackle very innovatively: redundancy, broken trust, limited access, waste and complexity (Botsman, 2014). According to Botsman (2014), these are the problems Sharing Platform start-ups try to solve and thus, gain an access to a competitive market formerly dominated by large industrial companies. For example, the financial industry is extremely prone to threats and possibilities of Sharing Economy, lacking each of the aforementioned factors. Moreover, managers should take these aspects into account when renewing their businesses to answer the new needs of Sharing Economy. (Botsman, 2014). With a similar approach Constantiou et al. (2017) highlight the importance for all kinds of business managers to understand Sharing Economy. After studying 37 Sharing Economy Platforms, Constantiou et al. (2017) were able to define the competitive advantage Sharing Platforms have over industry incumbents. According to Constantiou et al. (2017), Sharing Economy Platforms compete by a more fluid organisational structure compared to traditional companies, defined by market- and organisational mechanisms. The authors also state that their business models are about facilitating commercial interaction between two or more parties, not about selling large inventories or renting out expensive assets. Thus new entrant Sharing Platforms do not need large initial investments to enter the market (Constantiou et al., 2017). Their growth is amplified through “network effects” which means that every additional user of the platform adds value to other users of the platforms (Constantiou et al., 2016; Constantiou et al., 2017).

However, incumbent companies can successfully compete with Sharing Platforms. According to Botsman (2014), companies should tackle possible loopholes in redundancy, broken trust, limited access, waste and complexity by embracing directness, openness,

empowerment, efficiency and simplicity in their service offering. In order to offer such services in the market, Botsman (2014) suggests three business strategic approaches for managers of larger companies: 1. by making direct investments in- and acquisitions of smaller Sharing Platform start-ups, 2. by collaborating with Sharing Platform start-ups to enrich the service offering or by 3. fundamentally re-organising the incumbent firm's business model. Constantiou et al. (2017) state similar ways of approach – investments, acquisitions, collaboration or through competition. In addition to the studies by Constantiou et al. (2017) and Botsman (2014), the research made by Habibi et al. (2017) has relevant suggestions for managers. Firstly, the authors suggest that managers of incumbents should learn about their offerings' current or future position on the sharing-exchange continuum. Secondly, based on their identified position managers should carefully consider the impact of community building, the importance of utilitarian benefits vs. socialization, sustainability efforts, political views of their users and how strongly they communicate exchange of money and transactions in their service. (Habibi et al., 2017). To put it short, managers should learn about their relative sharing-exchange position and then adjust their Sharing Economy offering into the most relevant features of that position.

As Sharing Platforms challenge incumbents with new competitive dynamics, it is interesting to discuss how these platforms evolve and grow to become relevant players in the respective markets. Some aspects on the life cycle of Sharing Platforms have been illustrated in Sharing Economy literature by Gansky, (2012), Schor, (2014) and Sundararajan (2016). Gansky (2012) took an overall view on life cycles of Sharing Economy companies, or what she calls “The Mesh” companies. According to her study, typical Mesh businesses follow four stages in development: infancy, adolescence, adulthood and full maturity according to their stage of development. Interestingly, both Schor (2014) and Sundararajan (2016) point out that cities are an important driver for Sharing Economy companies in terms of economics and social aspects. Due to the larger intensity of population, social ties and higher economic activity, cities are a perfect place for a Sharing Economy company to start and expand their business (Schor, 2014; Sundararajan, 2016). When it comes to the later stages of a Sharing Economy company, Schor (2014) has an interesting point. In her early study on Sharing Economy, Schor (2014) points out a question about Sharing Economy companies: will they stay true to their better societal, environmental and economic aspects through sharing or will they blend into the rules of traditional business, or larger traditional companies? Schor (2014) analysed the case of Zipcar which was acquired by Avis, a larger competitor right after its initial growth. A direct acquisition like this is a good example of competition Sharing Economy start-ups might face from incumbent companies (Botsman, 2014; Constantiou et

al., 2017). It is interesting to note that current Sharing Economy companies have also been forced to at least cooperate with larger platforms or companies: Lyft has taken sizeable investments from Alphabet, in 2017 (Hawkins, 2017), TaskRabbit was acquired by IKEA in 2017 (Swisher, 2017), whereas Airbnb has managed to stay independent from larger companies (Lundgren, 2017).

After reviewing the Sharing Economy literature, a more rigorous analysis of Sharing Platform life cycles needs to be done to accurately describe their evolution. In order to do so, the next chapter focuses on the theory of platforms, including their economics, structure and strategy.

2.2 Platforms

According to MIT professors McAfee and Brynjolfsson (2017), the emergence of platforms, such as the Internet, the consumer Web and all its applications like Facebook or Amazon, is a core reason for a wave of digital disruption taking place in a range of industries at the moment. Platforms can be described as “*a digital environment characterized by near-zero marginal cost of access, reproduction, and distribution*” (McAfee and Brynjolfsson, 2017). In this thesis the word “platform” is used to discuss “industry-wide platforms” described by Cusumano (2010), not “product platforms” which means specific technology or technological elements which others can build on. An industry-wide platform differs from a product platform in two characteristics: Firstly, an industry platform offers a common technological foundation via a technology “system” on which other companies, called “complementors”, usually develop their own technology and business. Secondly, opposed to product platforms, industry platforms hold very little value without these complementors. (Cusumano, 2010).

The economics of platforms differ fundamentally from traditional value-chain economics. In traditional value chains, value comes from customers, through the value chain agents, and finally to the company itself. In the platform model, the company has two or several customer groups, both of which incur costs and create revenue through independent chains. (Van Alstyne et al., 2016). According to Eisenmann et al. (2006), platforms are the opposite of traditional products and services, as platform companies do not own their stock, physical assets or create services. Interestingly, platform businesses have existed for years already: shopping malls connect consumers and merchants, while newspapers connect readers and advertisers. However, the drastic developments in information technology have reduced the need for physical assets, enables connecting several groups together smoothly,

and reduced the costs of connecting them (Van Alstyne et al., 2016; McAfee and Brynjolfsson, 2017). Instead, platforms only facilitate activity between their participants, more specifically sharing in the case of Sharing Economy Platforms. Sharing Platforms act as an intermediary, a gatekeeper and a matchmaker between platform participants, resulting in lower costs for transactions, increased trust and thus lower risks for all agents involved (Constantiou et al., 2017).

Platforms have gained increasing weight in economic thinking after the rise of the Internet in the 1990's and therefore the topic has achieved interest among academic researchers as well (Cusumano, 2010). Previous research on platforms stems from economics-, strategy- and technology management disciplines (Cusumano, 2010). This chapter will focus on describing the most relevant findings from each of these disciplines.

How did the new era of digital Sharing Platforms emerge? What makes a successful Sharing Economy Platform business? According to an earlier study on similar questions, the majority of research is built on Platform Economics and Information Infrastructure Theories (Constantiou et al., 2016). The focus of the thesis is to build on the previous research by revisiting the literature from these two areas, and in addition exploring the field of Platform Strategy. The focus of the following chapter is to explain economic dynamics that make platform businesses successful in beginning, theories on how to sustain the user base, as well as strategies that make them last in the long term. Finally, a framework is provided to explain life cycles of Sharing Economy Platforms.

2.2.1 Platform Economics

Malhotra and Van Alstyne (2014) describe that Sharing Economy Platforms utilize economic loopholes inside traditional industries to grow aggressively, but the lack of proper economic dynamic might be their biggest obstacle towards building a sustainable business on the long term. According to earlier studies, it is very hard to put up a functioning platform operation and -business (Hagiu, 2014, Eisenmann et al., 2006). To analyse these loopholes, and to provide a better view on sustainable growth, the basics of Platform Economics are described next. Instead of the classic economic theories that are applied to industrial products and traditional services, platforms have their own rules to go by. Depending on different definitions, these rules go by the name of *Platform Economics* (Evans, 2009), *economics of multi-sided markets* (Evans, 2003; Rysman, 2009) and *economics of information goods* (Shapiro and Varian, 1999). Constantiou et al. (2016) state that these dynamics excel in explaining the early stages of a platform business.

Starting a platform business requires relatively low initial investment when compared to traditional industrial business (Constantiou et al., 2017). Based on traditional industrial strategy, a common way to build barriers for entry is to make heavy up-front investments in research and development, production, product differentiation marketing or logistics and then compete by leveraging economies of scale from initial investment over a longer period of time. According to this approach, it is important to be early in the market in order to build barriers for others. Instead of this traditional approach, platforms compete by facilitating interactions and creating information. (Van Alstyne, 2016; McAfee and Brynjolfsson, 2017). Important early activities for platforms include building software systems that automate interactions between participating agents, acquiring more early users on board, maintaining relevant user switching costs and leveraging strong network effects through the new users (Evans, 2009; Hagiu, 2014; Constantiou et al., 2017). The network effects created by getting the early users on board are the strongest barriers for entry that a platform can create inside its own market (Hagiu, 2014). Being one of the first entrants in the market is also important for platform businesses (McAfee and Brynjolfsson, 2017), but it can be overcome with strong network effects or other platform competition strengths which are described in detail later in this chapter. However, it is argued that the initial investment of building a high-performing software platform is considerably large and that there are classic supply-side economies of scale at play also in platform business success (Shapiro and Varian, 1999; Hagiu, 2014).

In the beginning, a platform must be designed according to participants it wants to act as an intermediary for (Hagiu, 2014). During the evolution of a platform, the number of agent groups can change based on the business strategy of the platform (Hagiu, 2014; Constantiou et al., 2017). In his study of multi-sided platform industries, Evans (2003) highlights a well-put list of conditions for a platform to have a business opportunity in a chosen market. Firstly, there has to be two or several distinct groups of agents or customers. Secondly, there are beneficial externalities, or network effects, for these groups to be connected with each other. Finally, an intermediary has to be able to internalize the positive externalities caused by connecting these groups. With all these conditions fulfilled, social and economic surplus can be created and a platform business is feasible. (Evans, 2003).

It is argued that the definition of a platform is very close to the meaning of two-sided markets (Eisenmann et al., 2006; Rysman, 2009). For the purposes of this thesis, it is important to understand the nuances of these two definitions from a theoretical perspective. The economics of two-sided markets has been traditionally approached from the perspective of the market intermediary – the market mediator owner (Rysman, 2009), whereas research on platforms has more views on external factors, such as users and network effects

(Eisenmann et al., 2006; Hagiu, 2014). Some authors argue that a platform is a synonym for a two-sided market (Eisenmann et al., 2006). Based on Rysman’s (2009) research, a two-sided market is defined as: “*it is one in which 1) two sets of agents interact through an intermediary or a platform, and 2) decisions of each set of agents affects the other set of agents, typically through an externality*”. Furthermore, Rysman (2009) points out that a two-sided market, or a platform, has two fundamental strategic issues to decide: pricing on each set of market sides and openness of the platform with regards to integrations with other platforms.

By “openness”, Rysman (2009) means two separate strategic decisions. Firstly, the amount of sides to include in the platform, and secondly, the level of compatibility and interfaces for third parties to use. Whereas earlier research only discusses decisions between being one-sided or two-sided (Rochet and Tirole, 2003; Rysman, 2009), more recent research discuss the option of being a multi-sided platform (MSP) and it’s logic (Hagiu, 2014). Both of these questions are relevant in the context of Sharing Economy, as the openness of a platform plays a critical role in its success in general (Rysman, 2009). For example, LinkedIn operates a three-sided platform: employees, recruiters and advertisers. It is currently pushing to open two more possible sides to the platform, developers and company HR functions, which would bring more potential business outcomes. (Hagiu, 2014). Some examples of Sharing Platforms include Airbnb which connects hosts and short-term renters of homes in a two-sided platform and Lyft that operates a three-sided platform to link professional drivers with people in need of a taxi, and third-party developers to build more applications with the help of existing Lyft platform. The question of having multiple sides, and the question of opening a platform for third parties for compatibility, is a strategic decision for platform operators. These aspects are discussed more in-depth in chapter 2.2.3, as a part of other Platform Strategy issues.

After ignition of a platform, its main growth driver is a network effect between its participants. Network effects, or network externalities mean the positive externalities caused for a network agent due to more agents joining the same network, and thus making it more valuable for all of its members. (Shapiro and Varian, 1999). By another definition, network effects are “demand side economies of scale” which increase the value of a platform as more people use them and thus give advantage to bigger networks (McAfee and Brynjolfsson, 2017). Another name for this type of effect is a “direct network effect” – the effect of another same type of user joining increases the value for another from the same type (Evans, 2009). Network effects can take place on one side of the platform, or on two or several sides. In the case where an additional agent joining increases the value of the platform for a different

agent group on another side, “cross-side network effects” are at play (Hagiu, 2014). This type of network effect can also be called an “indirect network effect” (Evans, 2009). For example, Facebook is a more valuable platform for its advertising partner side if more basic users join the platform, increasing the advertising audience. By all definitions, network effects are the single biggest growth driver among digital platform businesses. For the sake of clarity, in this thesis the term “network effect” is used to describe the added value of users joining a platform on the same side, and “indirect network effects” is used to describe the effects caused by new members on different sides of the platform.

The biggest challenge platform businesses face in their early days is the “chicken & egg” problem which means the process of getting all relevant agent groups or sides on board in a sequence that enables the platform to grow through increased network effects, and indirect network effects (Evans, 2003, 2009; Rysman, 2009; Constantiou et al., 2016). For example, a platform that connects buyers with sellers needs to have both in the platform for it to be anyhow valuable for its members. A platform for sellers only, without any buyers, would not create any value to its users. The platform has to have both sellers and buyers joining at the same time, in suitable proportions. There are differences in the coordination of platform user entry: in first scenario, both or all sides need to join the platform simultaneously for it to be successful, whereas in another scenario different sides need to join in a sequential order that makes sense for the market dynamics in the platform (Evans, 2003; 2009). In a third scenario, some sides of a platform might need to make considerable investments to participate in the platform, simultaneously or in a sequence (Evans, 2003, 2009). This depends on the platform’s strategy and dynamics of the market that it operates in. Overcoming a complicated “chicken & egg” problem enables the platform to use powerful network effects, it’s main source for getting more users on board and thus, create more value for everyone in the sphere of the platform (Evans, 2003, 2009).

Earlier research has identified some strategies for tackling the “chicken & egg” problem. For example Evans (2009) lists the following five strategies: 1. basic “zig-zag” strategy, a strategy for reaching a sufficient amount of users by building each side incrementally, 2. “pre-commitment to both sides”, a strategy to persuade a minimum number of users to commit on each side to increase credibility of a platform, 3. “marquee strategy”, a way to have influential users to join either, or both of the sides first to drive in normal users, 4. “the two step”, where the aim is to first build one side of the platform up to near completion, and then bring in the other sides, 5. “zig-zag with self-supply”, where the operators of a platform provide one of the sides of an initial platform by artificially until they get some users of that side to join.

In addition to getting users to join a platform in a right sequence, it is vital for them to identify differences in potential users and to get the right type of users to join first. For example, a platform can be much more effective in its early marketing and user acquisition if it can get early adopters, marquee-customers or influencers to join the platform first, since these types of users are the easiest to acquire and generate the most potential word-of-mouth about the platform. (Evans, 2009). The differences between the most valuable platform customers are classified into three archetypes by Evans (2009). Firstly, some customers value the platform more than others and are thus more likely to join. It makes a lot of sense for platform managers to reach out to these customers in the first place, and to get them join all sides of the platform (Evans, 2009). According to product diffusion theory, these customers could be called by the name of “early adopters” (Evans, 2009, Frattini et al., 2014). Second type of customers are highly valued by the customers on the other sides of a platform – so called “marquee customers” (Rochet and Tirole, 2003; Evans, 2009). Getting these customers on board, on all sides, accelerates indirect network effects in the platform. Third type of customers are called “influencers”, the types that are more likely to make other users to join the platform in general, on all sides. As a whole, the proportions of each user group in relation to each other are also important for maintaining sustainable growth of a platform. (Evans, 2009). The majority of potential users for a platform are called “early majority”, “late majority” and “laggards”, in order of their sensitivity to get involved with new consumer offerings or technology (Mahajan et al., 1990).

Through identifying and acquiring these types of customers early on, a platform can reach a “critical mass” of customers quicker and more effectively than by not trying to work on identifying them. In this context, critical mass means a number of users which is enough for the platform to be economically feasible for all sides of agents – profitable for the platform operator and provide economic surplus for each of the sides of the platform. Reaching critical mass in a certain amount of time is a do-or-die mission for new platform start-ups. The time of reaching a critical mass could be restricted due to for example financial reasons, competitive position in a market or a matter of maintaining enough activity inside a platform. (Evans, 2003; 2009).

In order to get a better understanding of tactics for reaching out to early users of new platforms, relevant product diffusion literature is reviewed. For example, early users and critical mass of users can be acquired through goal-oriented marketing communications directed to a right audience. Thus, platforms could tackle first steps of the “chicken & egg” problem. Relevant studies in new product diffusion point out that new adopters are mainly influenced through marketing communication in mass media and word of mouth (Mahajan et

al., 1990). Word of mouth spread by these potential early users has been proven to be a dominating factor in new user acquisition in early-stage businesses (Shim and Bliemel, 2018). Modern information and communication technologies, such as social media, online brand communities and search engines offer new possibilities for companies to target their potential users already in very early phase. According to Hu et al. (2018) entrepreneurial new innovations should target their low-budget marketing communications towards the most susceptible group of potential users (early-adopters) in the form of weak promotion or discounted offers for purchase. Targeting influential users (influencers) with a similar weak promotional campaign is the go-to option, if an entrepreneur is willing spend a mediocre amount on marketing. If a large, or unlimited marketing budget is accessible, entrepreneurs should focus on offering completely free purchases for a maximal group of unsusceptible users (late adopters). In other words, targeting different user groups also depends on a budget constraint and a type of marketing message sent. (Hu et al., 2018).

Pricing structures of multi-sided platforms are one of the important strategic decisions that digital platforms need to make in order to succeed (Hagiu, 2014; Sundararajan, 2016; Constantiou et al., 2017). Compared to traditional markets with only one side or a group of agents to serve, a multi-sided platform has a more complex pricing dynamic. The price set for the other side of the market affects the demand and price on the other side as well, through cross-price elasticity between the sides. (Rysman, 2009). It is not rare for platforms to subsidise one side and have higher fees on the other, in order to acquire more users, or highlight the value of the platform for the side which attracts other sides to join (Hagiu, 2014). This phenomenon is linked to indirect network effects (Hagiu, 2014), as here the network effects happen on both sides of the platform, not only one side. This kind of a market is called a market with network externalities – without them a platform cannot reach growth through network effects (Rochet and Tirole, 2003). In order to make powerful indirect network effects happen, platform managers need to design the platform as “neutral”, meaning low transaction costs, apply costs sensitive to volume of purchases and ease constraints for passing through the platform. In addition, if either of the platform sides coordinates their purchases with a single client, network effects won’t take place. (Rochet and Tirole, 2003). Moreover, Hagiu (2014) argues that MSP managers can use the following rules of thumb for making decisions about pricing different sides of the platform: 1. Charge a higher price for the group that has less price sensitivity, 2. if there are no priced transactions between the groups, charge more from the side that benefits more from having the other side present in the platform and 3. if there are priced transactions between the groups, then charge more from the side that extracts more value from the other.

Offering access to a platform for a group of agents for free would not seem economically viable for a profit-seeking business at first. However, earlier research has proven this to be a successful strategy for digital platforms, if it is able to capture network externalities which come from another agent joining the platform, encouraged to join with a subsidised price (Parker and Van Alstyne, 2005; McAfee and Brynjolfsson, 2017). From an economics perspective, these externalities act as “complements” for other services in the platform, thus increasing their demand (Parker and Van Alstyne, 2005). In this context, a complementary product could also mean an addition to the platform value proposal, a new functionality or a value-added service. Network effects caused by new joiners and value-adding functionalities on top of platforms core offering can create a powerful self-reinforcing loop which can lead to aggressive user- and revenue growth for platforms. The self-reinforcing loop is a fundamental part of success in Platform Strategy and can provide a market leading position to players who can utilize them properly. (McAfee and Brynjolfsson, 2017). In addition to being a great growth strategy, subsidizing has been proven to work for any of the sides of a platform, depending on dynamics of a platform (Parker and Van Alstyne, 2005). According to the research, these effects do not decrease consumer welfare in total, although they might appear as price discrimination (Parker and Van Alstyne, 2005).

Creating network effects, complementary offerings and a strong user base alone are not the only ways for platforms to compete and create barriers for entry in their industry. Platforms protect their user base and network effects against competitors by managing “multi-homing” of customers, customer “homing costs” and “switching costs” (Eisenmann et al., 2006; Farrell and Klemperer, 2007). In many industries, consumers use multiple similar platforms or tend to switch platforms often. This phenomenon is called multi-homing, and it is a crucial competitiveness factor for platforms as their user base is their biggest asset and platforms do not want to lose it. The costs of starting to use a single platform, including adoption, operation and opportunity cost of time, are called homing costs. (Eisenmann et al., 2006). The cost for consumers to switch from platform to another, including the homing costs of a new platform and termination costs of an old one, are called switching costs (Eisenmann et al., 2006; Farrell and Klemperer, 2007). Platforms use a skillful combination of switching costs and network effects to “lock-in” customers in their platform, trying to achieve a situation where the platform and its user base are too valuable for the consumer to abandon, and the switching cost too high to consider changing into a competing platform (Farrell and Klemperer, 2007). Interestingly, in addition to platforms also traditional industries experience switching costs and competition through them (Shy, 2002). Furthermore, the phenomenon of multi-homing is strongly dependent on platform competition, decisions on platform openness

and pricing. These topics are discussed in chapter 2.2.3, along with other strategic aspects of platform businesses.

2.2.2 Information Infrastructure Theory

Platform Economics is a good theoretical aspect for analysing ignition and growth of Sharing Platforms. In order to fully explain growth trajectories of Sharing Platforms, other literature streams need to be covered to create a comprehensive theoretical base for analysis.

According to the literature on growth of Sharing Platforms (Constantiou et al., 2016), theory of Information Infrastructures (II) offers good views on managing platform growth after its initial growth. In this chapter relevant literature and theories in the II domain are described.

Information Infrastructures are complex and constantly evolving large systems that encompass not only technical solutions but also the human- and organizational element (Monteiro and Hanseth, 1995; Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010; Grisot et al., 2014). The II theory takes a more comprehensive view on design, evolution and operation of an information system, as it considers its users, designers, learning, openness and heterogeneity of the system among other things. Examples of II's are the Internet and industry-wide Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) networks. (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010). Inter-organisational ERP or CRM systems are another example of II's (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2004). The complexity of an II makes it hard to define in a single sentence. For example, Hanseth and Lyytinen (2010) define Information Infrastructures (II) as *“shared, open, unbounded, heterogeneous and evolving socio-technical systems consisting of a set of IT capabilities and their users, operations and design and shaped by neighboring infrastructures, existing IT capabilities, user and designer learning, cognitive inertia, etc.”* The authors state that II's are comparable to other terms in Information Technology according to level of complexity of a system, and thus provide a list of different IT solutions: 1) IT capabilities, 2) applications, 3) platforms and 4) Information Infrastructures (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010). This comparison gives relevant context, as it can be used to support research on evolution of platforms.

Monteiro and Hanseth (1995) argue that II's differ from traditional information systems with two fundamental factors. Firstly, role of standards is more important when it comes to II's, since without a strong standard, and users adhering to it, an II would not exist. Secondly, the way II's stabilize their existence is rather different: through strong status of a shared standard of use. II's evolve through cooperation of its users, the system itself and an organisation where it is used. As platforms do, the II's also produce network externalities, or network effects among its users to grow and sustain. (Monteiro and Hanseth, 1995). In

addition, existing infrastructure has been found to have a large effect on evolution of new II's, with respect to possible restrictions regarding growth, flexibility and compatibility (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2004). With these theories in mind, one can state that platforms have other similar features as well. For example, Hanseth and Lyytinen (2004) state that platforms have developed through the convergence of several suitable infrastructures – the Internet, cloud technologies and mobile devices. Platforms also coordinate and regulate user activity inside a platform in order to create a shared standard of interaction through a software component they provide. What's more, the evolution of an II is a complex set of interdependencies between users, technology and organizations, which is similar to a platform growth path (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2004; 2010). Taking these comparisons into account, it is interesting to explore what views the II theory have on growth and sustaining a platform.

To shed light on evolution patterns of Information Infrastructures, earlier research discusses some of the design problems related to them. Evolutionary dynamics of II's are nonlinear, path-dependent and influenced by network effects and learning of its users (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010). Hanseth and Lyytinen (2010) present a design theory to tackle two fundamental design challenges of II's: 1) the “bootstrap” problem and 2) the “adaptability” problem. According to the authors, these challenges account for “dynamic complexity” of II's. The bootstrap problem refers to the challenge of designing the system to get first users to use the system in the first place. In the very early stages of designing a system, designers need to strongly prioritise the needs and wants of early users and put less weight on the overall design and functionality of the system as a whole, which can create problems on the long term. On the other hand, the adaptability problem is related to the increased need for infrastructural flexibility, diverse design needs and unforeseen functionalities when the II grows after its initial design. There is a clear contradiction between the initial design and the growth phase of an II: in the first phase, technical and social needs are met with a design which fits early users perfectly, whereas in the second phase more varied user needs have to be met with a more flexible design. (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010).

In their research article Hanseth and Lyytinen (2010) provide five design principles and 19 more detailed design rules to overcome the bootstrap- and adaptability problems. The key aspect here is to cultivate an installed base of users, work practices, technology and organisational commitment, and to maintain growth of the entire system by establishing these design principles (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010). Adding on the Hanseth and Lyytinen's (2010) study, Grisot et al. (2014) describe a “cultivation strategy” for II's, which highlights

the fact that complex II's are not built by design but rather cultivated to gradually evolve and grow. According to the authors, a sustainable cultivation strategy is based on three fundamental parts: process-orientation, user mobilization and learning (Grisot et al., 2014). Firstly, process-orientation implies that an ongoing and rigorous step-by-step approach is important when developing technology and existing practices. This supports the incremental development efforts of the cultivation strategy. Secondly, user mobilisation means that users need to be heavily involved with the gradual design process. Designers alone cannot set the plans for developing an II, instead especially early users need to be engaged with strong incentives to bring their own point of view into the design process early on. This is especially important to overcome the bootstrap problem of II design. Third point, learning, refers to the nature of incremental change – learning by doing, step-by-step. In fact, the authors state that cultivation strategy in general is learning-driven. (Grisot et al., 2014). To conclude, considering earlier reflections on similarities between II's and platforms, the cultivation strategy seems to be an effective theoretical lens for studying platform growth stages as well.

2.2.3 Platform Strategy

As described in the beginning of this chapter, platforms have been researched from the perspectives of economics-, strategy- and technology management (Cusumano, 2010). In this chapter, relevant Platform Strategy research is described. Compared to key findings of Platform Economics and Information Infrastructure, which describe the initiation and growth of a platform, the Platform Strategy literature contributes to the analysis of the later stages of Sharing Platform evolution. The purpose of discussing the Platform Strategy literature is to build an understanding of how a platform business is sustained in the long term after its successful initiation and augmentation. In this chapter, the general strategic challenges of platforms are first described, followed by both internal- and external views to Platform Strategy.

Earlier research is rather unified on the most important strategic challenges platforms face during their design, growth and lifespan. Previous studies have found common ground on fundamental aspects for building a platform business. (Cusumano, 2010). In his vast research called “*Evolution of platform thinking*”, Cusumano (2010) points out that technical compatibility, standards, network effects, switching costs and bundling are examples of important aspects on platforms. It is noteworthy to mention that some of the key terms in Platform Strategy are familiar from Platform Economics covered in the previous chapter. In

this chapter, most relevant Platform Strategy issues are described to build a comprehensive framework of Sharing Platform growth strategies later on.

To provide an overall picture of strategic challenges for platforms, earlier research provides a few frameworks. According to Hagiu (2014), multi-sided platforms (MSP's) need to tackle four fundamental decisions from the beginning. Firstly, platforms need to decide how many sides to bring on board (Hagiu, 2014). As discussed earlier regarding Platform Economics, this is an important decision since it defines the business potential of the venture, restricted by dynamics of the industry it operates in (Rysman, 2009, Hagiu, 2014). Secondly, Hagiu (2014) points out that design of platform functionalities is another important factor. This means the basic functionalities that a platform includes, with the goal of providing value for platform users in terms of for example lower search costs, transaction costs or product development costs (Hagiu, 2014). Third, the author states that pricing for each platform side is fundamentally important for its growth and business sustainability. The issue of pricing is highlighted in several other studies as well (Eisenmann et al., 2006). Finally, Hagiu (2014) points out the fourth decision point for MSP's: internal governance rules of the platform. Other research supports this fact (Eisenmann et al., 2006), and even highlights governance and regulation of MSP sides as the most important factor of platform success (Boudreau and Hagiu, 2008). These decisions aim to overcome three major challenges platforms face: the “chicken & egg” problem, the sheer complexity of running an MSP and resistance from stakeholder groups that might not want to become a part of a new, powerful MSP (Hagiu, 2014).

Another description for Platform Strategy is written by Eisenmann et al. (2006), who have a rather similar list of important strategic actions for platforms compared to Hagiu (2014). Eisenmann et al. (2006) consider pricing of different platform sides as the most important aspect of strategic decisions of platforms. The authors state that this is what makes or breaks the platform business. Secondly, Eisenmann et al. (2006) highlight the importance of platforms being able to compete with “winner-takes-all” market dynamics. These dynamics are familiar to many platform industries and derive from ever strengthening network effects and thus higher margins captured by a strong player in an industry (Eisenmann et al., 2006; Hagiu, 2014). Finally, the authors state that platforms need to be able to avoid “envelopment”, or in other words, direct competition from larger industry competitors (Eisenmann et al., 2006).

A third relevant overview on Platform Strategy is provided in the book written by McAfee and Brynjolfsson (2017), where they list success factors for popular platforms. They list five critical issues which successful platforms usually get right from the beginning. First,

platforms that manage to establish a business are usually among the first companies to enter a market or the first ones to apply a platform business model in it (McAfee and Brynjolfsson, 2017). However, the importance of so called “first mover advantage” has been also challenged in earlier platform literature, as Eisenmann et al. (2006) state that being first in a market and growing quickly are not necessarily the only way to build a successful platform business. Secondly, McAfee and Brynjolfsson (2017) state the importance of platforms utilizing the economics of complementary products in their offering. As discussed in the Platform Economics -chapter, this creates self-reinforcing network effects which are vital to growth. Third habit of successful platforms is the fact that they usually open up compatibility for a broad range of different contributors (McAfee and Brynjolfsson, 2017). This could be third party developers or other platforms for example (Boudreau and Hagiu, 2008; Rysman, 2009; McAfee and Brynjolfsson, 2017). Fourth, even though well-managed platforms maintain openness, they still carefully curate participants and interactions (McAfee and Brynjolfsson, 2017). This is similar to the platform governance and regulation highlighted earlier (Boudreau and Hagiu, 2008; Hagiu, 2014). Finally, McAfee and Brynjolfsson (2017) bring up the importance of user experience and user interface quality for platforms – an operative issue that platforms seem to approach with strategic intent.

After reviewing the overall frameworks for Platform Strategy, next the specific issues around it with are described with more care. The most relevant issues in Platform Strategy are identified and discussed in the following order: first elaborating on the strategic issues that are internal to a platform company, and then describing the issues that are external to a platform.

Internal Platform Strategy issues

In this chapter, platform-strategic issues that are internal to platforms are further explained. The topics include *number of platform sides* (Eisenmann et al., 2006; Hagiu, 2014; Van Alstyne et al., 2016), *openness* (Rysman, 2009), *design of functionalities* (Boudreau and Hagiu, 2008; Hagiu, 2014), *pricing* (Eisenmann et al., 2006; Hagiu, 2014), *regulation* (Boudreau and Hagiu, 2008), *organisational- and market mechanisms* (Constantiou et al., 2017) and *network effects* (Eisenmann et al., 2006; Van Alstyne et al., 2016). After this section, external issues to Platform Strategy will be discussed.

One of the first strategic decisions platforms make is on number of sides to include in the platform sphere (Hagiu, 2014; Van Alstyne et al., 2016). On a very basic theoretical level, platform sides, or ecosystem players include owners, providers, producers and consumers

according to the sides role in the platform (Van Alstyne et al., 2016). According to Hagiu (2014), the question of how many sides to involve in a platform is a trade-off between stronger positive network effects and more diversified revenue sources in the case of multiple sides, but increased complexity, possible conflicts of interest between the sides and increased costs of managing multiple sides of a platform. In other words, the benefits of having a smaller number of sides would be more economical and less complex. Moreover, Hagiu (2014) states that this might be beneficial for platforms in early stages, battling with the “chicken & egg” problem. However, in some cases the decision on including sides on a platform is simple – they are defined by natural industry dynamics and business logic of the industry and the ecosystem that surrounds it (Rysman, 2009; Hagiu, 2014; Van Alstyne et al., 2016). As the number of sides a platform wants to include in its sphere is not usually locked after initiating the platform, it can also take more sides on board later on or lose some sides if it needs to change its business model for a competitive reason or seek growth in some new area (Eisenmann et al., 2006; Cusumano, 2010; Hagiu, 2014). What is more, a platform might lose some of its freedom and space to innovate on new features if it ties itself down with too many sides from the beginning (Hagiu, 2014). To conclude, it seems that earlier research is rather unified with a strategy where a platform starts with only a few sides that are crucial for the ecosystem business logic, tries to build a user base on those sides and gradually adds possible new sides as strategic moves to take on a new industry, compete with other platforms and build more revenue streams.

The decision of how many sides to include in a platform is linked with a decision on openness of a platform (Rysman, 2009; Cusumano, 2010; Hagiu, 2014). As Cusumano (2010) states, industry platforms are of less value without their “complementors”. Complementors are third parties, outside developers, or other platform companies who create something of value for the platform ecosystem (Cusumano, 2010, Hagiu, 2014), or complementary products for a platform (MacAfee and Brynjolfsson, 2017). The extent to which these complementors can join in a certain platform, depends on the openness of a platform (Rysman, 2009; Cusumano, 2010; Hagiu, 2014). By definition, a platform can have an open architecture and open governance (Alstyne et al., 2016). Open architecture means how compatible its interfaces, code base or other technical and structural features are for complementors to use for their own purposes, whereas open governance means that third parties can engage in the regulation of interactions inside a platform (Rysman, 2009, Alstyne et al., 2016). Because technical compatibility can create significant value for multi-sided platforms, their managers often put incentives in place for complementors to join and develop complementary elements around the platform (Cusumano, 2010). The benefits are described

as spillover effects, network externalities or positive feedback loops, depending on the definition (Cusumano and Gawer, 2002; Van Alstyne et al., 2016). In practice, the incentives can be low licensing fees, subsidies or even organised collaboration programs with third parties (Cusumano, 2010). In a big picture, engaging third parties to develop a platform complements are usually a strategic intent to push the whole ecosystem or industry forward in order to maximize the good for the whole, not only for the platform (Cusumano and Gawer, 2002; Van Alstyne et al., 2016). A common strategy for platform openness is called the “open but not open” -strategy, which means that a platform keeps the most vital core technology only for itself and makes all its interfaces easily accessible (Cusumano, 2010).

Other fundamental decision for platforms is the design of platform functionalities. A platform business aims to create value for its users by for example reducing costs of transaction, cost of search, or costs of product development in an industry. (Boudreau and Hagiu, 2008; Hagiu, 2014). The platform should design its functionalities and processes to serve these values for its users. If cost of building them is less than the potential value, the platform operators should develop these functionalities for the users. Sometimes the interests of different sides of the platform vary, and thus it is hard to make all functionalities equally beneficial for all. (Hagiu, 2014). Hagiu (2014) stresses the importance of long-term thinking in these kinds of decisions, instead of short-term revenues. Moreover, a platform should prioritise the user sides which create long-term value for the platform, not the ones that possibly account for the largest part of current revenue (Hagiu, 2014). This argument makes sense, as other studies highlight the fact that successful platforms do not optimize value for the company itself but for the whole ecosystem around it (Van Alstyne et al., 2016). Van Alstyne et al. (2016) also state that successful platforms focus on designing functionalities for only a few critical interactions within the platform users first. If the first functionalities are successful, the platform can expand to serving other user needs and markets (Van Alstyne et al., 2016).

As discussed in the Platform Economics chapter earlier, one of the most important decisions a platform makes is pricing (Hagiu, 2014; Eisenmann et al., 2006). From a business-strategic perspective, pricing is very dependent on market structure of multiple competing platforms, where many different dynamics apply (Evans, 2003). It is common for platforms to subsidise one side with cheaper prices and have higher prices on another side – both in terms of absolute price and margins (Evans, 2003). This is called the “divide-and-conquer” pricing strategy (Caillaud and Jullien, 2003). It is used by platforms to for example overcome the “chicken & egg” problem, getting important users on board, or to compete with other platforms (Evans, 2003; Hagiu, 2014; Eisenmann et al., 2006). Earlier research

provides two good frameworks for platforms to base their decision making on: one by Hagiu (2014) and the other by Eisenmann et al. (2006). Hagiu (2014) breaks down the decision into three elements. Firstly, a platform should price more on a side that has relatively lower price elasticity of demand. Therefore, this side would be less sensitive to a higher cost incurred from using the platform and would not leave or switch to another platform that easily. Secondly, if the different sides of a platform do not exchange monetary fees with each other, the platform should put a higher cost on the side that gains more benefit from interacting with the other sides. The logic here is that a platform does not want to incur costs of participation to its most valuable user side that other sides are chasing. Third, if there are transactions between the sides, then a platform should put a higher price on the side that gains more monetary value from the others. This way, the platform would be fairer and more equal for its participants in terms of economics. (Hagiu, 2014). A similar overall logic applies in the decision criteria created by Eisenmann et al. (2006): Firstly, a platform should put a lower price, or subsidise, the sides that are more sensitive to price or quality. Secondly, the platform needs to get the marquee customers onboard on either or all sides of the platform – this happens through lower prices or incentives to join.

Once a platform is up and running, it is increasingly important to curate and regulate user interactions facilitated through a platform. Adding on Eisenmann et al. (2006), who emphasize the importance of pricing for Platform Strategy, Boudreau and Hagiu (2008) state that pricing alone is not enough to succeed, as regulating platform-facilitated interactions is the most important aspect of Platform Strategy. The importance of regulating and curating platform users has been identified in many earlier platform -related studies (Eisenmann et al., 2006; Hagiu, 2014; Alstynne et al., 2016; Constantiou et al., 2017). In their study, Boudreau and Hagiu (2008) point out different legal, technological and informational aspects that platforms use to regulate its participants. In practice, regulative actions could be for example curating who can access the platform, curating content inside the platform, restricting or encouraging interactions between some platform users, or educating users. These goals would be achieved through suitable information design, software architectural design or suitable financial incentives put on the users. The define a framework for platform regulation, according to which the strategic management of a platform is more complex than earlier studies illustrate, and where platform regulation is placed at the core of a platform’s business model. They suggest that platforms should prioritise maximizing the value created for the entire ecosystem over maximizing the value created for the company itself. Maximizing the value for an ecosystem requires active management of possible problems between the platform participants, including asymmetries of information, complexity, uncertainty and

negative network effects. Based on the framework, if these negative forces are not managed properly, platforms experience a “market failure”. (Boudreau and Hagiu 2008). In a later study, Hagiu (2014) breaks down platform governance into two aspects: firstly, the rules on who can access a platform and secondly the rules for interactions inside the platform. Through these governance rules, platform managers make constant trade-offs between quantity and quality, where the biggest risk lies in “crowding out” quality due to increased quantity. This could lead into “lemons market failure” which is caused by asymmetries of information between the buyer and seller. (Hagiu, 2014). One could say that cultivating interaction between groups of agents by managing these kinds of negative phenomena is, in fact, the ultimate mission of a platform (Boudreau and Hagiu, 2008; Rysman, 2009; Hagiu, 2014). In the context of the thesis, it is important to note that the needs for platform regulation change over time as platforms evolve. Thus, we could expect seeing successful platforms evolve not only in terms of business and technology but as regulators as their user base grows. (Boudreau and Hagiu, 2008).

The concept of platform regulation (Boudreau and Hagiu, 2008) is somewhat similar to the organisational and market mechanisms (Constantiou et al., 2017) described in the review of Sharing Economy literature. These mechanisms are what distinguish Sharing Platforms from other platforms, and are very typical for them (Constantiou et al., 2017). Especially the organisational mechanisms, meaning the level of control over the platform participants, are similar to Boudreau and Hagiu’s (2008) definition of legal, technological and informational instruments of platform regulation. It seems to be that the market coordination mechanisms which mean the level of competition between one side of platform participants (Constantiou et al., 2017), are something new that Sharing Platforms have created compared to traditional platforms. According to Constantiou et al. (2017), it is fundamentally important for platform managers to understand the strategic intent of the platform and align organisational and market mechanisms to implement that intent purposefully.

The concept of network effects has been thoroughly described in the Platform Economics chapter. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy to elaborate on the strategic importance of Platform Economics. Network effects are the driving force of the Internet economy as a whole and are a central element in Platform Strategy. Although network effects have been the greatest growth driver for small, innovative start-ups like Uber or Airbnb, the effects tend to favor bigger platforms. (Van Alstyne et al., 2016). As network effects become stronger along with more and more users joining a platform, they create strong barriers for entry in an industry (Eisenmann et al., 2006; Hagiu, 2014; Van Alstyne et al., 2016). This makes

entering an industry hard for new players. The classic “chicken & egg” problem makes it even harder to enter a market but can also make it challenging for incumbents to create such a competitive edge (Hagiu, 2014). As platforms grow through network effects, the value of a platform rises, and thus more new users are likely to join. As the value of the platform grows, it gains more market power and thus can increase prices on each of its sides. More market power and higher prices increase margins of the platform, which can be used in increased investment in research and development, marketing or other various ways to strategically outcompete other platforms. This logic can ultimately lead to market domination, and winner-takes-all market situation. (Eisenmann et al., 2006; Cusumano, 2010; Hagiu, 2014; Van Alstyne et al. (2016).

External Platform Strategy issues

After reviewing the Platform Strategy issues that are internal to a platform, this chapter will elaborate on strategic issues that are external to platforms. These issues include *market entry* (Evans, 2003; Eisenmann et al., 2006; McAfee and Brynjolfsson, 2017), *winner-takes-all competition* (Evans, 2003; Eisenmann et al., 2006; Rysman, 2009; Cusumano, 2010; Cennamo and Santalo, 2013; Hagiu, 2014; Van Alstyne et al., 2016) and *competition between platforms* (Evans, 2003; Eisenmann et al., 2006; Gawer and Cusumano, 2008; Hagel et al., 2008; Rysman, 2009).

When it comes to entering a new market, or starting a platform company from the scratch, previous Platform Strategy studies do not have unified findings. McAfee and Brynjolfsson (2017) describe early entrance in a market as one of the five success factors of platforms in general and present the examples of Uber and Airbnb to illustrate this. Other literature acknowledges the impact of early entrance as well but does not seem to highlight it as a critical step to success (Evans, 2003; Eisenmann et al., 2006). Instead, Eisenmann et al. (2006) state that early entrance is not always decisive. According to the authors, in markets that mature at a slower pace, late movers could have the advantage through various reasons. For example, later movers can learn from early movers positioning errors or develop on early movers’ technological mistakes, and thus be more successful in market entry. Based on research by Evans (2003) successful platforms in the past have been careful about making big investments into new platform markets early on. Instead of going all-in for a new market, platforms have entered a new market by building one interaction link between two user groups (for example, buyer-seller interaction) first, testing it, developing it and gradually validating its potential. The goal of gradual market entry is to learn right technology and

operating infrastructure before investing into them. (Evans, 2003). Evans (2003) gives examples of this kind of an approach, including Microsoft, eBay and Yahoo.

Although Evans (2003) and Eisenmann et al. (2006) seem to agree on the fact that getting it right with a gradual market entry seems to be a better way than early entrance, the authors disagree on how to scale a platform after the market entry. Evans (2003) found no evidence nor good examples on platforms that would have been successful after an entrance followed by aggressive growth to market-leader position. For example, Apple personal computers or Diners Club payment cards were not the market leader for a long time after their launch, but ultimately won over the market (Evans, 2003). On the contrary, Eisenmann et al. (2006) argue that for both early and late entrants, aggressive growth after entrance is a crucial factor in platform success. Moreover, Eisenmann et al. (2006) state that it is important for platforms to gather a critical mass of users as quickly as possible to gain control of a market. In order to scale the platform successfully, a platform must have sufficient financial backing in place, and enough talent to meet the growing amount of customer-facing tasks (Eisenmann et al., 2006).

To conclude on relevant points from the literature, it is important to find the right operational and technological infrastructure by building one interaction at a time through gradual development before making big investments (Evans, 2003). After finding the right mix of technology, operations and users, it is fundamental to secure sufficient talent and funding for scaling the platform (Eisenmann et al., 2006). Even if you're one of the first or latest to enter a market, a platform needs to get it right with correct mix of dynamics and resources (Evans, 2003; Eisenmann et al., 2006; McAfee and Brynjolfsson, 2017).

After a successful market entry, network effects have a central role in Platform Strategy. This is because the effects increase platform margins and can thus enable one or few platforms to dominate a market. (Eisenmann et al., 2006). This phenomenon is called a “winner-takes-all” market in Platform Strategy literature and it has been studied extensively (Evans, 2003; Eisenmann et al., 2006; Rysman, 2009; Cusumano, 2010; Cennamo and Santalo, 2013; Hagiu, 2014; Van Alstyne et al., 2016). According to Eisenmann et al. (2006) there are some characteristics in platform markets that are likely to end up being dominated by a few players. First, if costs of multi-homing into several platforms is high for at least one user side, users are more likely to select only one platform to be used actively. Second, if the side which have high multi-homing costs also experience strong network effects originated from the platform, they are more likely to lock-in as users as they receive more and more value from this single platform. (Eisenmann et al., 2006). The joint effect of multi-homing, switching costs and network effects is also called user “lock in” (Farrell and Klemperer,

2007). Third, if none of the sides of the platform have strong preferences for special features of some different platforms, they most likely end up using the one leading platform, since competing platforms cannot differentiate (Eisenmann et al., 2006). Rysman (2009) also studied the dynamics of platform markets. He pointed out three factors that make “tipping” more likely, which means markets becoming winner-takes-all markets or to fail completely. The opposite of tipping is when markets develop into a set of co-existing platforms. Firstly, if standards and platforms can differentiate from each other effectively, it is more likely for a market to have multiple platforms. Secondly, if using multiple platforms is easily accessible for users, the same outcome is more likely. Third, if providers of complementary offerings in an open platform can effectively differentiate themselves in the eyes of users, tipping is less likely. If they would not be able to differentiate through offering a complementary for one platform, they would opt for offering the same complementary to many platforms instead. (Rysman, 2009). Cusumano (2010) adds up on Rysman’s (2009) points by concluding that winner-takes-all market situation is less likely if platforms are able to clearly differentiate from each other, and if consumers have freedom of access to each of them.

With these criteria in mind, platform managers should be able to predict an outcome for their own market, and make decisions whether or not to compete for the leading position – in other words, make a “bet-the-company decision” (Eisenmann et al., 2006). In order to win over market domination, or a monopoly status, platforms need to have strong existing relationships with users to begin with, strong financial position and a reputation for winning such battles (Eisenmann et al., 2006). In addition, cost leadership or differentiation advantages are crucial in winning over markets (Eisenmann et al., 2006).

It is important to note that not all markets become dominated by one single player. Evans (2003) analysed different platform market structures and proposes three alternative archetypes. According to the author, a market can include several coincident platforms that offer substitutable offerings on the same side of users. An example of such a market would be payment cards, or computer operating systems. An alternative is a structure where there are several intersecting platforms. That means, a number of multi-sided platforms that offer substitutable offerings on some sides but not on all of the sides. An example of this would be the early internet browser offerings which were a part of operating system- and internet portal platforms. The third category of platform market structures is a monopoly platform, where one platform dominates and does not have any competition on any of its sides. It is very hard to give a recent example of this, but Evans (2003) suggests that yellow pages of newspapers have been a close example of a monopoly platform in some geographic areas. According to Evans (2003), multi-homing of users into several platforms has a clear effect on pricing

strategies of platforms but the exact dynamics have not been empirically tested nor found. (Evans, 2003).

The literature describes several competitive strategies for a situation where the market would be shared between multiple MSP's. Many of the competitive aspects have been illustrated earlier during this chapter, in the part discussing internal issues to Platform Strategy. However, it is noteworthy to elaborate on studies that have taken a more holistic approach on competition between platforms, including Evans (2003), Eisenmann et al. (2006), Gawer and Cusumano (2008), Hagel et al. (2008) and Rysman (2009).

As a result of an empirical study on platform companies, Evans (2003) lists four business models that work as competitive instruments for multi-sided platforms. According to the study, platforms compete through differential pricing in order to get “both sides on board” in the beginning and tweak pricing structures after the market entry to keep all sides on board. According to Evans (2003) pricing and differentiation are direct instruments to manage multi-homing which is a fundamental competitive factor for MSP's (Eisenmann et al., 2006; Farrell and Klemperer, 2007; Hagiu, 2014). Finally, Evans (2003) states that platforms compete in market entry, as successful ones start with a small but scalable business plan. With a slightly different point of view, Rysman (2009) lists five basic competitive acts for platforms: openness, pricing, marketing, innovation and quality. Of these factors, marketing, innovation and quality are most generic, but openness and pricing are the most fundamental ways to compete (Rysman, 2009). With the studies of Evans (2003) and Rysman (2009) in mind, pricing seems to be a fundamental competitive instrument.

In a market where multiple competing platforms exist, smaller players face a threat from larger or more resourceful players operating in adjacent industries. These larger players can potentially enter the smaller platforms market by quickly creating a similar offering or through acquisitions of smaller players in the market – this strategy is called “envelopment” (Eisenmann et al., 2006) or “tipping strategy” (Gawer and Cusumano, 2008). Based on Eisenmann et al. (2006), the envelopment strategy is possible because of two major factors. Firstly, it is very common for platforms to have overlapping user groups, even though they did not focus on exactly same application or even industry. The overlapping nature of user groups is noted in earlier studies on platform market structures as well (Evans, 2003; Armstrong, 2006). According to Eisenmann et al. (2006) more resourceful players can conquer another platforms network by offering a similar service inside a larger bundle of services, even with a lower price. The other factor is the rapid development of technology in network markets, which lowers barriers of entry between adjacent markets (Eisenmann et al., 2006).

Although it is extremely hard to resist an envelopment strategy posed by a larger, resourceful player, Eisenmann et al. (2006) identify three strategies for smaller players to overcome such a move. Most importantly, when facing potential envelopment, smaller players can alter their business models mainly through switching their main revenue sources. For example, a platform can change the side it subsidises in pricing or create a new offering. Secondly, smaller players can find alliances and partnerships with other larger players. This move could help building new switching costs to protect the user base or alternatively lower costs and offer more subsidies to the most valuable sides of the platform (Eisenmann et al., 2006). The importance of identifying possible enemies and alliances has been noted in even the earliest platform studies (Shapiro and Varian, 1999). Finally, Eisenmann et al. (2006) point out that smaller players can take legal actions towards larger players and conform to antitrust law to hinder or stop the envelopment process.

On the contrary to Eisenmann et al. (2006) study, Gawer and Cusumano (2008) take the perspective of a larger player in a similar position to conduct a strategy they call tipping. In other words, this strategy is an act to bring a market closer to the larger player's platform. According to Gawer and Cusumano (2008), implementing a tipping strategy requires actions in both business and technological aspects of the company. For example, a company pursuing such a strategy should imitate and bundle together technical aspects of the target market, and at the same time compelling, unique extra features. On the business side of things, a platform should focus on offering better incentives for complementors, better subsidies on the most important user groups and create alliances with other players possibly interested in the same market. An alternative strategy for platforms who do not want to tip in or envelop is called “coring”. In this strategy, a larger platform creates a new offering from the scratch. (Gawer and Cusumano, 2008).

Another perspective on Platform Strategy is provided by Hagel et al. (2008). Their aspect on Platform Strategy includes two options quite similar to Gawer and Cusumano's (2008) alternatives. The first strategy is called “shaping”, where a company aims to boldly shape the rules of a market by introducing new technological standards, platforms and operating principles (Hagel et al., 2008). A company needs to mobilize an entire ecosystem of players around this ambitious act, and thus includes partnership building. On the other hand, a platform company can be a follower to another company conducting a successful shaping strategy and to develop business and technical infrastructure compatible to the shaper's rules. (Hagel et al., 2008). More often than not, every platform is a part of such a shaping strategy or an intent to do so – acknowledging this, and the rules they play by, is important for even the smallest platform entrants (Hagel et al., 2008). In the context of this

thesis, the shaping strategy provides a lens to see over the big picture of platform competition and a vision for the ultimate end game of platforms.

2.3 Theoretical framework

In this chapter a synthesis of the literature review is provided by highlighting the most relevant theories regarding evolution of Sharing Platform's from a start-up, to an established business and finally to long-term business sustainability. A synthesis of relevant theories of evolutionary phases of Sharing Economy Platforms is created, based on the literature from four research areas: Sharing Economy, Platform Economics, Information Infrastructure theory and Platform Strategy. Based on the literature synthesis, a generalized theoretical framework for analyzing growth patterns of Sharing Platforms is created. The theoretical framework is used as a structure for an empirical analysis conducted on the two case companies, Lyft and TaskRabbit.

In their study Constantiou et al. (2016) built a framework based on literature from the fields of Platform Economics and Information Infrastructure theory. Their framework showcases two steps for evolution of Sharing Platforms: 1. *creating a network of users* and 2. *augmenting the platform*. This study aims to build on the previous framework by introducing a third step to the evolutionary process, 3. *sustaining the platform business*, by seeking knowledge from a broader set of literature. The extended framework is used as a structure for analyzing selected case companies.

There are two main reasons why this approach is relevant. Firstly, the topic of Sharing Economy is more mature at the moment of this study compared to the time Constantiou et al. (2016) conducted their study, as the platforms and industry have evolved. Thus, it makes sense to shed light especially on the later phases of platform development. Secondly, due to the increased maturity of the field, there is now more data and examples available on existing Sharing Platforms. This makes these platforms even more interesting to study and enables validation of previous theoretical findings.

2.3.1 Synthesis of theories for evolution of Sharing Platforms

Following on Constantiou et al. (2016) footsteps, three distinct steps in evolution of Sharing Platforms are identified. Based on the literature review, the identified three steps in the evolution of Sharing Platforms are: 1. *creating a network of users*, 2. *augmenting the platform* and 3. *sustaining the platform business*. To construct these steps, pieces of earlier

research literature that describe each step of platform evolution are identified. What is notable about this study is that earlier research is used to identify a third step which describes the later stages of a Sharing Platform business. *Appendix A: Sharing Platform Evolution – relevant theories* illustrate the most important findings in the literature that describe each step along the evolution.

The rationale for analyzing Sharing Platform growth from an evolutionary perspective stems from earlier research on the subject conducted in a similar manner. In addition to Constantiou et al. (2016), Gansky (2012) provides a theory for life cycles of “mesh businesses”. Compared to the three steps introduced by Constantiou et al. (2016), Gansky (2012) illustrates four distinct steps for growth of Sharing Platforms: infancy, adolescence, adulthood and maturity. Each of the steps are described with different characteristics. Interestingly, earlier studies on evolution of digital platforms in general have taken place in a similar format. For example, studies of developments dynamics of Apple’s iOS ecosystem (Eaton et al., 2012; 2015) and the evolution of cloud computing infrastructures in banking industry (Eaton and Hanseth, 2014) have been successfully conducted by analyzing platform evolution as a narrative.

Findings from the chosen fields of literature provide further reasoning for perceiving the evolution of Sharing Platforms in separate steps. The theory of Information Infrastructures states that complex information systems like platforms evolve and change gradually as their user base grows (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010). Theory of Platform Economics supports the evolutionary perspective, as the regulation (Bourdeau and Hagiu, 2008), pricing (Evans, 2003; Rysman, 2009) and openness for complementors (Rysman, 2009) has been found to change as platform evolves through gaining more users and by developing new functionalities.

The decision to break down the evolution of Sharing Platforms into several steps is based on Constantiou et al. (2016) view of two steps in the growth of Airbnb: *creating a network of users* and *augmenting the platform*. Earlier research provides validation for the two steps. For example, some theories clearly fall into the first step as they explaining the initial investments needed to start a platform business (Shapiro and Varian, 1999; Van Alstyne et al., 2016) and steps of acquiring first users for a platform (Evans 2003, 2009; Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010), whereas some describe market entry strategies (Evans, 2003; Eisenmann et al., 2006) and early competitive positioning compared to market incumbents (Botsman, 2014). Examples of support for the second phase include theories of growing an existing user base through network effects (Shapiro and Varian, 1999; Rysman 2009; Hagiu et al., 2014), balancing the effort to fulfill needs of new and existing users (Hanseth and

Lyytinen, 2010), adjusting platform regulation according to its development (Rochet and Tirole, 2003; Boudreau and Hagiu, 2008) and introducing new user groups for the platform after initial success with fewer user sides (Evans, 2003; Hagiu, 2014).

However, findings from earlier research illustrate a clear need for a third step that would describe evolution beyond the initial two steps, *creating a network of users* and *augmenting the platform*. The framework by Constantiou et al. (2016) lacks explanations for dynamics of introducing new sides for the platform and openness to complementary innovation after initial success (Evans, 2003; Eisenmann et al., 2006; Hagiu, 2006; Rysman, 2009), competition between established platforms (Evans, 2003; Eisenmann et al., 2006, Rysman, 2009) as well as an explanation for long-term competitive positioning of Sharing Platforms in their respected markets (Evans, 2003; Eisenmann et al., 2006; Rysman, 2009; Cennamo and Santalo, 2013). In other words, Constantiou et al. (2016) successfully discuss the interactions between a Sharing Platform and its users and the effects of introducing incremental and value-added services for users, but do not fully take into account the effect of openness to complementors of Sharing Platforms nor competitive platforms. With this study, the aim is to validate and extend the theory of evolution of Sharing Platforms by introducing a third step.

Thus, the aforementioned findings are used to create a comprehensive research literature overview that describes the growth of Sharing Platforms in three evolutionary steps: *creating a network of users*, *augmenting the platform* and *sustaining the platform business*. The synthesis of this phenomenon is first of its kind – previous studies on Sharing Economy Platforms have not produced an overview on Sharing Platform evolution this comprehensive, one that would capture the growth of Sharing Platforms all the way from how they are started, to their long-term sustainability.

In terms of theoretical ideas or complete theories found from the literature, Table 2 classifies the contribution from each research avenue. The three (3) most relevant Sharing Economy theories contributed on first two steps, and two (2) of them also for the third –phase of evolution. The Platform Economics research literature provided ten (10) important theories for the first phase, six (6) for the second phase and two (2) for the final phase. From Information Infrastructure theory, one (1) relevant finding for the first phase and two (2) for the second phase are found. Platform Strategy literature proved to be the richest literature stream for analysing the last phase of Sharing Platform evolution, as it contributed two (2) theories for the first phase, four (4) for the second phase and seven (7) important theoretical links to the third phase. Below you can find an overview on the literature review findings, and their contributions on the theoretical background of the thesis.

Table 2: Overview of reviewed literature areas

	Creating a network of users	Augmenting the platform	Sustaining the platform business
Sharing Economy	3	3	2
Platform Economics	10	6	2
Information Infrastructure	1	2	0
Platform Strategy	2	4	7
Total	16	15	11

For the purposes of this study it is important to describe findings of the literature review in the light of three identified stages of development for Sharing Platforms. Next, each of the stages are defined by shortly showcasing matching theoretical findings from the literature. These theories form a theoretical base and rationale for each of the steps.

The first evolution step, creating a network of users of a Sharing Platform (Constantiou et al., 2016) is also described by Gansky (2012) as “infancy”. The biggest competitive advantage that a successful Sharing Platform company can play out against market incumbents is the market and organisational coordination mechanism (Constantiou et al., 2016) that enables them to build a fluid, cost efficient offering for markets that are struggling with lack of redundancy, broken trust, limited access, waste of resources or complexity (Botsman, 2014). Gansky (2012) adds that “mesh companies” need to build trust with a selected user community by trials, subsidised products and exceptional customer service compared to incumbents. Earlier literature in Platform Strategy is not unified on a correct market entry strategy in sequence with competitors. While McAfee and Brynjolfsson (2017) highlight the importance of early mover advantage, other authors deny its importance (Evans, 2003; Eisenmann et al., 2006). Entering a market after competitors might as well prove a successful strategy, as later movers can learn from technical and business-strategic mistakes made by the early entrants (Eisenmann et al., 2006). Successful new starts in Sharing Economy do not usually require a significant initial investment, but instead utilize strong demand side economies of scale, in other words network effects, to compete against incumbents (Shapiro and Varian, 1999; Hagiu, 2014; Van Alstyne et al., 2016; McAfee and Brynjolfsson, 2017). Successful platforms start by testing the market by serving only the most critical user sides of the platform in the beginning and possibly bring more sides on board during later phases of platform evolution (Evans, 2003; Rysman, 2009; Hagiu, 2014). The pricing of each side is designed to support user growth in a sustainable way, taking the long-term value of the platform, and cross-side network effects into account (Hagiu, 2014).

According to the literature, good platforms enhance platform neutrality – in other words the ease of transactions, high trust and smooth interaction between users (Rochet and Tirole, 2003). The biggest challenge platforms face in early days is the “chicken & egg” problem (Evans, 2003, 2009; Rysman, 2009; Constantiou et al., 2016). Successful platforms overcome this problem by applying different strategies for igniting (Evans, 2009) and by enabling smooth product diffusion through selected user groups (Rochet and Tirole, 2003; Evans, 2009). Word of mouth (Shim and Bliemel, 2018) and targeted marketing (Hu, 2018) are some examples that the literature illustrates as proven strategies for product diffusion. When ignited, it is crucial for a platform to keep a healthy balance in serving different needs of its early users that helped develop the platform in the first place, and the new users joining in bigger numbers. This dilemma is called the bootstrap problem, and it can be tackled by following a design strategy for Information Infrastructures, described by Hanseth and Lyytinen (2010).

Augmenting of a Sharing Platform, or “adolescence” (Gansky, 2012), seems to be at least as tricky as their creating a network of initial users. The same key competitive fundamental applies: Market and organisational coordination mechanisms (Constantiou et al., 2016) and competitive edge versus incumbents (Botsman, 2014). As number of users grow in the platform, it is extremely important to maintain platform neutrality (Rochet and Tirole, 2003), or the ease of interaction inside the platform, to create even stronger network effects (Shapiro and Varian, 1999). Based on the literature it is clear that in the growth phase, network effects will literally make or break the platform when competing with other possible platforms in the same market (Eisemann et al., 2006; Rysman, 2009; Hagiu, 2014). In order to increase the positive effect of new joining users, pricing strategies (Eisemann et al., 2006; Rysman, 2009; Hagiu, 2014), decisions on possible new sides for the platform (Evans, 2003; Rysman, 2009; Hagiu, 2014) and openness of the platform for outside developers (Rysman, 2009) come into play. Growing platform businesses protect their user base by leveraging switching costs, homing costs and user lock-in (Eisemann et al., 2006; Farrel and Klemperer, 2007). When number of users in a platform start to grow, there is a need to put more focus on platform regulation (Boudreau and Hagiu, 2008), or in other words the management of fair, safe and reliable interactions inside it. In terms of technical infrastructure and design of functionalities, platforms in their growth phase need for more flexibility as new, unforeseen user needs arise. This is called the adaptability problem (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010). Leading platforms have proven to adopt a cultivation strategy which means a rigorous step-by-step evaluation and design of new features based on feedback from user base (Grisot et al., 2014). In contrast to the first phase, earlier research does not reveal a unified view on

successful strategies in the second phase of a Sharing Platform evolution, since there are drastically more variables. However, strategies have been laid out in studies by Evans (2003, 2009) and Rysman (2009). Evans (2003) points out that all platforms should aim to get all user sides on board with differential pricing and keep them on board by tweaking the pricing model as the platform grows. Rysman (2009) lists five key competitive factors of platforms: openness, pricing, marketing, innovation and quality, where the first two are most fundamental.

In the final phase, sustaining a platform business, the same complex economical and technical dynamics do apply than in earlier phases. Gansky (2012) calls this phase as the “adulthood” and “full maturity” of a Sharing Platform. However, the aim of this thesis is to take a high-level strategic view on the later phases of Sharing Platforms. Therefore, most of the theoretical contribution for the last phase of the framework draws mostly from Platform Strategy literature, including theories about market structures, competitive dynamics and strategic key decisions for Sharing Platforms. Research literature on Platform Strategy agrees that network effects are the key element of competition among platforms, because increasing network effects lead to a situation where one or few players dominate a specific ecosystem or market – this phenomenon is also called as winner-takes-all market dynamic, or market tipping (Evans, 2003; Eisenmann et al., 2006; Rysman, 2009; Cusumano, 2010; Hagiu, 2014; Van Alstyne et al., 2016). This is the end goal of most platform industries, but the market can also “tip” into other directions: a group of co-existing platforms or market failure (Rysman, 2009). In addition to creating network effects, the literature highlights that platforms need to facilitate interactions between its user sides in a way that does not cause “market failure”. As the user amounts and needs evolve, platform has to evolve its internal regulation as well (Boudreau and Hagiu, 2008), including its organisational and market mechanisms (Constantiou et al., 2017).

Winner-takes-all market dynamics are dependent on costs of multi-homing, costs of switching, and intensity of network effects per user, since the joint effect of these three phenomena causes user lock-in on the winning platforms (Farrel and Klemperer, 2007). If multi-homing and switching -costs are high, the market is more prone to be dominated by one platform when it matures (Eisenmann et al., 2006). Platform markets can also reach a “tipping” point, where the market either fails or becomes monopolistic (Rysman, 2009). Tipping happens if platforms cannot differentiate, users cannot reach all competing platforms without further cost and if the complementors of competing platforms are able to differentiate from each other. With this information in place, platform leaders need to make a “bet the company decision”, in other words, whether or not to aim for platform market leadership

(Eisenmann et al., 2006). Platforms can also co-exist in markets in two different ways: coincident platforms offer substitutable services on the same user side, or platforms with intersecting offerings for different user sides (Evans, 2003).

Previous research on Platform Strategy identifies four long-term strategies for platforms competing over market control. These strategies are envelopment-, tipping-, coring- and shaping- strategies. Envelopment strategy (Eisenmann et al., 2006) is very close to nature of tipping and coring strategies (Gawer and Cusumano, 2008). It means a market entry from a larger platform company via creating its own offering with existing resources from adjacent industry or via acquisitions (Eisenmann et al., 2006). In other words, this means introducing a new side to the platform during the later stages of platform evolution, with a goal to start a new business area (Eisenmann et al., 2006; Rysman, 2009). Gawer and Cusumano (2008) specify that tipping strategy includes more imitation and bundling of existing technological and organisation resources, whereas coring strategy is about building a competitive offering from the scratch. Counter-strategies for smaller players to compete against envelopment include switching revenue sources, creating alliances and taking legal action (Eisenmann et al., 2006). Another long-term strategic course is the shaping strategy, where companies aim to shift an entire industry by introducing new standards and operating principles via their platform. The alternative to taking the lead is to follow a leading platform and to integrate an offering into it.

2.3.2 Research framework for evolution of Sharing Platforms

Based on the synthesis of literature review from four different research fields, a theoretical framework is created in order to form a generalizable theory for Sharing Platform evolution. The framework acts as a structure for an empirical study of two case platforms. Next, the theoretical elements of the framework are described and their relevance for empirical research are discussed.

The research framework of this study is built on Constantiou et al. (2016) framework on evolution of Sharing Platforms by adapting the structure of the evolutionary timeline, the first two steps of evolution and their contributing sub-factors. In order to describe the theoretical content of the first two steps and to extend the framework with a third step of evolution, carefully selected key theories are used.

The selected theories describe major challenges that Sharing Platforms generally face during each step of evolution and describe a set of theoretical strategies that are used to overcome them. To describe the evolution of Sharing Platforms, *the design theory for*

dynamic complexity in Information Infrastructures (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010), *strategies for igniting catalytic reaction* (Evans, 2009), *strategies of two-sided markets* (Rysman, 2009), *empirical aspects of multi-sided platform industries* (Evans, 2003) and *strategies for two-sided markets* (Eisenmann et al., 2006) are selected. Each theory has a different contribution for each stage of evolution.

The framework has three important features. Firstly, the evolution of Sharing Platforms can be perceived via three phases of development: *creating a network of users*, *augmenting the platform* and *sustaining the platform business*. The first two steps have been adopted from Constantiou et al. (2016), and the third step is developed based on selected literature. Secondly, each of the three stages are affected by two main sub-factors. Again, the sub-factors of first two are adopted from Constantiou et al. (2016), whereas the sub-factors for the third step are sources from selected literature (Evans, 2003, Rysman, 2009, Eisenmann, 2006). Each step has several fundamental challenges that are generalizable for all platforms and theoretical strategies to tackle them. These problems, as well as the strategies, have been selected from research made by Evans (2003; 2009), Hanseth and Lyytinen (2010), Rysman (2009) and Eisenmann et al., (2006). Thirdly, the view of Constantiou et al. (2016) is imitated, where evolution of Sharing Platforms is measured by number of users during a period of time: the evolution timeline of case platforms. See *Figure 1: Framework for Evolution of Sharing Platforms* for a simplified illustration of the framework. Next, the theoretical reasoning behind each of the evolutionary steps are described.

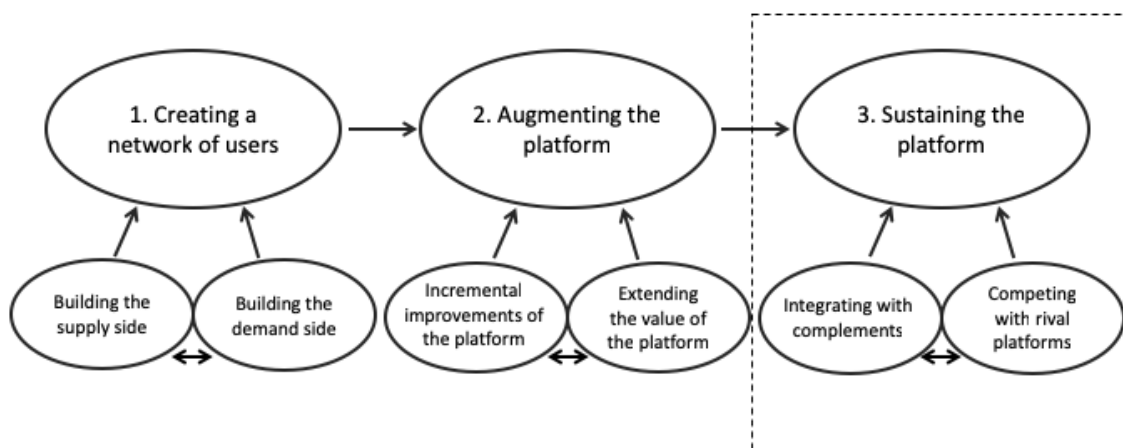


Figure 1: Framework for evolution of Sharing Platforms, adopted from Constantiou et al. (2016), extended with Evans (2003), Eisenmann et al. (2006), Rysman (2009)

Creating a network of users

According to Constantiou et al. (2016), the first phase is affected by two main factors: strengthening the supply side and strengthening the demand side. In order to explain the first phase, the following theories are selected: Evans' (2009) theories for igniting catalytic reaction for platform companies, theories of multi-sided platform markets (2003) and the Information Infrastructure theory by Hanseth and Lyytinen (2010). There are two reasons for selecting Evans' theories (2003; 2009) for this purpose. Firstly, together the studies form a view on the evolution of a multi-sided platform not only in the start but also in the second and third phases of platform evolution. Secondly, the studies come from the same author and thus form a more unified theory for the phenomenon than alternative theories found in the literature review. The theories explain the very early stages of platform development, including the common “chicken & egg” problem and alternative strategies for overcoming it. The theory is comprehensive, as it takes into account the importance of product diffusion through different user groups and differences among platform business models. Evans' research (2003) supports the strategies for first evolutionary phase through providing an extensive study on different platform business models but also provides insight for the third phase described later in this chapter. However, the theory does not explain the full life cycle of Sharing Platform evolution completely.

The design theory for Information Infrastructures by Hanseth and Lyytinen (2010) is used to complement Evans' (2003, 2009) theories to complete the first phase of evolution. Where Evan's theories succeed to explain the evolution of Sharing Platforms from an economical perspective, the II theory manages to explain the platform development from a technological, user-driven perspective. Thus, it adds sufficient theoretical insight for the framework, where the economical perspective alone does not. The theory explains the fundamental problem for platforms in their earliest stages: the bootstrap -problem which entails getting an initial group of users onboard a platform by serving their needs perfectly. The design theory itself provides tools for overcoming this problem. In short, the theory suggests that platform developers focus on simplicity and true usefulness of early features of the platform in order to secure early growth in user numbers. In more detail, developers of platforms should use simple features and standards as attractors that drive a critical mass of early users on the platform and create systematic feedback loops with the users. What is more, a critical mass and early features of a platform start to accumulate as an installed base

of users and technology, which can be combined in different ways to create more value to platform participants. (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010).

Augmenting the platform

Based on Constantiou et al. (2016), the second step (*augmenting the platform*) includes two affecting factors: “*incremental improvements for the platform*” and “*extending the value of the platform*”. Theories by the same authors as in the first phase (Evans, 2009; 2003, Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010) are used to explain the second phase of evolution. In addition, aspects from Rysmans (2009) strategies for two-sided markets are used to define the second step. The design theory for information infrastructures by Hanseth and Lyytinen (2010) introduces the adaptability problem which means local design needs that derive from new users with different needs and needs for new features, integrations and system complements. The problem also entails that at the same time, a platform must hold on to its early users who might have different needs than the upcoming new users. In order to tackle the adaptability problem, platform designers need to design for openness and user heterogeneity by creating new simple capabilities that are modular and compatible with each other. This creates path-dependency, positive network effects and lock-in for users on different sides of the platform. According to the theory, these elements are key to successful initiation of a platform. (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010). Adding up on the theoretical basis of the second phase, Evans (2003; 2009) explains the dynamics of both direct- and indirect network effects, and the role of customer heterogeneity in achieving them. Finally, Rysman (2009) explains some key strategies for augmenting a platform: pricing, openness, marketing, innovation and quality. Especially pricing and openness play a key role in the success of Sharing Platforms. Pricing strategies are an important component in driving network effects and getting even more users on board. Openness comes down to two important decisions, degree of integration with platform complementors and rival platforms (vertical- and horizontal integration). Especially the openness-strategy has important implications on the third step of platform evolution as well. (Rysman, 2009).

Sustaining the platform

The third step, sustaining the platform business, is affected by two fundamental aspects of Platform Strategy that have not been taken into account in Constantiou et al. (2016) study: competing with platform rivals and integrating with platform complements. These factors are explained with theories by Eisenmann et al. (2006), Evans (2003) and Rysman (2009).

Firstly, the Rysman's (2009) theory of five individual strategies for platforms is used to explain competitive actions of Sharing Platforms. The strategies are pricing, openness, innovation, marketing and quality, of which the first two have the most importance. Stemming from these strategies, are the earlier phases of evolution, different competitive settings can take place in a platform market. (Rysman, 2009). Most importantly, Eisenmann et al. (2006) describe the dynamics of winner-takes-all competition: platform markets are prone to these dynamics, if multi-homing costs are high, network effects are strong, and users don't have too many special feature requirements. Elaborating on the competitive dynamics, Rysman (2009) states that increased competition between platforms leads to the market tipping point which means either a winner-takes-all market position, co-existing platforms, or market failure. Evans (2003) elaborates on alternative market structures for platforms differently by describing that co-existing platforms can take intersecting, or coincident market structures. Eisenmann et al. (2006) describe another competitive move for platforms, envelopment, where a larger platform mobilizes a new side to its existing platform to capture markets from a smaller platform operating in that field. Eisenmann et al. (2006) also explain how smaller platforms can protect themselves from envelopment through changing business models, seeking partners or by taking legal action. Together, these theories form a solid theoretical base for describing platform competition which is a fundamental aspect on sustaining a Sharing Platform business in the long term.

To explain the decision of whether or not to integrate with platform complementors, Rysman (2009) highlights the impact of openness -strategy which addresses two issues: the number of sides a platform serves and the compatibility of the platform towards competitors and complementors. Firstly, the platform can decide to change the number of sides when it evolves. Adding more sides to a platform shifts its competitive position in the marketplace. Secondly, the openness of the platform for competitors and complementors, in other words vertical- and horizontal integration, can create powerful indirect network effects if managed successfully. (Rysman, 2009).

The scientific literature from four fields have been reviewed, all of which contribute to understanding the nature of Sharing Platform evolution from the very beginning until augmenting the user base and finally reaching a state of sustainable business. The scientific framework presented in this chapter acts as a basis for an empirical study on selected case companies Lyft and Task Rabbit, which is presented in the following chapter. To be more exact, the framework is used to compare the findings of theory with the results of the empirical study. Moreover, both the framework and the empirical results are compared to findings of the research by Constantiou et al. (2016).

3 Research approach

An explanatory embedded multiple case study method (Yin, 2009) is applied in order to conduct research on two case companies. For that purpose, a grounded case study research process is followed (Eisenhardt, 1989; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The method aims to create theory inductively, by constant comparison and iteration between findings from earlier literature with findings from the case study data (Eisenhardt, 1989; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). To build on a similar study conducted by Constantiou et al. (2016), the method aims to validate and extend the earlier findings by applying it on two additional case companies. In practice, the research approach is highly iterative, reflecting constantly between earlier theory and the emergent findings of empirical study. As a result, a timeline of the evolution of both case companies is built by identifying key events and strategic actions of both case companies from popular tech blogs.

An explanatory embedded multiple case study method (Yin, 2009) is selected as a method for multiple reasons. In the thesis, two case companies are analysed in order to find patterns in platform evolution. The embedded case study approach was selected because it allows including multiple units of analysis on different levels but has its focus strictly on the cases at hand, not the universal nature of the phenomenon itself (Yin, 2009). In other words, the purpose of this thesis is to explain the evolutionary process of two case platforms, compare the results with earlier findings and look for patterns that could possibly explain the evolution of Sharing Platforms in general.

The case study data is analysed by using a grounded case study methodology (Eisenhardt, 1989; Strauss and Corbin, 1990), where findings are created inductively instead of traditional deductive research approach. There are three main reasons for using a grounded case study method in this study. Firstly, even though there exists earlier empirical research about the subject of Sharing Platform evolution, the field still lacks existing knowledge. This is where a grounded study method can contribute, as it excels in building theory from research findings instead of only relying on background theory and enables testing of existing findings from new perspectives (Eisenhardt 1989; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Secondly, a grounded case study approach supports the sequential, evolutionary nature of the study at hand (Eisenhardt 1989; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Thirdly, conducting a grounded study on different case companies enables comparison and extension of emergent theory produced by Constantiou et al. (2016) in their study of Airbnb (Eisenhardt, 1989). As a result, the constantly iterating approach of a grounded case study promises results that are logically more solid than by solely relying on earlier theory to create findings from data.

Inspired by methods used in earlier research on digital platform innovation and - evolution (Eaton, 2012; Eaton et al., 2014; Eaton et al., 2015; Constantiou et al., 2016), the research uses freely available online blog posts as its main source of qualitative research data. More specifically, the focus of the research is on gathering instances of “tech blogs” which are a type of blog focused on professional communication in fields of information technology, related innovation and high-tech industries (Davidson and Vaast, 2009).

3.1 Case selection

According to the grounded case study research method (Eisenhardt, 1898), case sampling is an important part of the research process. As this research aims to replicate Constantiou et al. (2016) study, as well as extend its findings, it is important to select cases that are similar enough to be comparable but theoretically different in order to cover theoretical categories described earlier in the literature review (Eisenhardt, 1989). There are both theoretical and practical reasons for selecting Lyft and TaskRabbit as case companies for the thesis. An overview of theoretical differences of Lyft, TaskRabbit and Airbnb is illustrated in *Table 1: Lyft, TaskRabbit and Airbnb compared to Sharing Economy frameworks* in chapter two. For the case study, it was important to find case companies that have a comparable history in terms of timeline, service elements, business maturity and origin, which enables conducting research on them in practice. However, it was also important to select case companies that are different from a theoretical perspective in order to generate interesting findings. The reasons for case company selection are described in the following paragraphs.

Firstly, on the practical reasons, the case platforms serve as a good comparison to the earlier research made on Airbnb in terms of their stage of evolution. The history of the companies provides a similar timeline to be studied, as all of them have been founded between 2008 – 2012. In addition, the selected companies have reached a rather similar level of maturity: for all three companies there has been indications of reaching business profitability (Bercovici, 2016; Burns, 2017). In addition, both case companies have reached a fundamental milestone in their long-term business sustainability: Lyft conducted an Initial Public Offering in 2019 (Hawkins, 2019), and TaskRabbit was fully acquired by IKEA in 2017 (Swisher, 2017). Due to the success of each of the three platforms in comparison, they have evolved all the way from an early-stage start-up to an established business in their respective industries. This fact makes Lyft and TaskRabbit interesting cases to study not only in terms of the ignition and augmentation of platforms (Constantiou et al., 2016) but also

their long-term competitiveness. Secondly, both of the case companies' offerings have a physical and digital element, which puts the companies under the effect of somewhat similar growth dynamics, such as the network effects of digital goods and supply restraints of physical elements of the offering (Constantiou et al., 2016; Constantiou et al., 2017). Third, the fact that both case companies, as well as Airbnb, have originated from the U.S. market supports their comparability in a case study approach. Finally, both of the case companies have a sufficient amount of research data available from online sources across their entire lifespans up until this date, which makes them comparable to earlier research made on Airbnb (Constantiou et al., 2016). These five practical reasons define the research sample, help control variation of the study and can be used to define generalizability of results (Eisenhardt, 1989).

When it comes to theoretical aspects of Sharing Economy Platforms, there are several reasons for selecting Lyft and TaskRabbit as case companies. Firstly, on the demand side aspects, the business model of all three platforms includes a market-oriented commercial aspect, based on the classification of Sundararajan (2016). According to the author, the models vary from giving gifts to market-like transactions. In this study, the Sundararajan classification is followed, where Lyft and Airbnb are similar in providing both gifts and market-like transactions, TaskRabbit acts more like a purely market-based platform (Sundararajan, 2016). The commercial orientation of the case companies makes them comparable – if the operation was based on “giving gifts”, then the case could not analyse business- and user growth in a comparable manner. From a supply-side perspective, both the case companies are in a different industry and operate a different business model of Sharing Economy (Constantiou et al., 2017). According to Constantiou et al. (2017) classification of four Sharing Platform models, Airbnb is in the hospitality industry and operates as a “chaperone”. Lyft is in the transportation industry, operating a “franchiser” model, whereas TaskRabbit is a peer-to-peer platform for errands and small gigs, operating more like a “principal”. Finally, combining both demand- and supply side theoretical theories, the two companies can also be analysed based on the nature of the product that is shared in the platform: whereas Airbnb, the subject of the Constantiou et al. (2016) study, taps into a sharing a globally available, “meshy” rent of apartments, Lyft facilitates sharing of “meshy”, locally shared rides, and Task Rabbit shares “not meshy”, local errands (Gansky, 2012; Sundararajan, 2016). The aim in analysing and comparing growth trajectories of companies from two different industries and with slightly differing business models is to reveal interesting, universal findings. The selection of the two case companies based on their

theoretical classification helps creating new findings from this study, as the cases represent different theoretical categories of Sharing Platforms (Eisenhardt, 1989).

In the following chapters, the case platforms are described in brief, based on information retrieved from CrunchBase, a company information portal maintained by TechCrunch, a popular tech blog.

Case 1: Lyft

Lyft Inc. is a peer-to-peer transportation platform that connects passengers who need rides with drivers willing to provide them using their own vehicles. Founded by Logan Green and John Zimmer in May 2012 in California, their vision is to radically reduce the number of cars needed for human transportation, and thus change the infrastructure of cities through a reduced need for parking areas, highways and less traffic congestion. Lyft has achieved a strong market position in big metropolitan city areas such as San Francisco, New York and London despite tough competition from Uber and other global ride-hailing industry upstarts. The company has grown from a small start-up into a company of several thousand employees through 4 acquisitions and 9 rounds of venture capital investments accumulating into a total of \$4,9B. Lyft was valued at a total market capitalization of \$24BN in conjunction with its IPO in 2019 (BBC, 2019). Up to this date, Lyft is on a strong business growth trajectory and becoming an even stronger challenger to its much bigger rival, Uber. The company has a strong position, with a 35% market share in North America (PYMNTS, 2018), but it has not expanded abroad as quickly as Uber. Finally, after long speculations over reaching a profitable state of business, Lyft conducted an Initial Public Offering in early 2019 as the first Sharing Economy company in history (Hawkins, 2019).

Case 2: TaskRabbit

TaskRabbit is an online and mobile marketplace for quick jobs and gigs, which aims to connect neighbors with each other to get simple jobs done for a small fee. The most frequent transactions in the marketplace are cleaning, moving, delivery and handyman services. TaskRabbit was found in Boston, January 2008 by Leah Busque, her husband Kevin Busque and Brian Leonard. The idea came during a snowstorm, when Leah needed to purchase dogfood for her dog – as there were not any delivery services for these kinds of small errands, Leah and her husband decided to move to San Francisco and create one. Having started the company in the infamous Facebook incubator, fbFund, Leah's idea soon took

wind. Nowadays the company employs nearly 100 people. By 2017, the company had raised \$37.80M through 6 rounds of investments and made 2 acquisitions. Compared to Lyft, TaskRabbit has a smaller valuation, less employees, has raised less money and made fewer acquisitions. Rumors of Task Rabbit reaching profitability took place in 2017 (Bercovici, 2016). However, in 2017 the company was fully acquired by IKEA, a leading designer and seller of furniture and home accessories (Swisher, 2017), shortly after a major overhaul in company business focus (Weber, 2014).

3.2 Data collection

This research aims to explain the evolution of two Sharing Platforms from their initiation until a point where they have reached a sustainable state of business. In order to research the evolutionary stories of Lyft and TaskRabbit, secondary and tertiary data is sought from publicly available professional news blogs focused on high-technology industries, or in other words, tech-blogs (Bar-Ilan, 2005; Davidson and Vaast, 2009). CrunchBase, one of the most popular tech-blog aggregators in the world, is used as a main source for data. In addition, both Lyft's and TaskRabbit's own blogs were used to source more information to have another perspective on the news pieces and thus triangulate the qualitative data (Bar-Ilan, 2005). In total over 15 822 blog entries were collected for the purposes of this study, of which 1055 were analysed in more detail. Using these blog entries, an evolutionary timeline for both case platforms was created to illustrate relevant actions that have taken place during the past ten years. For Lyft, a timeline from its founding in 2012 until 2019 is covered, whereas the TaskRabbit timeline spans from 2008 until 2018.

Using blog entries to create a narrative for technology innovation in organizations has been successfully implemented as a research method in previous studies (Eaton, 2012, 2015; Eaton and Hanseth, 2014). For example, Eaton et al. (2014) researched the full evolution of a central cloud computing system of Norwegian banks during late 1990's until 2014 by using interview data, company websites, news archives related to the system and Norwegian press releases. In total the authors used over 320 press releases to study the matter. In a later study, Eaton et al. (2015) explained the timeline for development of Apples iOS platform ecosystem from 2007 to 2011 to illustrate the dynamics between boundary resources of Apple's centrally managed platform and third-party complements to the platform. The authors examined 4,664 blog entries in total, collected from a tech-blog aggregate called Techmeme. In addition to tech-blogs, the authors utilized official platform-regulation guidelines released

by Apple in their own channels. Constantiou et al. (2016) have adopted the research methodology of the latter example by examining over 800 blog publications of Airbnb. Thus, the research methodology of this thesis aims to repeat the same process.

The validity of using public blog posts can be justified in many ways. The popularity and amount of public blogs, or web logs, has risen massively after the introduction of easily available Internet and blog tools in the 1990's (Bar-Ilan, 2005; Davidson and Vaast, 2009; Vaast et al., 2013). Through the popularity, it has gained the attention of for example managers, educators and scientists (Bar-Ilan, 2005; Davidson and Vaast, 2009). According to Bar-Ilan (2005), especially professional blogs provide a good source for secondary and tertiary information for their readers because they concentrate and filter specific information. Blogs concentrate information about some specific topic usually in chronological order, and the entries are rarely deleted (Bar-Ilan, 2005). The filtering effect of blogs is due to their nature: blogs are usually a collection of links, written into a story, including an integrative point of view by the writer (Bar-Ilan, 2005). Thus, one could assume the most popular blogs use “filter” the most relevant information. For this thesis, information from a certain type of blogs is collected: from tech-blog aggregators. They are a type of professional knowledge blog community, where blog posts written by multiple authors are showcased, with topics ranging from developments in new technologies to high-tech business (Davidson and Vaast, 2009). These kinds of tech blog aggregators create and diffuse information, which is fundamentally important in high-tech innovation because diffusion of innovation happens through communication of early adopters, developers and experts of fields (Davidson and Vaast, 2009; Evans, 2009; Frattini et al., 2014). Tech blogs are usually written by expert technologists of leading tech-companies, independent developers or other commentators (Davidson and Vaast, 2009). These kinds of tech-bloggers have increasing influence in whole technology innovation discourse, compared to bloggers from inside major tech companies and traditional experts (Davidson and Vaast, 2009; Vaast et al., 2013). The most influential tech-bloggers are so called A-list bloggers, who draw a great deal of social capital and expertise from their past professional careers and are featured in the most popular tech-blogs (Vaast et al., 2013). In the next chapter, the analysis of in total 1055 blog entries are described.

3.3 Analysis

In this thesis, a grounded case study method is used to analyse the data and to build theory iteratively (Eisenhardt, 1989; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Inspired by earlier studies by Constantiou et al. (2016) and Eaton et al. (2014; 2015), this study aims to reveal patterns of technological and organizational change in evolutionary stories of two case companies. This is done by identifying relevant strategic actions taken by the platforms from a sample of over 15 822 public news blog posts that mention Lyft (14 426 instances) or Task Rabbit (1396 instances) from CrunchBase, an online information portal on technology companies. From the sample, in total 1055 posts were taken into more careful analysis, 894 for Lyft and 161 for TaskRabbit. Building on that, smaller samples of 399 are considered relevant in terms of creating an action timeline for Lyft, whereas 80 blog posts contributed in building a similar timeline for TaskRabbit. Next, the methods for processing the blog data, creating the samples and identifying relevant events are described in detail.

The study follows a theoretical grounded case study process described by Eisenhardt (1989) and a more specific data analysis technique by Strauss and Corbin (1990). In theory, the grounded case study process includes the following steps (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). 1. *Open coding*: finding relevant concepts and sorting them into categories, 2. *Axial coding*: connecting categories based on their relationship with the study phenomenon itself and 3. *Selective coding*: finding a core category, describing it, creating a storyline and identifying its effects on the study phenomenon.

Imitating the method created by Strauss and Corbin (1990), the analysis of blog entry data is structured into four steps: 1. categorizing blog entries under relevant topics, 2. creating second-order categories for blog entries based on their relationship with evolution of the case companies, 3. identifying core categories and their effects on evolution of the companies and additionally, 4. creating an overall timeline of growth for both case companies. An additional step was introduced in order to create two overall timelines which illustrate the development in number of users- and key financial metrics across time for each platform. This contributed on the general understanding on the evolution of case companies. Next, each of these steps are described in more detail.

In the first step, within-case analysis is conducted by choosing theme categories to use as search words to filter the blog entry data (Eisenhardt, 1989). In practice, the full sets of blog entry data are processed with focus on identifying blog entries with headlines directly mentioning, or being clearly associated with different themes including “feature”, “user”, “partner”, “payment”, “regulation”, “pricing”, “acquisition”, “funding”, “launch”, “market”

or “competition” in addition to the company name, either “Lyft” or “TaskRabbit”. In addition, stories featuring the category “user” are searched for subcategories, “rides”, “riders” and “drivers” for Lyft and “tasks”, “clients” and “taskers” For TaskRabbit. The number of categories is limited to the goal of reaching “theoretical saturation” described by Strauss and Corbin (1990). In other words, no more categories are created when new relevant categories stop emerging from the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The most relevant categories used as filters are identified by selecting key themes from the research framework literature described in chapter 2.3.2, then iteratively testing different filter topics one by one, and finally by selecting the ones that contribute highest number of hits in across themes. This process is an example of iterative approach of the grounded case study method (Eisenhardt et al., 1989) that aims to surface findings from case studies inductively, through constant reflection between research samples and theory. All relevant findings made through this method are linked with one or several of the aforementioned themes in order to create first-order categories (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Tables 3 and 4 illustrate the total number of findings for each first order coding category for both cases.

Table 3: Lyft - first order category findings

Theme	Feature	User	Partner	Payment	Regulation	Pricing	Acquisition	Funding	Launch	Market	Competition
Findings	246	166	211	19	200	113	21	104	129	233	127

Table 4: TaskRabbit - first order category findings

Theme	Feature	User	Partner	Payment	Regulation	Pricing	Acquisition	Funding	Launch	Market	Competition
Findings	44	65	24	1	18	20	16	23	32	51	22

Secondly, in order to identify second-order categories for different themes, questions that embody the relationships between first order categories and the study phenomenon itself are generated. These questions aim to identify the relationship of the findings with the study phenomenon itself, the evolution of Sharing Platforms (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Imitating the Constantiou et al. (2016) study, two distinctive questions are generated for each evolutionary step described in the research framework of the thesis – in total six questions. The questions were derived with the grounded case study process (Eisenhardt, 1989) which includes constant comparison of empirical findings with background literature. In other words, the second-order categories were identified by choosing relevant findings emerging from the data but also based on the research framework presented in chapter 2.3.2.

The following literature explains the theoretical logic of finding second-order categories. Building on the study made by Constantiou et al. (2016), the focus of this thesis is to reveal the actions Sharing Platforms take to first create an initial, multi-sided user base,

and then augmenting the platform by introducing new features or value-adding complementors on the platform. In hindsight, these themes are considered relevant from the perspective of the research framework of this thesis presented in chapter 2.3.2 as well. In theory, Evans (2003, 2009) and Rysman (2009) highlight the importance of tackling the “chicken & egg” problem by gathering an initial user network through catalytic strategies and growing it with network effects. What is more, Hanseth and Lyytinen (2010) stress overcoming the bootstrap problem by developing platform features to serve the needs an early user group, and then tackling the adaptability problem caused by incoming new users by creating modular, value-adding new features. To add more perspective on the evolution of case platforms, the later stages of Sharing Platform evolution are studied by researching the interaction of case platforms with their complementors and competitors. A clear need for this perspective echoes from the research framework (Evans, 2003; 2009, Rysman, 2009) which give consideration to platform openness, number of sides and platform competition that ultimately leads to the platform market tipping point.

Deriving from key issues identified from the research framework literature, the questions that embody second order categories are: 1) What are the platforms strategic actions towards the demand side? 2) What are the platforms’ strategic actions towards the supply side? 3) How do the platforms provide supporting services to the participants? 4) How do the platforms provide value-added services to the participants? 5) What are the platforms’ strategic interactions with complementors of the platform? 6) What are the platforms’ strategic interactions with its competitors? According to these questions, each blog post instance is linked to only one second order category in order to match them in relevant passages. The second order categories were coded by numbering each blog post in the range between 1-6 accordingly. These passages enable both within- and cross-case analysis of findings (Eisenhardt, 1989). Each of the blog posts that were included in second order categories were studied by reading the actual blog text content, not only the headline. The second order category findings and their relation to the study phenomenon are presented in the figures 2 and 3 below. The timelines of second order category findings help to understand the relation of each finding with the evolution of the case platforms. These relations are used to derive the third-order categories.

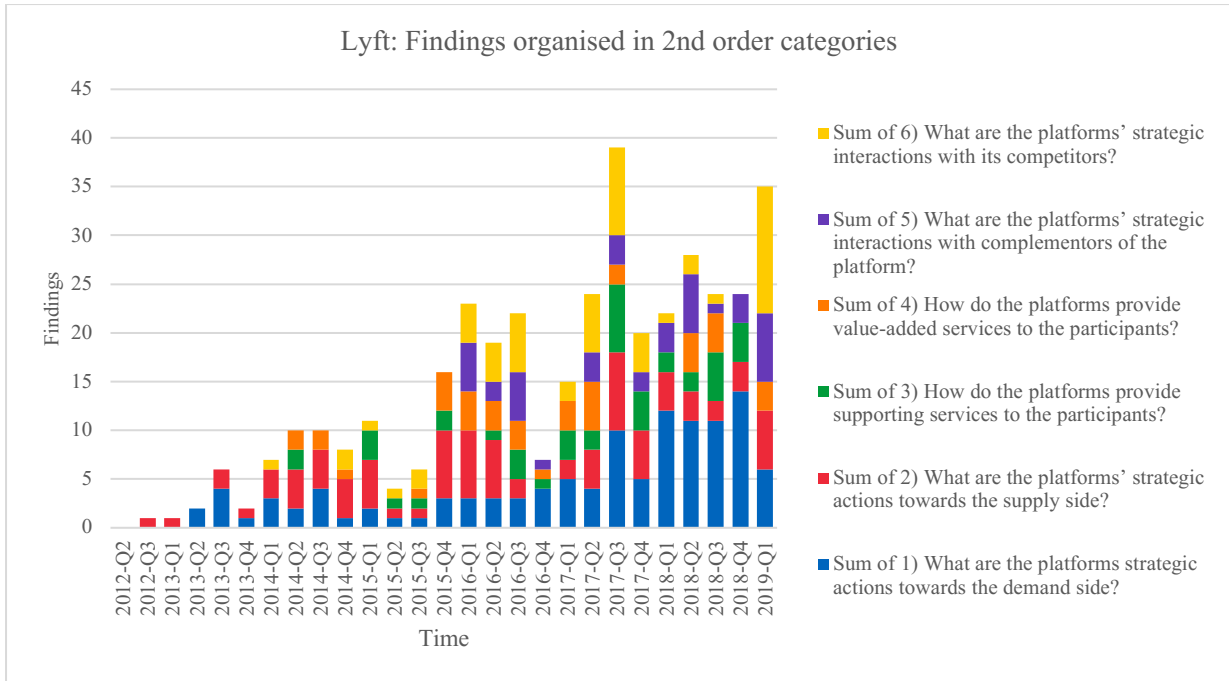


Figure 2: Lyft - second order category findings

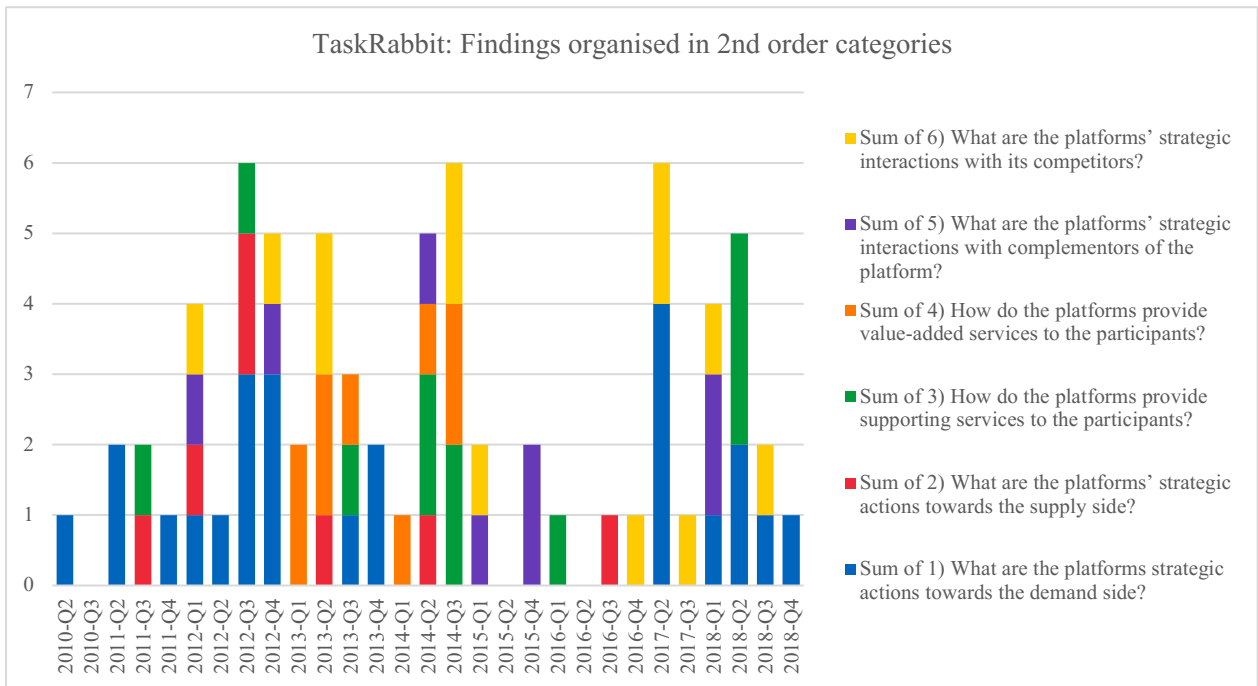


Figure 3: TaskRabbit - second order category findings

Third, as an outcome of analysing the data organised in second order categories, three separate steps for Sharing Platform evolution are identified: *creating a network of users*, *augmenting the platform* and *sustaining the platform*. The steps are identified by finding core passages through the case platforms evolution, especially the ones which are prolific for each of the steps for the case companies. In essence, the core passages are new phenomena which did not take place in the earlier stages of platform evolution in terms of frequency of findings

in the second coding category (see figures 2 and 3). These core passages act as means to analyse tendencies, differences and similarities, both within-cases and cross-cases (Eisenhardt, 1989).

For Lyft, there are two meaningful core passages for each stage of evolution. The core passages are “*building the supply side*” and “*building demand*” in relation to *creating a network of users* (2012/ Q2 – 2014/ Q1), “*incremental improvements in the platform*” and “*extending the value of the platform*” in relation to *augmenting the platform* (2014/ Q2 – 2015/ Q4), and finally “*integrating with complements*” and “*competing with rival platforms*” in relation to *sustaining the platform business* (2016/ Q1 – 2019/ Q1).

For TaskRabbit, only one meaningful core passage per each stage is identified. The core passages are: “*building demand*” in relation to *creating a network of users* (2010/ Q2 – 2012/ Q4), “*combining platform services in new ways*” in relation to *augmenting the platform* (2013/ Q1 – 2014/ Q3) and “*competing for survival*” in relation to *sustaining the platform* (2015/ Q1 – 2018/ Q4).

These core passages will be used as a structure to present research findings on the evolution of both case platforms, and to be compared with the structure of the theoretical framework.

For readers’ convenience, an overview on different steps of analyzing the case study blog data is provided in *Appendix B: Overview of coding process, adopted from Strauss and Corbin (1990)*. In addition, the list of blog posts indicating relevant strategic actions taken by the platforms, including their respective source link, as well as first- and second order categories can be found from appendix C and D which illustrate the action timelines of both case companies.

In addition to the qualitative archive data gathered from blog entries, Eisenhardt’s (1989) suggestion on combining qualitative and quantitative evidence in grounded case studies is followed. The aim is to study the evolution of Sharing Platforms, comparing key strategic actions and their effect to platform user- and financial growth. Thus, in the final step of the analysis process, timelines of user growth were created for both companies. The data for the timelines was gathered from relevant blog posts sourced during the process of blog data analysis. Additionally, timelines illustrating financial growth of both companies were created in order to support reader’s understanding of the phenomenon. The financial timelines illustrate funding rounds raised by the case companies, as well as amounts of revenue occasionally reported by the case companies. All timelines are presented in chapter four along with other findings of the thesis.

4 Findings

In this chapter, the results of the empirical study of two Sharing Platforms, Lyft and TaskRabbit are presented. A storyline of platform evolution for both cases is created, based on information gathered from a number of tech blog posts about both companies – in total 399 for Lyft and 80 for TaskRabbit. The study describes a seven-year timeline (2012/Q1 – 2019/Q1) for Lyft and a nine-year timeline for TaskRabbit (2010/Q1 – 2018/Q4), during which several identifiable strategic actions were taken by both companies.

For both cases, three evolutionary phases along their history are identified: *creating a network of users* for the platform, *augmenting the platform services*, and *sustaining the platform business* in order to stay competitive. Key aspects in the initiation of a platform are building a trustworthy supply base by user validation and maintaining trust between platform participants, after which both companies have had an increased focus on creating demand through new delivery channels or pricing. For both cases, the first phase has taken 2 – 3 years. After creating a sustainable user base, both case platforms have focused on creating more user growth through incremental feature improvements in the platform, or by increasing the value of the platform to meet needs of new users. The findings show that for TaskRabbit, the augmentation of the platform showed positive results for 2,5 years until its user growth plateaued in 2014 (Alaimo, 2018). For Lyft, a strong user growth period of 2 years in 2014 – 2016 is identified, but its user numbers continued to increase even after that due to strong new partnerships and features (Dickey, 2018). Finally, after 5 – 6 years of evolution, the findings of this study reveal a third phase that is still ongoing for both platforms: *sustaining the business through integrating into the platform ecosystem, by partnering up with complementors or creating new sides for the existing platform*. The third phase of evolution is also described by competitive acts towards rival platforms. Interestingly, for the two cases this final phase has created totally opposite future projections. During 2016 – 2019 Lyft has created new sides for its platform through acquisitions and partnerships (Hawkins, 2016; Brown, 2018), whereas TaskRabbit unsuccessfully aimed to decrease different use cases for its platform (Weber, 2014). What's more, Lyft has created strong capabilities via partnerships with giants such as GE, Ford and Waymo in order to compete, and lead the drive hailing industry into a completely new direction: self-driving cars (Farooqui, 2016; Reuters, 2017; Jhonsa, 2017). At the same time, TaskRabbit committed into a partnership with Amazon to support its new home services business expansion (Kafka, 2015), after which getting fully acquired by IKEA (Swisher, 2017). The next chapters will describe findings in more detail, case by case.

4.1 Case 1: Lyft

Initially, the company that became Lyft was named Zimride and it focused on matching drivers and riders between long-to-medium distance routes between cities (Fehrenbacher, 2012). Before changing the name into Lyft in 2012, the company already had gathered a good amount of learnings about the ride-hailing industry, funding and an initial user base. These first steps gave Lyft much needed runway to start again but with a new angle towards the ride-hailing market. What changed, was the operating model: Lyft focuses on matching city drivers with riders in need of short routes and on-demand ride-hailing in high population density areas. In early days, Lyft focused on providing the service only during evening hours. To be exact, the aim of this study is to analyse the evolution of Lyft only, not its predecessor Zimride. (Fehrenbacher, 2012).

Since the launch in 2012, Lyft's growth in terms of users in terms of rides and drivers has been spectacular. *Figure 4: Lyft – number of rides and drivers 2010 - 2019* illustrates this in a visual chart. The number of rides is communicated in terms of cumulative rides operated by Lyft, whereas the number of drivers illustrates the number of drivers registered on the Lyft platform at any given moment. Each data point on users illustrated in the chart has been obtained from the blog posts that form the data set for this study. When it comes to demand for rides, Lyft has been successful in creating fast growth from an initial 40 000 rides (Kosoff, 2015) shortly after the launch in end of 2012 to 1 million completed rides in July 2013 (Lawler, 2013), only a year after officially launching the platform. After years of exponential growth, in 2018 Lyft reached 1 billion completed rides (Dickey, 2018). It is interesting to note that the driver base has increased more steadily, from 7000 in mid- 2012 (Kosoff, 2015) to a pool of 1,4 million registered drivers at the end of 2017 (PYMNTS, 2018). Fierce competition with Uber over drivers in the North American market has overshadowed the development of supply side of the platform (Panzario, 2014; Dellinger, 2017).

The founders, Logan Green and Martin Zimmer, raised a sizeable amount of venture capital early to prepare for rapid expansion in a tough market which they believed would be dictated by factors such as lower prices compared to traditional taxis, trust between users and safety of passengers (Fehrenbacher, 2012). As Zimride, the company had raised a seed round (\$300.000) and a series A round (\$6M) of venture financing, but for the expansion of Lyft the company raised a series B round of \$15 in 2013 (Lawler, 2013). For comparison, and to understand the true perspective of Lyft's successful growth trajectory, Lyft raised its latest

\$600M round midway through 2018 with a valuation of \$15.1BN (Korosec, 2018). All in all, Lyft has had strong backers during its 10-year history – in total the company has raised \$4.9BN in 19 rounds of funding to fuel its growth. *Figure 5: Lyft – amount of funding and revenue 2010 - 2019* illustrates the financial growth of Lyft during a 2011 – 2019 timespan. The data illustrated in the graph is from selected blog posts. During 2017 – 2018, there were several public statements from Lyft leadership about aims to reach profitability and talks about Lyft planning for an Initial Public Offering (IPO) (Trefis Team, 2018). What makes the growth story of Lyft even more impressive, the company reportedly received several acquisition-offers from larger companies like GE and Apple, however turning them down (Roston, 2016; Miller, 2016). In the beginning of 2019, the company filed for an IPO (Deutscher, 2019).

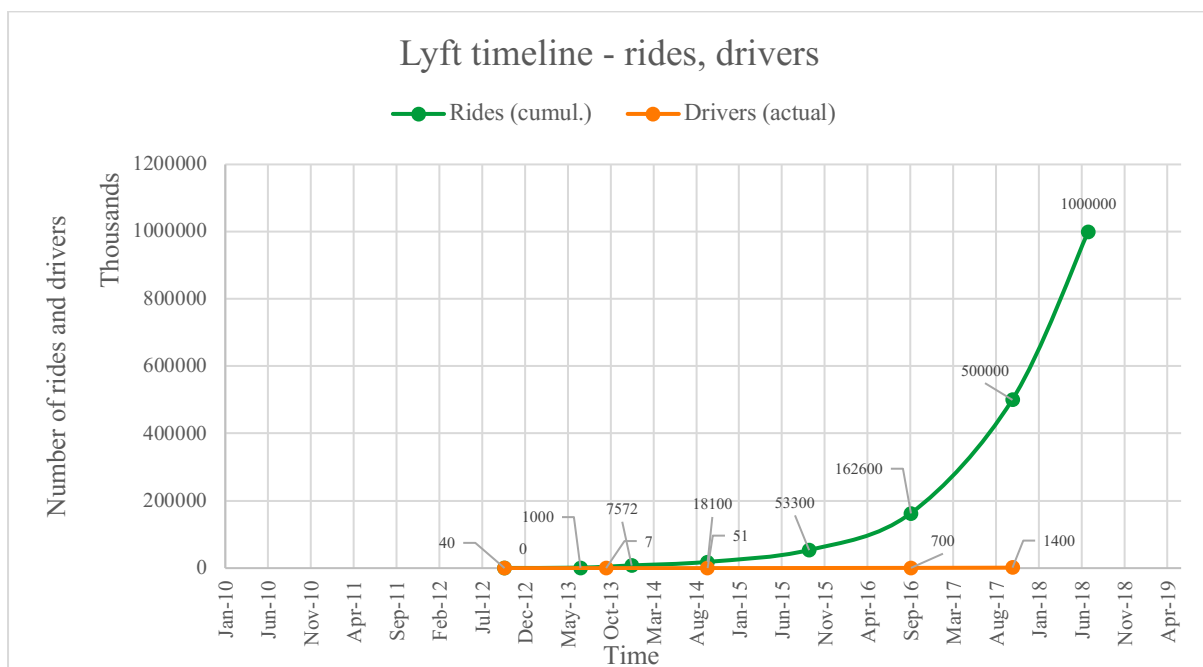


Figure 4: Lyft – number of rides and drivers 2010 - 2019. Data from Lawler (2013), Kerr (2014), Kosoff (2015), Kerr (2016), Buhr (2016), Carson (2017), Kerr (2017), Bosa and Zaveri (2017), Dickey (2018), PYMNTS (2018).

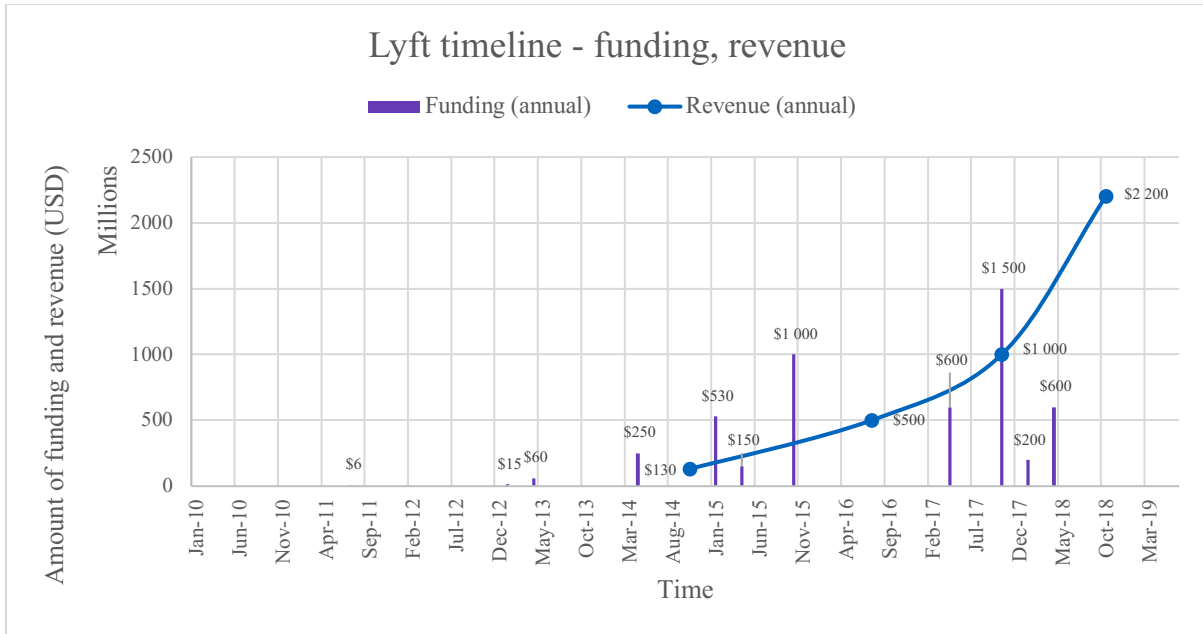


Figure 5: Lyft – amount of funding and revenue 2010 - 2019. Data from Fehrenbacher (2012), Lawler (2013), Kerr (2015), Kosoff (2015), Korosec (2018), Kerr (2018), Trefis Team (2018), Frommer (2018).

4.1.1 Creating a network of users

Building the supply side

Lyft was able to create explosive growth right after its launch, reaching 40 000 rides in 2012 (Kosoff, 2015). At the same time, it had 7000 registered drivers (Kosoff, 2015). In order to serve that demand, Lyft made sure its supply side is stable through maintaining safety and trust between drivers and riders. From the beginning, Lyft drivers went through driver background checks, car inspections, personal interviews, record checks and an authentication to the app with users’ personal Facebook accounts (Fehrenbacher, 2012). According to the company, they learned the importance of securing trust among platform participants from earlier Sharing Economy pioneers, such as TaskRabbit (Fehrenbacher, 2012). In 2012, Lyft publicly stated that less than 5% of all driver applications are accepted to be drivers for the platform (Lawler, 2012).

A fundamental part of Lyft’s marketing strategy was to distinguish from competitors, especially Uber, by a friendlier user experience for riders. Their early slogan was very prolific for the company: “Lyft - your friend with a car”. In addition to a famous mustachio-decoration on Lyft cars and friendly brand colours, the early Lyft rides included a tradition of the driver greeting the passenger with a casual “fist pump” and riders always having the options to sit on the front seat. What’s more, Lyft payments were named donations, where the rider could technically decide the exact sum to pay for the ride as a nice gesture for the

driver, instead of an official payment (Soper, 2014). From the beginning, the Lyft app included tools for riders to rate drivers after the ride, and the other way around, in order to build trust and reputation for good drivers (Fehrenbacher, 2012).

In addition to ensuring trust through driver background checks, Lyft made significant improvements to the insurances for drivers. In September 2012 the company added a \$1 million in excess liability insurance for both its drivers and riders, in order to cover incidents that occur during driving, however not covering collision damages (Lawler, 2012). In February 2014 the company announced a larger coverage of insurances, including collision insurance up to \$50.000 and a policy with a \$1 million limit covering drivers hit by un- or underinsured motorists (Lawler, 2014). In addition, the company said it will gather a “Peer-to-Peer Rideshare Insurance Coalition”, consisting of transportation companies, regulators and insurance providers. A month later, Lyft introduced an insurance that covers drivers even between rides (Lawler, 2014) in order to tone down critique on driver safety and a recent fatal accident on a Lyft driver.

Throughout its existence, Lyft has battled against government regulation of the questionable working relationship of drivers on the platform. During the ignition phase 2012 – 2014, the biggest regulatory pushbacks were related to Lyft’s biggest early launches in Los Angeles, Seattle, Connecticut and New York, where regulatory debates issued driver fees, insurance, safety and taxi competition laws (Bishop, 2013; Biddle, 2013). Upon the launch in Los Angeles early in 2013, Lyft announced an agreement with California state regulators which enabled the company among other ride-hailing start-ups to continue their business while the government prepared new laws to match the new industry with traditional taxi industry legislation (Bishop, 2013). In Seattle, regulators put a 150-car cap on how many drivers there can be on the platform per each ride-sharing company. In Connecticut, both Lyft and Uber faced 14 local taxi companies in court after their launch (Weber, 2014). During 2014 in New York, Lyft’s big market launch was halted due to an announcement from NY Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC), stating that Lyft does not meet safety and licensing criteria in the market - unlicensed Lyft drivers would be fined \$2,000 for picking up passengers via the Lyft app (Novet, 2014). What is common to Lyft’s reaction to regulation in each of these markets is that Lyft continued their service despite the setbacks, provided public policy statements regarding its driver pool and used its user communities to vocalize resistance towards the government (Lawler, 2014; Novet, 2014).

Competition against Uber has been tough for Lyft all the way from 2012 until 2018. Competition has taken different forms during the years, but it has been fiercest when it comes to battling for a sustainable driver pool in local markets. It is interesting to note that Uber

was, and still is considerably ahead of Lyft in market expansion. For example, Uber already had passed the New York TLC regulations when Lyft entered the market (Novet, 2014). Uber took an aggressive stand in defending its driver pool in the North American markets, such as organizing an undercover campaign called Operation SLOG in 2014, which included pushing its own users to distract Lyft drivers by ordering fake drives (Lawler, 2014) and aggressive marketing campaigns to convert Lyft drivers to register on Uber. Other Uber actions were for example paying substantial fees (\$250 - \$500) for Lyft driver to register on Uber instead (Soper, 2014; Weber, 2014), offering stronger driver referral fees to its users and introducing lower prices in areas of increased competition from Lyft.

Lyft also rewarded its most active drivers with a 10% higher commission if they drove more than 30 hours per week starting from 2014 but ultimately switched the model into rewarding active drivers measuring the number of drives instead of hours in order to stop hour-based frauds from happening (Bergen, 2015).

Even after the ignition phase 2012 – 2014, maintaining the supply side stayed a top priority for Lyft. The company launched a driver perks -program called Accelerate in March 2015. As Lyft’s business model relies on treating its drivers as individual contractors instead of employees, it could not offer traditional employee benefits. Instead, it maintained a pool of discounts and perks depending on the experience level of the driver on Lyft platform. For instance, drivers would start at “Silver level”, where they get discounts for car purchases from partnering vehicle retailers, health insurance and support with taxes. Building on their experience, the drivers would receive perks such as car maintenance and gym memberships on Gold level. On the final Platinum level, drivers could always cut the queue in driver support chat. (Nagy, 2015).

Building demand

Lyft raised substantially large amounts of venture capital in 2013 (\$60M) and 2014 (\$150M) to fuel its rapid growth after pivoting from Zimride to its current business model (Chaey, 2013; Fried, 2014). The funding appears to have been spent generously into growth marketing and user acquisition: after the big North American launches in Boston, San Diego, Los Angeles, Seattle and New York in 2013 – 2014, the company launched in 24 cities inside just 2 weeks, offering free rides on the Lyft platform during the entire two week launch period for new riders to test the service (Lawler, 2014). In addition, Lyft cut down average fares by 10% overall. As the number of markets grew to a total of 60 cities, so grew user numbers. By mid-2013, upon the launch in Washington, Lyft reached one million completed

rides (Lawler, 2013). At the same time, Lyft doubled the number of weekly rides inside a three-month period, which was mainly due to positive word of mouth spreading through the user audience (Grant, 2013).

After Lyft had achieved larger user numbers, it started to play out new pricing structures to maintain steady growth and flexibility of use during both peak hours and low demand periods. First, in 2013 the company launched Prime Time Tips, a dynamic pricing structure for demand peak hours (Lawler, 2013). Prime Time Tips allocated a maximum of 25% additional fee directly to drivers' pockets during peak hours, incentivising drivers to pick up more passengers during times of strong demand, while still offering riders a feasible price range. Purposefully, the model was different than Uber's maximum of 2x surge pricing, where the company also took a cut. Lyft launched an additional pricing model in March 2014, the Happy Hour –feature which cuts -50% off the normal riding fee when there are drivers available but not customers to order rides (Lawler, 2013; Soper, 2014).

A fundamental shift in Lyft's overall pricing model happened in March 2014 through switching from donation-based payments into fare-based pricing. The fare pricing entailed a minimum payment of \$6, plus a \$1.90 fee per mile, \$0.35 per minute, \$1.50 pick-up fee and a \$1 Trust and Safety fee. (Soper, 2014)

In addition to more flexible pricing, Lyft introduced partnerships and reached out to new user groups in order to boost demand. In April 2014, it established a partnership with Slickdeals, an application for crowdsourced discount deals as a way to distribute free rides for first time users (Lazarro, 2014). The Slickdeals campaign was available in 30 cities where Lyft operated.

In the first half of 2014 Lyft started to market specific services for three new user groups: premium rides (Gayomali, 2014), low-cost shared rides (McGarry, 2014) and business users (Taylor, 2014). The premium ride, Lyft Plus, was twice as expensive as a normal ride and always included a car that would fit 6 people minimum. On the contrary, Lyft Line was introduced to serve riders who prefer lower costs. Lyft Line collected several people along the same route to share a ride and pay 60% less than for a normal ride. Lyft for work, on the other hand, enabled businesses to purchase an amount of Lyft credits for each employee to be used in work travel and commute. According to Taylor (2014), 20 companies signed up for the service shortly after the launch. Interestingly, each of these three new services were direct competitive moves into a market previously only served by Uber's similar services, such as Uber Black (premium service), Uber Pool (cheaper carpooling) and Uber for Business.

Later in 2014 Lyft pursued to drive to more users to its carpooling service Lyft Line. Firstly, the platform introduced Driver Destination, a tool which drivers could use to decide which orders to pick up in order to optimize the route as a whole (Lawler, 2014). This made carpooling easier. In addition, Lyft paid both drivers and riders for using Lyft Line in order to acquire users for the feature (Wasserman, 2014). However, in the beginning of 2015, the aggressive user acquisition efforts led to a short car-pooling price war between Uber and Lyft. After Uber first launched \$5 fixed prices on Uber Pool rides, Lyft responded with a flat rate of \$2.5 one day later (Weber, 2015). Later in the year, Lyft changed this pricing into what it called Lyft Hot Spots – certain spots in San Francisco where Lyft Line rides could be ordered with \$3 each. However, the Hot Spots pilot was shut down 5 months later (DeAmicis, 2015).

Lyft used different pricing strategies also in the later stages of evolution. In 2017-2018, Lyft introduced a Loyalty program consisting of three different parts. Via a partnership with Delta Airlines, it rewarded frequent airport riders with Delta Airlines free miles who rode Lyft (Delta Airlines, 2017). Secondly, the company piloted subscription-based pricing in Denver for frequent users and launched Lyft Personal Plans in all its markets in mid-2018 (Chuang, 2018). During the same year, it introduced a rewards program for Business users as well (PYMNTS, 2018).

4.1.2 Augmenting the platform

Incremental improvements in the platform

In the end of 2014 Lyft had operated 18 million cumulative rides and maintained a driver base of 51 000 individual drivers (Kosoff, 2015; Carson, 2017). Using different tactics described in the earlier subchapter, it managed to reach a sustainable user base in order to start augmenting the platform infrastructure, through incremental improvements and more drastic value-adding new services.

In March 2015 Lyft raised its biggest funding round so far, \$520M led by the Japanese e-commerce giant Rakuten, followed by another round of \$150M from Icahn Enterprises in May. The purpose was to level up with Uber, boost expansion in North America and to especially focus on developing its carpooling service Lyft Line (Soper, 2015; FinSMEs, 2015). The company had expanded the carpooling service gradually from city to city, while facing regulatory pressure in some states due to debate over legitimacy of shared car rides (Kerr, 2014; McGarry, 2014). Lyft Line was an integral part of fulfilling the

company mission of seamless personal transportation, shared rides and less cars (Terdiman, 2015).

What’s notable about Lyft’s phase of growth during 2014 – 2015 is the way it actively used commercial partnerships with other platforms and industry incumbents to bring on new features and services into its own platform. Examples of incremental improvements through partners include technical integrations of the Lyft app with payment processors Stripe (Reader, 2015), PayPal (Reader, 2015) and Google Wallet (Baldwin, 2015). In addition, partnerships were initiated with communication tool Slack (Titlow, 2015) and social media platform Facebook (Raymundo, 2015) to implement integrations which enabled users to order rides inside these two commonly used platforms.

Lyft continued to support its driver pool by introducing a series of partnerships: with Verizon to cut drivers phone bills (Heisler, 2015) and with GPS navigation app Waze to give better route instructions (Keller, 2016).

In June 2015, Lyft acqui-hired a start-up named Leo to bring more talent on board for needs of some specific technologies. The team had developed location-based messaging and had formerly worked for Google. According to speculation, the team was meant to develop Lyft’s location-, payment- and user experience features (Buhr, 2015).

Meanwhile, Lyft also continued to develop new tools to improve on its core functionalities: carpooling and user experience of rides. In March 2015 Lyft introduced “Profiles” feature that enabled users to describe themselves in more detail with fun facts and other info. Lyft used this info to match riders and drivers with common interests (Sawers, 2015). Later in the year, it introduced new pricing option for Lyft Line, where passengers would get cheaper rides if they are ready to wait for it longer (Lynley, 2015). To add up on this feature, Express Re-route feature was implemented at the same time. Basically, Lyft optimised the pick-ups automatically, suggesting deleting your current order to be picked up by a Lyft Line that was matched to your route (Dickey, 2015). These three new features gave Lyft Line much needed operational flexibility and was aligned with the strategy formulated for its recent funding round in March 2015.

Notable incremental improvements in the Lyft platform after 2014 – 2015 stem from major improvements in its driver services. In 2017, Lyft released a standalone app for drivers (Lee, 2017) and a 24/7 driver support service (Locklear, 2017). In 2018, the company introduced a fixed amount of tipping, an event planner feature and default 5-star ratings for drivers to protect their ratings (Catalano, 2018).

Extending the value of the platform

During 2014 – 2015, several value-adding features and initiatives were launched to enhance Lyft's position in the market, growing platform operations and the company's international expansion. A notable characteristic in Lyft's period of growth is its engagement in a large number of commercial alliances with different companies in the ride-hailing ecosystem. Next, the most important partnerships are described to illustrate the value-extension of Lyft platform during 2014 – 2015.

The most notable strategic action during Lyft's growth phase was its strategic partnerships with three Asian ride-hailing companies. The deals with Chinese DiDi Chuxing, Indian Ola and South East Asian GrabTaxi in late 2015, which aimed to start the company's international expansion, and to join forces against a common competitor in the global ride-sharing market, Uber (Srivastava, 2015, Lien, 2015). In essence, the four companies formed a global ride-hailing coalition that would ease trade between them by borrowing users to each other.

With Didi Chuxing, Lyft established an agreement where DiDi users traveling from China to U.S. could hail a ride from the Lyft pool using the DiDi app, and vice versa. This created a huge market opportunity for both companies, as the annual travellers between China and U.S. are counted in millions. At the same time, DiDi invested \$100M in Lyft. (Srivastava, 2015).

With Ola and GrabTaxi, a similar integration was made, which allowed travelling users to easily hail rides in the other country via the other company's app. What was special about this approach was the fact that users could use the app in their native language and also pay with native currency. For Lyft, this was a way to bypass cultural barriers in Asia and get a foothold in a market that was hard, yet expensive to reach (Somerville, 2015).

In 2015, the company continued to support its drivers by working with Hertz to offer affordable car rentals for Lyft drivers and with Shell gas stations to offer cheaper gasoline (Somerville, 2015). This provided distinctive added value for drivers which were the lifeline of Lyft's operations.

In order to extend the platform services, Lyft used partnerships with healthcare organisations and hospitals to drive more users on its platform and tap in into an underserved user group. For instance, in 2016 the company established alliances with National Medtrans Network in New York to handle non-emergency rides to hospitals, and built a new feature called Concierge for its new partners to order rides on behalf of the elderly, sick, or immobile persons. In addition to getting more users on the platform, this was a way for Lyft to serve

the city community at the same time – the NY Medtrans Network reportedly operated 25,000 rides each week and wanted to have Lyft as an operator for all of them. (Matney, 2016).

Similar to the Medtrans partnership, Lyft started to work with several health care organisations: home-care company Lifematters, Blue Cross Shield Association, American Cancer Society and medical transportation company Acuity Link (iNews Wire, 2017; Melton, 2017; Dahlberg, 2017; Baum, 2018). The partnerships mainly aimed to decrease now-show rates and late arrivals in hospital appointments which created a huge inefficiency cost for hospitals in the U.S.

The company sought for more users and better customer experience via joint operations with heavy-traffic airports like Los Angeles Airport and the John. F. Kennedy airport to facilitate organised pick-ups points (Parker, 2015; Etherington, 2016). The platform also established relationships to different Airlines, including JetBlue (Etherington, 2016) and Delta Airlines (Delta Airlines, 2017), for users to earn airline membership credits, Lyft credits and frequent user rewards by using Lyft for airport travel.

In 2016, both Lyft and Uber started a partnership with grocery chain Walmart to provide an extra service for Walmart clients: last mile delivery of groceries purchased online. The fee for ride-hail deliver would appear as an added delivery fee for Walmart customers (Soper, 2016).

During a time of dramatic growth, Lyft's partnership strategy seemed to play a key role in growing value-added services on top of the core functionalities of the platform. It is interesting to point out that introducing a series of open partnerships is contrary to the strategy played out by main competitor Uber which relied mainly on creating in-house capabilities to produce add-on services (Hockenson, 2015). What's more, Lyft's internationalization strategy was also a total opposite of Uber's: where Lyft entered markets by partnering with local ride-hailing companies, Uber entered a market and aggressively competed with existing players (Lien, 2015).

4.1.3 Sustaining the platform business

Integrating with complements

Due to 2016, Lyft had grown from a small start-up to a growth company competing for market-leading position in North America and actively expanding to the Asian market with help from a select group of partners. During 2015, the company doubled the number of annual rides operated through its platform from 53 million to 160 million in 2016 (Carson,

2017). At end of 2016 the Lyft platform was run by 700 000 (Kerr, 2017) individual drivers, up from a total of 51 000 drivers in end-2014 (Kosoff, 2015). However, the growth was just picking more speed - in 2018 Lyft reached 1 billion completed rides (Dickey, 2018), and had 1,4 million drivers on its platform (Kerr, 2018).

As with “*extending the value of the platform*” earlier during the growth phase, Lyft kept actively building partnerships with companies around its ecosystem in order to build its competitiveness. However, some of the partnerships it established in later stages of its evolution were made with a longer-term mindset and were more strategic than most of the value-adding partnerships described in the earlier chapter. The company used partnerships with auto industry incumbents as well as with technology companies to build new technological elements in its platform and create offerings for markets adjacent to normal ride-sharing, namely self-driving cars and bike sharing (Jhonsa, 2017; Reuters, 2017; Miller, 2018; Ialorek, 2018). These initiatives were a turning point for Lyft’s evolution. Also, the same actions can be interpreted as a move from not only augmenting the platform itself but starting to contribute to the entire industry’s future by integrating into it, and by shaping it in order to sustain the platform business for longer term (Eisenmann et al., 2006; Cusumano, 2010). Current base of theory does not fully explain this phase (Constantiou et al., 2016).

Starting from the beginning of 2016, Lyft started to build capabilities to shape the future of ride-sharing and the automobile industry through autonomous, self-driving cars. During the course of two years (2016 – 2018), the company engaged in partnerships with automobile incumbent General Motors (GM) (Farooqui, 2016), Google’s self-driving technology spin-off Waymo (Jhonsa, 2017; Bambach, 2017), self-driving hardware developer Nutonomy (Etherington, 2017), artificial intelligence start-up Drive.AI (Etherington, 2017), auto industry leader Ford (Reuters, 2017), car manufacturer Magna (Reader, 2018), car brand Jaguar (Etherington, 2017) and finally with Google parent company Alphabet (Hawkins, 2017). Through studying the content of news releases on each of the initiatives, it becomes clear that their purpose was to bring together a group of trusted partners, each who can contribute their specific piece to develop self-driving car technology (Jhonsa, 2017; Fast Company, 2018). The content of the blog posts also revealed that Lyft’s part in this puzzle of strategic initiatives was to act as a platform and a pool of data, on which to build a self-driving infrastructure (Farooqui, 2016).

In January 2016 Lyft raised a funding round of \$1BN of which \$500M came from automobile industry incumbent General Motors (GM) (Barbaschow, 2016). Along the funding, the two companies agreed on a long-term alliance aiming to build a network of on-demand self-driving cars that could be operated through the Lyft platform. As a short-term

joint activity, the two companies agreed to offer GM cars with low rents (\$99 a week) to new Lyft drivers through a service called Express Drive (Lunden, 2016). The purpose of this short-term initiative was to gather more drivers to join the Lyft platform (Hawkins, 2016). After launching Express Drive service in 4 cities in mid- and eastern U.S., the allies decided to launch it on the West Coast as well due to increased popularity (Reuters, 2016). At the end of 2016, the relationship between the allies took a turn, when reportedly Lyft turned down an acquisition offer from GM after which GM allied with Uber to create a similar rental car service as Express Drive (Roston, 2016; Hawkins, 2017).

In the meanwhile, Lyft continued building capabilities in the field of self-driving car technology. A big step to implement this strategy was a partnership with Google’s subsidiary Waymo which specialised in building autonomous vehicle software, hardware and vehicles. As one blog post from May 2017 describes, the aim of the alliance was to “bring self-driving transportation into the mainstream market through joint product development efforts and pilot projects”, where the parties would contribute their own part – Lyft with its route-optimization algorithms and Waymo with its experience in real-world pilots and expertise in self-driving technology (Jhonsa, 2017; Bambach, 2017). Six months later, Lyft’s relationship with Alphabet deepened even further, as the company raised a \$1BN financing round from Capital G, the venture investment arm of Alphabet. What is interesting about this deal, is that Alphabet was invested in Uber earlier through its another venture arm, GV. However, Alphabet sued Uber over allegedly having broken trade secrets in the self-driving technology (Hawkins, 2017).

The sudden change in the alliance between GM and Lyft saw another twist in September 2017, when Lyft announced a partnership with competing incumbent, Ford (Reuters, 2017). The partnership was possible due to the non-exclusive nature of Lyft’s and GM’s relationship. The end goal of the Ford-Lyft alliance was to launch a fleet of self-driving Ford cars, accessible via Lyft app, by the end of year 2021. The strategy to accomplish this goal was structured around several actions via the partnership. Firstly, Ford offered an undisclosed number of cars and drivers to be added on the Lyft platform. Secondly, Lyft and Ford teams started developing integrative software that would enable Ford cars to directly communicate with the Lyft platform. Thirdly, Ford started to develop self-driving technology on the Lyft platform with help from its associated company Argo AI. What became clear from the blog posts discussing this release, is that the Ford -partnership was an example of Lyft’s openness strategy: in a public statement, Lyft invited third parties in the transportation industry to develop self-driving technologies utilizing the Lyft platform, in partnership (Reuters, 2017).

Lyft executed a similar openness strategy through partnerships with other automobile industry incumbents as well. Lyft joined in an alliance with first Jaguar Land Rover in June 2017, with a deal that included \$25M in funding for Lyft, a large fleet of Jaguar cars to be integrated on the Lyft platform and industry pilots in autonomous cars.

A partnership was created with car-part supplier Magna in early 2018, with Lyfts benefits including a \$200M funding round, and a possibility to build and test self-driving car technology elements to be sold to industry incumbents in partnerships with Magna (Reader, 2018). The partnership was an interesting push into the self-driving industry from Lyft that was so far only known for its ride-hailing app. An earlier related blog post reveals that Lyft had rented a 5000 -acre stadium in California for testing self-driving technology and its technological elements, and that it had opened a new office called “Level 5” that was focused on developing autonomous car software and hardware in-house (Reader, 2018).

In addition to self-driving car technology, another strategic avenue that Lyft took was to integrate with the providers of bike- sharing programs. For Lyft, one of the first initiatives in this field was a promotional partnership with Biki, a bike-sharing program in Honolulu, Hawaii (Hawaii Star Advertiser, 2017). The campaign promised discounts for Biki users who subscribed on Lyft, as well as donations for a local bike sharing association. In early 2018, Lyft integrated its routes via pre-planned pick up spots with close proximity to bike-sharing stations of the Baltimore bike sharing program (Dickey, 2018). These partnerships paved the way for Lyft’s own bike-sharing service that was released in July 2018 (Brown, 2018). Lyft aimed to create partnerships with cities and communities to enable well-functioning bike-sharing programmes across North America (Brown, 2018). The launch was a part of a fundamental update on how Lyft wanted to implement its vision, through investing in transportation in underserved communities, better integration of different transportation methods through Lyft platform, decreasing traffic violence and taking of 1 million cars off the streets by 2019 in the U.S (Brown, 2018). It is interesting to note that the launch of Lyft’s own bike-sharing program followed an acquisition of Motivate made in June 2018, a bike-sharing business worth \$250M (Reader, 2018).

In addition to moving into the bike-sharing business, Lyft responded to competition from Uber, Lime and Bird, which had recently started operations in electric scooter rentals. In 2018, Lyft quickly launched its own services in San Francisco, Austin, Santa Monica and Denver, charging \$1 for unlocking a scooter, and an additional 15 cents per minute (Ialorek, 2018; SoCal – Tech, 2018; Korosec, 2018). A blog post from early 2018 reveals that Lyft had created functionalities for both bike- and scooter sharing long before it had legal permission

for operating them, nor publicly released capabilities of working in the areas (Constine, 2018).

Lyft showed clear signs of integrating with complementary platforms in one of its strategic core areas, carpooling, as it partnered with Scoop, a competing carpooling service. The idea was to supplement Scoops services by offering more rides for commuters (Elder, 2018). The partnership drove more commuters on the Lyft platform as well. In June 2018, Lyft continued its strong focus on carpooling by announcing a major Lyft app update that better supported its users to select carpooling instead of individual rides through a new service called “Lyft Shared Rides”, better integration with public transport systems and “one tap to ride” -feature (Elder, 2018). In other words, Lyft made significant changes into the user experience of the app to support carpooling and public transport and re-branded its carpooling function.

Competing with rival platforms

Earlier theories of Sharing Platform evolution do not cover competitive dynamics between rival platforms (Constantiou et al., 2016), despite the fact that Platform Economics and -Strategy literature have been found to be especially prone to winner-takes-all competition dynamics, platform envelopment (Eisenmann et al., 2016) and pricing competition (Evans, 2003; Rysman, 2009). However, the findings suggest that competitive actions towards rival platforms have been a fundamental element along Lyft’s evolution.

According to findings of this study, Lyft’s most important rival ride-sharing platforms include Uber, Didi, Ola and Grab. Uber has been Lyft’s fiercest competitor mainly because the companies started their operations in the same home market, the U.S. Moreover, Uber is the leader in North American ride-sharing market but Lyft has been able to obtain more market share. In 2018 Lyft reported to have a 35% market share in North America, up from 20% only 18 months earlier (PYMNTS, 2018). At the same time, Uber reported to have 70%. Whereas Uber and Lyft have basically shared the North American market, Grab has dominated the South-East Asia, whereas Didi is the number one in China and Ola the leader in India (Bhuiyan, 2017). For the purposes of this thesis, it is reasonable to briefly compare Lyft with its closest competitor Uber, as a large majority of findings of this section were related to Lyft’s actions towards Uber, and vice versa.

In 2018 Lyft reached one billion completed rides, whereas Uber had completed 10 billion rides due to the same date, having completed one billion rides already in 2015 (Dickey, 2018). Founded already in 2009, Uber had chosen a different expansion strategy

than Lyft: Uber used its first mover advantage to expand in North America and overseas as quickly as possible by raising massive rounds of capital, whereas Lyft decided to expand more carefully, only in North America and internationally via partnerships with local players (Srivastava, 2015; Hawkins, 2016). In terms of financial backup Uber had the upper hand as well. Due to 2017 the company had raised \$12BN and it was valued at \$69BN, whereas Lyft's similar numbers were \$2.6BN and \$7.6BN (Bhuiyan, 2017).

During 2016 – 2018, there are several news releases of Lyft and Uber battling over the North American market, mainly covering actions like pricing adjustments, new feature releases and marketing towards drivers of both platforms. For instance, in early 2016 Lyft reportedly dropped prices for riders in 33 markets, saying it wanted to “keep up with resolutions” of being “the most affordable option for passengers” (Buhr, 2016). However, according to the blog post, this was a reaction towards Uber's similar price drop weeks earlier. In the densest markets, price reductions increased to price wars, such as in New York in 2014 (Kerr, 2014), San Francisco in 2015 (Weber, 2015) and Toronto in 2017 (Ng, 2017). What's more, Lyft rolled out nationwide subscription pricing in the U.S. to tie in regular users into using its platform in 2018 (Lekach, 2018).

In terms of feature releases, competitive reactions were fast paced. For example, it took Uber a year to launch a “multiple stops” feature after Lyft (Hartmans, 2017), 3 months to build an “instant pay” feature for its drivers after Lyft had released it (Bhuiyan, 2016) and only a few days to expand its ride-sharing program Uber Pool after Lyft expanded Lyft Line in the same local market (Soper, 2016). In a position of a market-leader, Uber seemed to react fast to diminish Lyft's competitive moves by introducing a similar feature. Lyft's new feature releases included for example launching premium rides called Lyft Lux to rival Uber Black in 2017 (Lien, 2017) and launching an in-app navigation feature in 2017 (Bhuiyan, 2017). What is more, Lyft launched a standalone app for drivers in 2017 which was rather late compared to Uber which had it for years (Carson, 2017).

According to the blog findings, competition between Uber and Lyft was fiercest when it comes to maintaining and acquiring more drivers on their respective platforms. Although similar competition for drivers lasted many years, the best example of this during 2016 – 2018 is the Uber “Hell” program (Dellinger, 2017). It included Uber creating fake driver accounts on the Lyft platform to make its users wait longer and tracking of drivers that were multi-homing on Lyft and Uber. The tracked drivers received generous offers from Uber in order to diminish their time used on driving Lyft. On the other hand, Lyft utilized several Uber scandals that led to drivers and riders deleting the Uber app in 2017, by expanding rapidly into more than 50 cities at once (Sumagaysay, 2017), resulting in a 60% increase in

passenger activations (Johnson, 2017). Lyft also focused on depth of penetration in different states of the U.S. – whereas Uber had nationwide coverage, Lyft was reported to have a better state-wide coverage (Fingas, 2017). That means, not only operating driver fleets in the most central areas but paying drivers an extra fee to serve riders in the rural areas as well.

According to the findings from blog entries, Lyft also boosted its driver marketing by acquiring two start-up teams, YesGraph and DataScore in late 2017 (Real, 2017). The start-ups' employees joined Lyft payroll, specifically to strengthen the growth- and retention teams.

In addition to geographical markets and users Uber and Lyft also competed over several new vertical markets (Evans, 2009), or in other words, by introducing new sides to their platforms (Eisenmann et al., 2006; Evans, 2009). Operating self-driving cars, electric scooters and bike-sharing were some of these new sides for both of the platforms. As mentioned in the earlier chapter, Lyft did a major acquisition in the bike-sharing space to match Uber's similar offering that was already in the market (Reader, 2018). What is more interesting, according to an interview of Lyft director of product Taggart Matthiessen, the cornerstone of Lyft's competitive strategy was to push into the self-driving car service, and thus fundamentally improve users' lives instead of only growing in terms of market share (Johnson, 2017). From the data it becomes clear that Lyft was committed to follow this strategy, as it publicly pointed out future goals to operate increasing numbers of autonomous cars via its platform in partnership with incumbents and other technology providers (Kerr, 2016; Reuters, 2017). Lyft executed the strategy by launching first self-driving Lyft cars in Boston (Etherington, 2017) and San Francisco in 2017 (Davies, 2017). At a similar pace, Uber was testing a fleet of autonomous cars in Pittsburgh in 2017 and had tested its own technology for two years longer than Lyft (Kerr, 2016). However up until 2018, Lyft had reportedly operated over 5000 autonomous drives, whereas at the same time Uber had to pause its efforts due to heated public discussions caused by fatal incidents via Uber's self-driving cars (Reuters, 2018).

China is a huge market for both Uber and Lyft. The companies had different strategies in pursuing a share of it, as described in the earlier chapter. Whereas Uber aggressively entered the market to compete with local market leader Didi, Lyft engaged in a bi-lateral partnership with Didi, Ola and Grab (Hawkins, 2016). Relevant strategic actions in trying to get ahead in this competition took a twist due to Uber's merge with Didi, which happened by surprise to Lyft. In essence, Didi acquired Uber's China business operations after Uber ran into consequent regulatory troubles in the country. The study data does not tell the story of what happened to the partnership between Lyft and Didi, despite the fact that Lyft reported to “re-evaluate” the partnership. (Hawkins, 2016)

In 2019 the rivals, Uber and Lyft, both publicly hinted they are aiming to go public (IPO) in the near term but Lyft seemed to be getting there first by executing the deal faster (Lekach, 2019). Lyft publicly stated it would go public in March 2019, whereas there was no public statement from Uber at this point (PitchBook Blog, 2019). The hypothetical valuations of both companies were \$20M-\$25M for Lyft, and more than \$90M for Uber (Lekach, 2019). Ahead of the IPO, Lyft lowered prices for its services all across the North American market, reportedly to slightly increase its market share compared to Uber, which might have had a positive effect on the IPO valuation (Efrati, 2019). What is notable about the Lyft IPO is the state of its business: in March 2019 it filed public financial documents for its public offering, stating a \$900M loss in 2018, but an annual revenue of more than \$2.2BN with growth of 76% from 2017 (Somerville, 2019). One analyst claimed that Uber had lost market share over the course of past 10 years to Lyft steadily year by year, and that one potential reason for Lyft to file first for an IPO was not be compared to its larger rival's valuation if it did so first (Griswold, 2019). Finally, on March 29th, the company stock was released on the New York Stock Market with a valuation of \$24BN which reportedly exceeded public expectations (BBC, 2019).

4.2 Case 2: TaskRabbit

TaskRabbit was founded in 2008 in Boston as “RunMyErrand” by Leah Busque and her husband. The business took its first steps when the founders decided to attend Facebook's start-up incubator program, fbFund, during 2009 in California (Roush, 2010). At the time Sharing Economy and other forms of crowd-sourcing were hot new topics in Silicon Valley and thus the company got a kickstart to its early growth by raising a financing round of \$1 million from two venture capital companies in the area. The capital was used to launch the service with its current name, TaskRabbit, in San Francisco, in early 2010 (Roush, 2010). According to the CEO Busque, the initial core idea of the company was “service networking”, where online social networking was used to connect “runners” to do a range of tasks for clients who needed help with, for example walking the dog, grocery shopping or picking up dry cleaning (Roush, 2010).

Figure 6 illustrates a timeline of TaskRabbit's user growth, where data points are retrieved from blog post studied for the case. Compared to the data on Lyft, it is notable that TaskRabbit reported its number of clients in terms of current, actual number of clients, not as a cumulative number as Lyft did. However, the number of taskers is communicated in terms of cumulative numbers, as in Lyft's case for drivers. At launch, TaskRabbit's supply side

consisted of 300 “taskers” or “runners” in Boston, Massachusetts and 50 beta-users in San Francisco, California (Roush, 2010). The other side of TaskRabbit’s platform are called “clients”. After the 2010 launch, reported numbers of platform participants were not found until end-2011, when the company publicly stated 1,500 taskers and 3,000 tasks listed in service exchange on the platform (Tsotsis, 2011). This is when TaskRabbit started to find its growth trajectory – in just 1,5 years, the platform grew to 1.250,000 clients in late 2013 and 30,000 taskers in October of 2013 (Yeung, 2013). Interestingly, TaskRabbit engaged in several commercial partnerships to boost demand during this period (Indvik, 2012; Yeung, 2012). However, the user growth slowed significantly from 2014 onwards, as figure 6 illustrates. As one of the possible reasons for this, the results suggest TaskRabbit’s change in platform service offering in 2014 (Weber, 2014; Brustein, 2016). Finally, in 2018 the platform reported it facilitated 60,000 taskers and in 2018, 1.500,000 clients (Swisher, 2017, Alaimo, 2018).

TaskRabbit’s growth was fuelled by rounds of venture capital funding during 2010 – 2012. It raised \$850.000 and \$5M in 2010 (Klein, 2010; Taylor, 2010), followed by \$17M in 2011 (Huang, 2011) and \$13M in 2012 (Jeffries, 2012). It is notable that the company did not raise large rounds of external capital after this. The only data point of revenue found in the research process is from 2014, when the company reported a modest \$2,1M revenue (Brustein, 2016). Finally, in September 2017 IKEA acquired TaskRabbit with an undisclosed sum (Swisher, 2017). *Figure 7: TaskRabbit – funding and revenue 2008 - 2012* illustrates this.

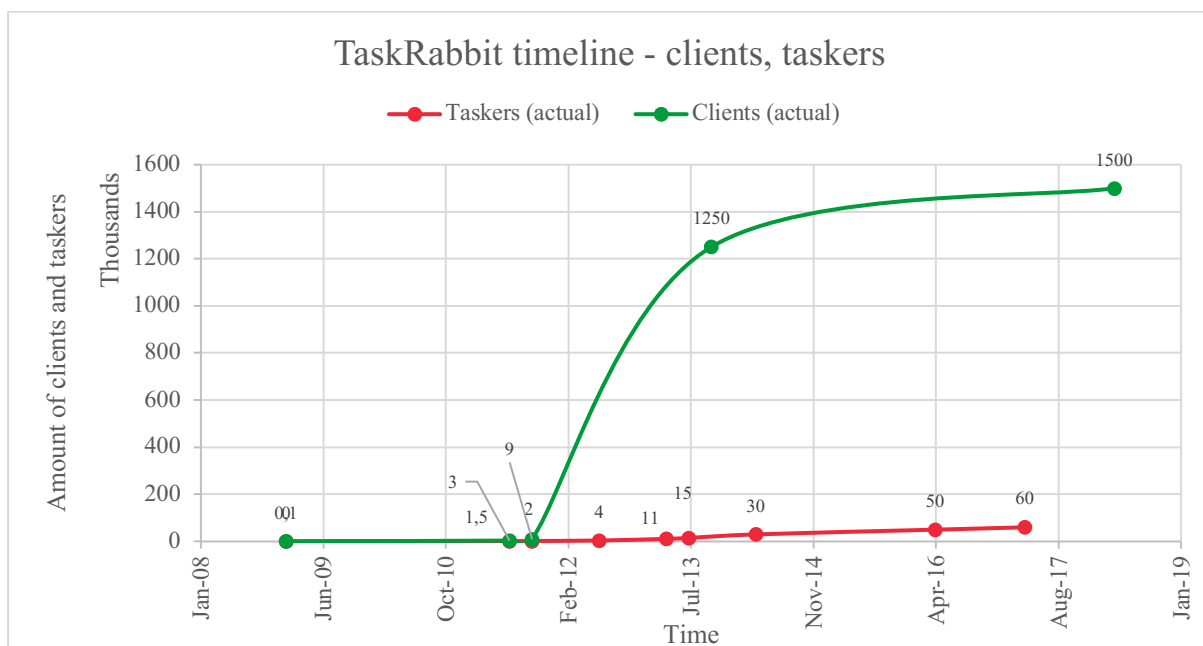


Figure 6: TaskRabbit – number of clients and taskers 2008 - 2018. Data from Roush (2010), Tsotsis (2011), Yeung (2013), Sacks (2013), Swisher (2017), Alaimo (2018).

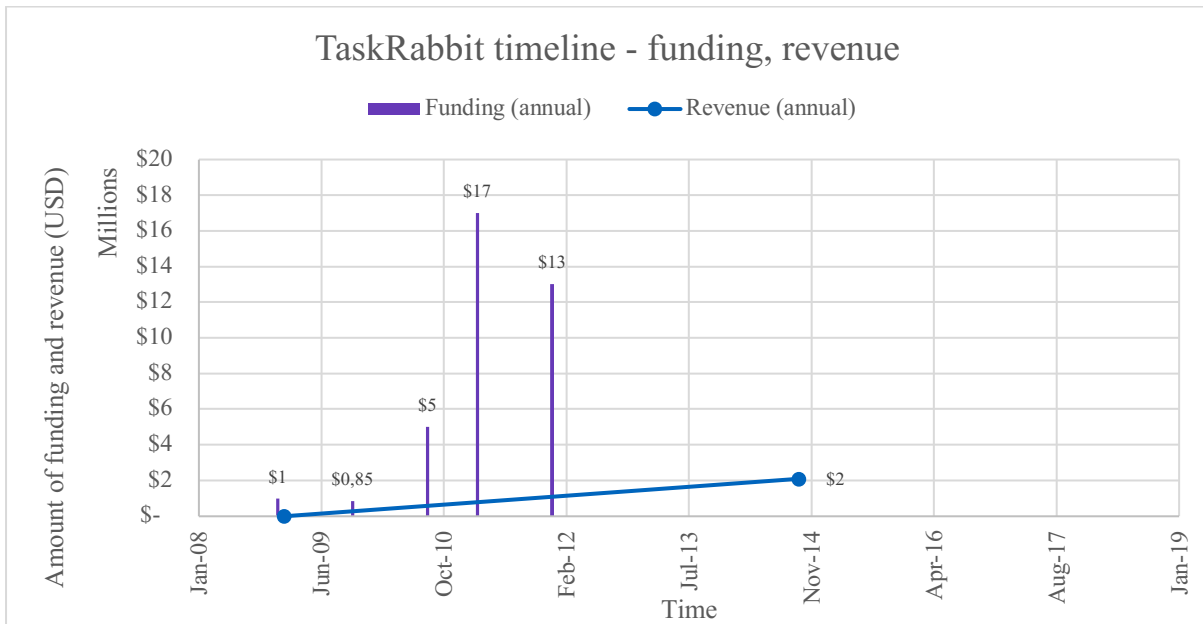


Figure 7: TaskRabbit – amount of funding and revenue 2008 - 2018. Data from Klein (2010), Taylor (2010), Huang (2011), Jeffries (2012), Brustein (2016).

4.2.1 Creating a network of users

Building demand

Since its San Francisco -launch in early 2010, TaskRabbit grew from an initial 350 taskers to 1,500 taskers and 3,000 clients in late 2011 (Roush, 2010; Tsotsis, 2011). During this time, it raised four rounds of capital (Klein, 2010; Taylor, 2010; Huang; 2011; Jeffries, 2012), which kickstarted a period of accelerating user growth. TaskRabbit publicly stated that the funds would be used for expansion in North American markets (Taylor, 2010; Huang, 2011). The early efforts to grow TaskRabbit’s network of users were found to be strongly focused on creating demand, whereas strengthening the supply side played a minor role.

When it comes to TaskRabbit working to strengthen its supply side, only a few relevant findings are found. From the early beginning, TaskRabbit used criminal background checks, phone screenings and video interviews to quality-check all of its new taskers (Tsotsis, 2011; Taylor, 2011). The process took time, and the company publicly stated having 5000 eager applicants waiting to get accepted as a tasker for the platform in 2012, as the vetting process of. new taskers could only handle a few hundred on a monthly basis (Jeffries, 2012). The platform had a reputation system for clients to rate taskers after each job was done, and a transaction service to move payments (Taylor, 2011). TaskRabbit was also mentioned to use significant amounts of early funding to acquire runners on its platform to secure operations in new markets, such as San Francisco in 2010 (Roush, 2010). What’s notable about how

TaskRabbit treated its taskers, is the level of gamification it applied into its platform: leader boards, progress bars, awarded points and “levels” for taskers were a fundamental part of the TaskRabbit platform early on, meant to engage users to be more active (Tsotsis, 2011).

After starting, TaskRabbit expanded explosively from a city to another. TaskRabbit seemed to excel in urban areas with high density of residents. After launching the service in San Francisco in 2010 (Roush, 2010), the platform raised \$5M of venture capital, to start a nationwide expansion into other major urban areas (Taylor, 2010). Due to June 2011, the company had launched in Los Angeles and Orange Country, California (Torres, 2011), and was facilitating more than 3000 tasks per month (Tsotsis, 2011). Due to the end of 2011 the service was live already in 12 U.S. cities and the company planned expansion to areas like Seattle, Austin, Atlanta and Philadelphia among others (Huang, 2011). In end of 2012, the platform had expanded and reached a stable market position in 9 cities in the U.S., including New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Chicago, Seattle, Portland, Austin and San Antonio (Lawler, 2012). It had also set sights for international markets and was expected to aim for Vancouver and London during 2013 (Lawler, 2012).

What is special about the platform pricing during 2010 - 2012, is that it operated a business model based on bidding on different services offered by the taskers (Tsotsis, 2011). In other words, the pricing levels were not fixed but were based on clients selecting the best offer and the most reliable tasker. Task Rabbit took a 12% - 30% share from the revenue created (Tsotsis, 2011). In its early days, the company also conducted different promotional pricing campaigns to drive more clients on its platform. In 2012 it also launched a \$10 flat pricing scheme for its Deliver Now service, a home-delivery service for fast food (Taylor, 2012). During the same year, the company released a queuing service for \$55 dollars up to four hours upon the launch of a new iPhone model, meant for people who did not want to stay in line themselves to purchase the iPhone (Fermoso, 2012).

During 2010 – 2012, TaskRabbit successfully conducted joint promotion with leading consumer brands. Its first promotional partnership with a major brand was with Bravo television network, where actions included TaskRabbit being featured in one of their TV series, and a joint presence at SXSW conference in Austin (360i, 2012). The blog source states that Bravo’s digitally savvy on-air, online and conference audience was a lucrative target for TaskRabbit’s marketing efforts that included a \$25 voucher for the platform services. In October 2012 the platform started a joint campaign with PepsiCo, where PepsiCo used TaskRabbit platform as a channel to promote its new product, PepsiNext (Indvik, 2012). The company promised 50 free tasks for platform clients for four weeks – accompanied with a unit of PepsiNext. Third major action during 2012 was an alliance with the clothing brand

GAP, where customers who purchased more than \$75 worth of goods from GAP stores in New York or San Francisco, got a \$25 voucher for TaskRabbit’s services (Lawler, 2012; Yeung, 2012). According to the blog sources, the campaign was meant to raise awareness of TaskRabbit among consumers in key the two key markets.

As for other releases, TaskRabbit released a public API in 2012 to make it possible for other online services to link their users with the TaskRabbit service, and thus drive more taskers and clients on the platform (Tiku, 2012). In conjunction with the API release, the company launched three new partnerships based on the integrations via API: YouEye, an online user testing platform, one with Producteev, a task management app, and one with Astrid, the personal organization and group collaboration app.

In addition to geographical market expansion via fast-paced marketing, promotional pricing and technological integrations, TaskRabbit also acquired rival platform companies to capture customers, talent and technology faster (O’Dell, 2012; Roush, 2012; Taylor, 2012). In early 2012, the company acquired SkillSlate, a New York-based platform that was focused on matching real service professionals, such as programmers, handymen or movers instead of occasional gig workers (O’Dell, 2012; Roush, 2012). The blog sources state that this was a strategic move in order to broaden the service offering of TaskRabbit by adding more professionals on the platform, to strengthen its position in the New York market and to acquire some of SkillSlate’s key technological talent. Later in 2012, TaskRabbit did its second acquisition over kid’s clothing start-up One Jackson (Taylor, 2012). According to the sources, the key strategic intent of this acquisition was to hire several technical people and key executives from One Jackson.

4.2.2 Augmenting the platform

Combining platform services in new ways

As figure 6 illustrates, after its early steps during 2010 – 2012, TaskRabbit’s user count started growing fast. Between 2013 – 2014, the platforms clientele grew to 1.250,000 in October 2013 (Yeung, 2013), whereas the number of taskers increased to 15,000 in October 2013 (Yeung, 2013). Between the first quarter of 2013 and the third quarter of 2014, a separate narrative is identified: TaskRabbit was focused on maintaining the growth via release of new features, services and finally bundling them in a completely new way (Taylor, 2014; Weber, 2014; Heath, 2014). Interestingly, the first publicly stated revenue estimate was

released in October 2014, as the company reportedly made \$2.1M in sales that year (Brustein, 2016).

The period is also characterized by start of international expansion for TaskRabbit, by opening shop in London, U.K. (Yeung, 2013). According to Yeung, what was special about the launch in London, was the fact that the platform removed the bidding-based pricing model that so far had been at the core of its service. Instead the taskers in London were allowed to set an hourly rate, but only for three pre-defined categories available upon the launch: house or office cleaning, handyman help, and Christmas assistance. In the North American market, the same old bidding service was still in place in the meantime.

In all of its key markets, TaskRabbit had an intent to grow its share in the professional services area in addition to just occasional gig-workers offering their personal service on the platform. The findings that showcase this include promotion of TaskRabbit as a recruiting platform (Malik, 2012) and the SkillsSlate acquisition in 2012 (O’Dell, 2012; Roush, 2012). The platform continued taking actions towards this direction by launching Task Rabbit for Business service in the form of a web portal available for the SXSW Conference in 2013 (Taylor, 2013). According to the source, TaskRabbit was trying to position itself as “more reliable than online classifieds and less costly than traditional temp agencies”. The company went into full-on competition with temporary worker agencies by introducing new business user features 3 months later, including services for compliance paperwork, handling payroll taxes and unemployment insurance for companies hiring temporary workers for more than 15 hours a week (Taylor, 2013). According to the source, due to that date the business side of the platform was the fastest growing user group with 16,000 businesses signed up. The company took a 26% cut from the business service (Taylor, 2013), and reportedly 30% of its revenue came from business users (Taylor, 2013). At the end of 2013 the company announced layoffs for 20% of its crew, with a reported intent to focus on the enterprise market, mobile user experience and to turn the business profitable (Taylor and Ha, 2013). However, in beginning of 2014 the business service portal of TaskRabbit was removed despite its early success (Perez, 2014). According to the blog, TaskRabbit explained the action by stating its intent to re-directs its business- and consumer users to use the same core service of TaskRabbit, not any separate business interfaces.

Later in 2014 more drastic changes in TaskRabbit’s operations started to take wind. According to the blog posts, based on the results the platform got from its newly opened U.K. market, the platform decided to re-organise its services in all markets according to what seemed to work in London (Newton, 2014; Taylor, 2014; Weber, 2014; Heath, 2014). The change in the platform was conducted in two steps. In June 2014, the company announced a

“brand new product experience” based on user feedback (Sawers, 2014). It included a new terminology, where “runners” were called “taskers”, and the customers “clients”. The change also included a new algorithm that matched taskers to tasks based on their previous activity in the service, their skill set and availability. Most importantly, a new “transparent pricing system”, or in other words an hourly salary model for taskers was introduced instead of bidding. This shift in pricing fundamentally changed TaskRabbit’s business model (Taylor, 2014; Weber, 2014).

The new product experience was followed by a launch of a new website and an updated client-side mobile application for both Android and iOS in July 2014 (Taylor, 2014). More importantly, the company restricted available tasker services to be offered to four most popular ones: moving, handyman services, cleaning and errands such as grocery shopping (Weber, 2014). TaskRabbit reportedly reasoned this shift in service logic as an intent to streamline the logic of the platform, and to make services instantly bookable without any further friction. What is more, the blogs state that the change in services was based on user feedback, research made by the company data science team, and several user interviews. In the midst of the change, the company also announced a \$1M insurance for every task made on its platform (Weber, 2014). The company stated being highly confident that its users would accept this change (Taylor, 2014). However, shortly after the launch of the new version of the platform, some users criticized the new service vocally online and, in the media, especially about the new pricing model where bidding was replaced with hourly wages (Weber, 2014). On the other hand, the company reported having a dramatic rise in tasker applications since June (Taylor, 2014). Whether or not the change in service logic had a negative overall effect on the platform business, is not clearly stated in the sources. However, the platform user growth did slow down after summer 2014, as figure 6 illustrates.

4.2.3 Sustaining the platform

Competing for survival

By 2014, the platform had accumulated up to 1.250,000 clients and 30,000 taskers (Yeung, 2013). After the big changes in the platform services made in summer 2014, the company now operated in four specific task verticals (Taylor, 2014; Weber, 2014; Heath, 2014). For the third step of platform evolution between 2015 - 2018, a key passage (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) for TaskRabbit’s development is identified: “*competing for survival*”. Blog entries from this time indicate that the company went through a series of actions that highlight a

struggle for continuity of the entire business, such as efforts to find focus in business operations (Taylor, 2014; Weber, 2014; Heath, 2014), partnering with larger rival that operated in the exact same business (Sawers, 2015; Kafka, 2015), exploring a sale of the company (Huet, 2017), and finally being acquired by IKEA in 2017 (Swisher, 2017). The company also continued establishing new markets, including its international expansion to Canada in 2018 (Lawrence, 2018) and launches in six more cities in U.K. (Williams, 2018). The company did not raise any external funding rounds during this time.

As one blog post describes, the end goal for TaskRabbit was not to dominate a single niche in the “odd jobs” market as some of its competitors like Fiverr and AirTasker (Kokalitcheva, 2014; Lunn, 2018) but to capture the market for all kinds of quick tasks and gig jobs (Brustein, 2016), including the enterprise market (Taylor and Ha, 2013). Another article stated that TaskRabbit’s re-organised platform aimed to become the “Uber for everything”, as it operated a similar business logic but in a variety of fields (Heath, 2014). Some of the closest TaskRabbit competitors identified from the blog sources include social network for tasks called Pickle (Butcher, 2017), on-demand tasks platform Bizzby (Butcher, 2017) and task-sourcing app AirTasker (Lunn, 2018). Other relevant, more niche-focused competitors include knowledge-work site Fiverr (Kokalitcheva, 2014), food delivery app GrubHub (Dickey, 2014) and home-service providers Thumbtack and Handybook (Newton, 2014; Brustein, 2016).

Interestingly, also Amazon moved into the home services market in the U.S. in 2015 (Sawers, 2015). Amazon was reportedly engaged in partnership with TaskRabbit and other gig-economy start-ups to strengthen its home services offering (Sawers, 2015; Kafka, 2015). According to one blog post TaskRabbit was actively communicating the partnership with Amazon as one of their strengths for future expansion, but remained silent of its performance (Brustein, 2016). However, according to an analysis in one blog post, Amazon has the upper hand in the partnership (Zhuo, 2015).

Arguably TaskRabbit was struggling to reach its strategic goal of covering multiple areas of the gig economy, as it changed the fundamental logic of its service from bidding to hourly rates (Weber, 2014), and from a variety of services to only a handful of the most popular service areas (Taylor, 2014; Weber, 2014; Heath, 2014). The company also reported modest revenue results in 2014 (Brustein, 2016) and surprisingly discontinued its service for businesses after its initial success (Perez, 2014). All in all, the results of this study indicate that the later stages of the platform evolution a lack of focus in business operations, number of sides of the platform, and pricing – all of which have been proven to play a key role in Platform Strategy according to earlier research (Evans, 2003; 2009; Rysman, 2009).

However, other findings suggest more positive news for the company, including statements of TaskRabbit reaching profitability after strong 340% user growth during 2015 (Yeung, 2016), and future plans of expanding to 16 more cities starting from 2017 (Swisher, 2017).

The findings suggest that TaskRabbit continued to build commercial alliances with other industries to boost user growth. In 2015, the company partnered up with Lovespace, an on-demand storage space service to provide taskers to help with larger tasks related to the service (Lovespace, 2015). Additionally, the platform partnered up with media agency OMD by implementing a “donate” -button on its website and app interfaces (McClellan, 2015). The purpose of this partnership was to attend a marketing campaign for the Salvation Army.

During 2015 – 2018 period, TaskRabbit continued to implement changes into the operating model of its platform. In 2016 the platform introduced “on-demand matching” service for the iOS version of the platform, which aimed at making the service even more frictionless and fast for its clients (Yeung, 2016). In essence, the update promised to deliver a tasker in 90 minutes instead of the average 1-3 days that it previously took to get a tasker on a job. According to the management of TaskRabbit, the change was based on promising results generated by similar changes in the platform earlier – 340% user growth during 2015, and first signs of reaching profitability (Yeung, 2016).

In 2017 TaskRabbit publicly stated it was exploring the possibility for selling the company to possible acquirers (Huet, 2017; Swisher, 2017). The company continued to state that it was reaching profitability in its business operations (Bercovici, 2016; Swisher, 2016). It was soon after this announcement that the company CEO stated ambitious expansion plans for the future: the platform aimed to expand to 16 new cities, currently operating in 24 cities (Swisher, 2017). In just a few months, the platform established business in Baltimore, Nashville and Triangle.

In September 2017 TaskRabbit’s story took a dramatic turn, as IKEA acquired 100% of its shares with an undisclosed sum (Swisher, 2017). Nevertheless, TaskRabbit still remained independent in terms of brand and operations. In hindsight, the acquisition made sense from IKEA’s point of view, as the delivery and assembly of furniture purchased from IKEA was a major part of transactions in the TaskRabbit platform already from the beginning (Sacks, 2013; Brustein, 2016). Following on this logic, in 2018 IKEA launched a new “at-home assembly service” enabled through the TaskRabbit platform (Chang, 2018; Estrada, 2018).

Shortly after the IKEA acquisition, TaskRabbit’s most relevant actions included an expansion to Canada (Lawrence, 2018) and cutting all service fees by 50% (TaskRabbit, 2018) and struggling with a cyber breach in 2018 (Shu, 2018; Cameron, 2018). However, the

scope of research for this case study is limited up to the acquisition made by IKEA for the purposes of this thesis.

5 Discussion

Up to this date, Lyft is the only Sharing Economy business to successfully conduct an Initial Public Offering (Hawkins, 2019), whereas TaskRabbit’s acquisition by IKEA is one of the few notable exits amongst Sharing Economy Platforms (Swisher, 2017). Next, the evolution of Lyft from its launch in 2010 until the IPO in 2019 is discussed. Moreover, the evolution of TaskRabbit from its founding in 2008 until the acquisition by IKEA in 2017 is explained. For both case companies, results of the empirical study are compared to key findings from the literature.

The literature review findings show that current literature that would fully explain the evolution of Sharing Platforms does not exist. Due to the lack of scientific literature on the topic, a new theoretical framework is proposed by synthesizing findings from four research streams, consisting of literature from Sharing Economy (Constantiou et al., 2016), Platform Economics (Evans, 2003; 2009; Rysman, 2009), Information Infrastructure theory (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010) and Platform Strategy (Eisenmann et al., 2006; Rysman, 2009). The results provide answers for the two research questions stated in the introduction-chapter.

Based on iterative analysis of the theory and data, both within-case and cross-case (Eisenhardt, 1989), the findings translate Sharing Platform evolution into a three-step process. The process consists of the following steps: successful platforms first *create an initial network of users*, then proceed by *augmenting the platform services* and finally find ways to *sustain the platform business* for long term. The first two steps are based on Constantiou et al. (2016) framework, whereas the third step is constructed from the findings of the thesis. The findings from both cases provide validation for the constructs and their relationships in the first two steps of the framework initially created by Constantiou et al. (2016). The findings also indicate strong evidence for the existence of a third step, as the storylines of case companies seem to fit the selected theory (Evans, 2003; Eisenmann et al., 2006; Rysman, 2009). However, the study highlights differencing results between the two cases, as findings from the Lyft case study have a stronger connection with the research framework theory than the findings from the TaskRabbit study. Next, these findings are explained by answering both research questions. The first research question is:

1. *What are the common components for successful evolution of Sharing Economy Platforms, from a start-up to an established business?*

The results form an answer to the first research question. The findings show strong support for the first two steps of Sharing Platform evolution framework (Constantiou et al., 2016). Both platforms show evidence of creating an early network of users first, and then augmenting the platform by launching new services. The case of Lyft shows similar findings for these two steps, whereas findings on TaskRabbit indicate a slightly different narrative. The differences come alive in the core categories (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) of both cases' storylines. For Lyft, the study indicates similar core categories as Constantiou et al. (2016) in their study of Airbnb's evolution: "*building the supply side*" and "*building demand*" in relation to *creating a network of users*, and "*incremental improvements of the platform*" and "*extending the value of the platform*" in relation to *augmenting the platform*. In comparison, for TaskRabbit only one core category is found per each step: "*building demand*" in relation to *creating a network of users* and "*organizing platform services in new ways*" in relation to *augmenting the platform*. Both case storylines match with key theory highlighted in the research framework, including clear examples of strategies for igniting catalytic reaction in order to bypass the "chicken & egg" problem (Evans, 2003; 2009), as well as findings of cultivation strategy to tackle the bootstrap problem the adaptability problem (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010). The aforementioned elements are the common components for successful evolution of a Sharing Platform from the start to an established state of business. Next, these elements are described in more detail.

Creating a network of users

Both similarities and differences are found in how the case companies built their early network of users. Both companies utilized the "zig-zag" strategy (Evans, 2009) to capture relevant user groups on both sides of the platform with different actions. The companies also raised substantial amounts of venture capital to fuel rapid growth its markets from an urban area to another: Lyft expanded from San Francisco to Los Angeles, Seattle, Boston and New York (Chaey, 2013, Lawler, 2013; 2013; 2013; Campbell, 2017), whereas TaskRabbit started from Boston, expanded to the cities of West Coast (Roush, 2010; Taylor, 2011).

Considering how the case platforms built their supply side as a part of the "zig-zag" strategy (Evans, 2009), more actions in the storyline of Lyft were found than in the storyline of TaskRabbit. To be exact, the findings for TaskRabbit's attempts to build its supply side were so few that "*building the supply side*" was not identified as a core category in its

narrative. However, the findings show evidence of both companies using rigorous background checks, interviews and other methods to screen its supplier applicants (Tsotsis, 2011; Taylor, 2011; Fehrenbacher, 2012). Both companies also implemented rating- and reputation systems in their platform from the early beginning (Taylor, 2011; Fehrenbacher, 2012). These early features are examples of the cultivation strategy to tackle the bootstrap problem in the early design of a complex platform, or in other words, designing the platform to be as easily adaptable as possible for early users, with constant feedback from users (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010). A blog entry even states that Lyft learned the importance of building trust among suppliers from earlier Sharing Economy entrants, such as TaskRabbit (Fehrenbacher, 2012). Building on that, several instances of actions by Lyft to promote its service for drivers are identified. For example, the company extensively branded their service very user-friendly (Soper, 2014), added significant insurances for drivers early on (Lawler, 2012; 2014) and provided commissions for active drivers (Bergen, 2015). Lyft also had to fight for its driver base: it was constantly challenged by aggressive user acquisition tactics by Uber (Lawler, 2014), as well as government regulation (Novet, 2014). The research results show that compared to the case of TaskRabbit, for Lyft the supply side of the platform seemed to weigh more in importance. There is a clear connection to theory: Lyft treated the supply side users like marquee users, acknowledging their importance in overcoming the “chicken & egg” problem of early-stage platform business (Evans, 2003; 2009). The more drivers joined the Lyft platform, the more it increased rider’s willingness to participate. Thus, strong indirect network effects were at play (Evans, 2003; 2009). In other words, Lyft focused on acquiring and keeping important supply-side users more than TaskRabbit. The findings of the thesis point out that this was one of the defining success factors for Lyft’s early-stage “zig-zag” strategy (Evans, 2009). According to the strategy, Lyft aimed to attract a substantial number of supply side users on the platform first, in order to expand the demand side (Evans, 2009). For TaskRabbit the lack of strategic actions on taskers (supply side) has arguably resulted in losing some of the indirect network effects to fuel its growth later on (Evans, 2003; 2009).

When it comes to building the demand side of each platform, both companies showed clear strategic intent to expand rapidly. Firstly, both engaged in early commercial partnerships with well-known brands to increase demand: Lyft’s partnership with Slick Deals (Lazarro, 2014), and TaskRabbit’s partnerships with Bravo at the SXSW conference (360i, 2012), GAP (Lawler, 2012) and Pepsi (Indvik, 2012). These promotion actions have a link to theory, as both companies were seeking to acquire more users via “word of mouth” of early, innovative users (Evans, 2009). What is more, Lyft’s early “zig-zag” strategy (Evans, 2009)

included a bold change its pricing from initial donation-based model into fare-based pricing (Soper, 2014) and launching several new services, including Lyft Line for sharing low-cost rides (McGarry, 2014), Lyft Lux for premium rides (Gayomali, 2014), and Lyft for Business (Taylor, 2014). These actions can be seen as an example of building positive direct network effects to acquire more demand-side users (Evans, 2003; 2009). In addition, the launch of new services by Lyft is an example of the cultivation strategy described by Hanseth & Lyytinen (2010), where the first features are launched to meet the needs of early adopters in order to overcome the bootstrap problem.

In comparison, TaskRabbit's platform was not initially focused on a specific use case – instead it aimed to capture the whole “odd jobs” market (Brustein, 2016). The findings indicate that the lack of focus on specific use cases could have diminished possible direct and indirect network effects around the platform, and possibly complicated TaskRabbit's user acquisition in the future (Evans, 2003; 2009). Furthermore, TaskRabbit decided to use company acquisitions as a means to grow, by acquiring SkillSlate and One Jackson in 2012 in order to further increase the variety of services offered via the platform (Roush, 2012; Taylor, 2012). TaskRabbit's acquisitions are an example of an attempt to increase indirect network effects, as more different services on the platform lead to more interest from the demand side to join according to Evans (2003; 2009). For both companies, several actions focused on both the demand- and supply side work as an application of the “zig-zag” strategy in practice (Evans, 2009), as the platforms aimed to get both sides of users onboard (Evans, 2003). The constant iteration between acquiring supply and demand side users highlight a connection between the first two sub-constructs of the theoretical framework (*building the supply side* and *building the demand side*).

Augmenting the platform

As a result of this study, a key difference between the evolution of case platforms in the second phase (*augmenting the platform*) is identified. In hindsight, it is reasonable to argue that after having developed features for the early user network by tackling the bootstrap problem, the case platforms handled the adaptability problem differently (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010). In other words, TaskRabbit did not create new features to meet new users' needs, whereas Lyft rolled out new services and features almost constantly. The constant development and iteration with new services indicates a connection to cultivation strategy from the II theory (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010). Whereas Lyft seemed to systematically build indirect network effects (Evans, 2003; 2009) through incremental service additions like

subsidised rental cars from GM, payment solutions Google Wallet and Stripe (Lunden, 2016, Reader, 2015, Baldwin, 2015), TaskRabbit only conducted changes to its platform's existing features and their pricing (Taylor, 2013; 2014; Weber, 2014; Heath, 2014). What is more, Lyft clearly applied the openness strategy (Rysman, 2009) by integrating its platform with rivals Didi, Ola and Grab in order to add value for its existing users, and to tap into a completely new geographical user group at the same time (Srivastava, 2015, Lien, 2015). Some findings seem to contribute on both core-categories of the second evolutionary step. For example, the Lyft partnerships with GM (Farooqui, 2016) provided both incremental improvements (car rentals) as well as value extension (self-driving car development). In the case of Lyft, findings of "*incremental improvements on the platform*" and of "*extending the value of the platform*" have resulted in similar network-effects that strengthen each other, thus indicating a connection between the sub-constructs of the framework. For TaskRabbit, only one core-category was found: "*combining platform services in new ways*".

However, the research framework does not fully explain the changes in pricing TaskRabbit made during the second phase of evolution (Weber, 2014; Taylor, 2014). In comparison, Lyft took successful actions already in the first phase of evolution to change its pricing from donation based to hourly-based (Soper, 2014) and developing new features for business users (Taylor, 2014), high-end users (Gayomali, 2014) and shared riders (McGarry, 2014). Similar actions taken by TaskRabbit later in the second phase did not produce successful outcomes. In essence, TaskRabbit's shift from auction-based to hourly-based pricing faced resistance from its users (Weber, 2014) and instead of building new services, it integrated its "for business" service into a generic service portfolio (Taylor, 2014). The changes in pricing highlight Evan's (2003; 2009) findings of the importance of pricing in order to get both sides of the platform on board. According to the findings of the study, after the second phase of platform evolution the user growth of TaskRabbit hindered dramatically (See figure 6: TaskRabbit – number of clients and taskers 2008 - 2012), whereas for Lyft the user number growth accelerated (See figure 4: Lyft – number of riders and drivers, 2010 - 2019). This finding indicates a connection between the second- and the third step of the platform evolution framework.

The findings of the study contribute to earlier research (Constantiou et al., 2016) by introducing a third step for evolution framework of Sharing Platforms. The findings that are described next answer the second research question of the thesis:

2. *How does a Sharing Economy Platform sustain its business after establishing it, and what are its successful components?*

The answers are provided by identifying a third step for the framework, called *sustaining the platform*. In this phase, the case companies interacted with platform complements, rival platforms and rival incumbents according to the theory of openness (Rysman, 2009) and platform competition (Eisenmann et al., 2006). As earlier studies (Constantiou et al., 2016) do not explain this phase, the results of the study contribute to existing Sharing Platform literature by explaining how the case platforms settle in the market after a period of fast user growth. The findings of the Lyft case study show two core categories for the third phase of platform evolution: “*integrating with complements*” and “*competing with rival platforms*”. Findings from the TaskRabbit case study highlight similar interactions with complements and competitors during the third step of evolution. However, only one core category to explain TaskRabbit’s third evolutionary phase is found: “*competing for survival*”. Core categories of both cases are found to match with the theoretical framework, including Eisenmann et al. (2006) theory about envelopment strategy, winner-takes-all competition, as well as Rysman’s (2009) findings on competitive pricing and openness strategies. What is more, the findings show similarities to theories of platform market structures (Evans, 2003) and winner-takes-all competition (Eisenmann et al., 2006).

Sustaining the platform

Key actions during Lyft’s third evolutionary phase include interactions with complements, incumbents and rivals. For example, Lyft built self-driving car alliances with complementary technology providers Waymo and Magna (Jhonsa, 2017; Reader, 2018) as well as with incumbents such as Ford and GM (Reuters, 2017; Farooqui, 2016). These actions are examples of vertical- and horizontal integration in the decisions related to openness strategy (Rysman, 2009). What is more, after building partnerships in bike and scooter sharing services Lyft launched its own services in the same fields (Hawaii Star Advertiser, 2017; Brown, 2018). From a theoretical perspective, Lyft’s actions in the field bike- and scooter sharing are instances of adding more sides on the platform (Rysman, 2009) and practicing an envelopment -strategy against smaller platforms in the bike-sharing business (Eisenmann et al., 2006). The findings indicate that these actions are a part of Lyft’s strategy to build long-term business sustainability in the fast-changing transportation industry (Evans, 2003; Eisenmann et al., 2006). For example, the company publicly stated a vision about bringing fleets of self-driving cars in the market due to 2025 in order to achieve the company vision of decreasing car-ownership (Mohilay, 2017). Interestingly, Lyft was very determined in

reaching this goal as it reportedly declined acquisition offers from rival incumbents GM and Apple (Roston, 2016; Miller, 2016). Lyft had reached a strong competitive position which enabled it to fend off envelopment attempts from incumbents (Eisenmann et al., 2006). Lyft was able to compete in the competition due to strong financial backing, a large existing user base and a proven history of winning competitive battles against Uber (Eisenmann et al., 2006).

Throughout its existence, Lyft has shared the North American market with another large platform – Uber. The ongoing competition seemed to focus on pricing, the supply side (drivers), and new features. Lyft reportedly engaged in fierce pricing wars with its main rival Uber (Buhr, 2016; Kerr, 2014; Weber, 2015; Ng, 2017), which indicate a link to Rysman’s (2009) pricing strategy. The company had to also fight for keeping its supply side users of the platform against various driver acquisition campaigns by Uber, such as the HELL-program (Dellinger, 2017). According to Eisenmann et al. (2006), the competition over a specific user side usually comes down to costs of multi-homing which both companies actively encouraged through targeted promotion to each other’s supply side (Fingas, 2017; Johnson, 2017; Dellinger, 2017). Another example of competition between the platforms is the fast pace of similar features released (Bhuiyan, 2016; Soper, 2016; Carson, 2017). While the theoretical framework lacks a specific explanation, competition through new feature releases falls to Rysman’s (2009) generic competitive strategies for platforms, specifically “innovation”.

It is easy to state that the market structure resembled co-existing platforms described in theory by Evans (2003), as both Uber and Lyft still exist in 2019. Although the competition over the North American market was fierce between the two players, the platforms could still co-exist. This is why the platforms did not form a winner-takes-all market structure (Evans, 2003; Eisenmann et al., 2006). Eisenmann et al. (2006) list two reasons for this: firstly, multi-homing costs for both riders and drivers of Lyft and Uber were relatively low and therefore it was possible for a smaller platform like Lyft to compete with Uber. Secondly, although both platforms were able to maintain strong network effects, neither side of the users seemed to be prone of special features in the ride-sharing service. This is why the platforms were not able to lock-in either side of users to solely use their platform. (Eisenmann et al., 2006).

In contrast to the case of Lyft, it can be argued that TaskRabbit could not find a sustainable competitive positioning against rival platforms or incumbents in its final phase of evolution. The company had many direct rivals, such as Pickle, Bizzby and AirTasker (Butcher, 2017; Lunn, 2018). It also faced both competition and complementary interaction

from Amazon, a larger platform which entered the home services market in 2015 (Sawers, 2015; Kafka, 2015). This finding matches with Eisenmann et al. (2006) theory of envelopment by a larger platform, as well as Rysman's (2009) openness strategy. Consequently, the findings highlight that TaskRabbit's intent to sell 100% of its shares to IKEA (Swisher, 2017) is an act of "finding a bigger brother" which Eisenmann et al. (2006) list as one of the methods to fight off envelopment. Other similar findings include TaskRabbit's partnerships with Lovespace and OMD (Lovespace, 2015; McClellan, 2015). The IKEA acquisition gave TaskRabbit the resources for further expansion and enabled it to launch "at-home assembly service" with IKEA (Swisher, 2017; Chang, 2018; Estrada, 2018; Lawrence, 2018).

In the scope of the research framework, the results of the two case studies are comparable but different in terms of sentiment. The internal validity of the Lyft case is strong as the results highlight a strong link between empirical findings and theory across all three evolutionary steps of a Sharing Platform (Eisenhardt, 1989). The emergent theory seems to match to the key topics of the research framework, explain the reality of the field and understand the topics at hand (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

In comparison, the case of TaskRabbit explains its evolution in three steps according to the research framework but communicates different sentiment for each of the sub-constructs. In other words, the big picture of the TaskRabbit evolution matches with the research framework, but the sentiment is different and simpler. Internal validity of the TaskRabbit case is weaker than that of Lyft's (Eisenhardt, 1989). There are two potential reasons for this. In hindsight the evolution of TaskRabbit was not as successful than what Lyft experienced. In fact, it can be argued that in some terms the storyline of TaskRabbit represents a failed attempt to grow a Sharing Platform business, whereas the story of Lyft is more successful. The TaskRabbit storyline is different also compared to the study of Airbnb by Constantiou et al. (2016), as Airbnb clearly reached a state of sustainable business. Secondly, a larger set of blog entry data was available for Lyft, which could stem from the popularity of the platform. To be exact, the storyline of TaskRabbit did not form similar, consistent patterns as the story of Lyft, thus providing findings that seemed more random. In conclusion, when it comes to cross-case patterns the results are comparable but not similar (Eisenhardt, 1989).

6 Conclusion

This study covers the evolution of two Sharing Economy Platforms from their founding until reaching a sustainable state of business for the long term. Through carefully studying the storylines of ride-sharing platform Lyft (2010 – 2019) and peer-to-peer errand service platform TaskRabbit (2008 – 2018) based on publicly available tech blogs, patterns for successful decisions along the evolution of Sharing Platforms are revealed. The study identifies strategic actions conducted by both case companies in terms of obtaining more users, value-adding technological developments and interaction with other platforms. As a result, three steps to comprehend the full cycle of Sharing Platform growth are identified: *1. building a network of users, 2. augmenting the platform and 3. sustaining the platform business.*

In the case of Lyft, the first step of evolution is dominated by strong actions to build the supply side of the platform by offering drivers distinctive customer experience, facilitating platform features to enhance trust, and offering extra perks to retain drivers on the platform. The efforts are combined with fast expansion across North America, including pricing campaigns and multiple commercial partnerships aimed to increase demand. Lyft’s second phase reveals a constant pattern of releasing incremental feature innovations on its platform to meet expectations of a growing number of customers. Lyft also applied a clear strategy to expand the value of the platform via partnerships with international rivals and companies from adjacent markets. In the final phase, Lyft built strategic capabilities by integrating with incumbents in the transportation industry, which offered complementary elements to Lyft’s offering in self-driving cars, scooter-sharing and bike-sharing. Thus, the company was able to build new sides on its platform in addition to drivers of cars, and clients who order riders. When it comes to interaction with rivals, Lyft was successful in competing with its main rival, Uber, mainly through pricing wars and driver- acquisition. The company was able to fend off incumbents such as General Motors and Apple and conducted a successful initial public offering (IPO).

TaskRabbit started to build its initial network of users with a rapid expansion in the North American market. Like Lyft, the company did build trust among users by carefully validating each tasker-supplier to join the platform, via implementation of reputation systems and insurances for users. However, its focus was more on the demand side: it aimed to increase demand by engaging in commercial partnerships with leading brands and directed many low-priced campaigns towards its early user base. During the second phase of evolution, TaskRabbit re-organised its service offering and changed its pricing model, which

resulted in decreasing user growth. In the third phase, TaskRabbit integrated some of its services with a larger platform, Amazon, and was acquired by an industry incumbent, IKEA.

Of the two cases studied in this thesis, results on Lyft indicate a strong theoretical fit for earlier theory and the research framework. The evolution of TaskRabbit, on the other hand, follows the same three-step structure but the core-categories found in its storyline tell a different story than the pre-defined theoretical sub-constructs of the framework.

The findings of the thesis contribute to existing research by providing empirical validation and -extension for the results of an earlier research on Airbnb by Constantiou et al., (2016). More specifically, by sourcing from timely key theory and public tech blog entries on two popular Sharing Platform companies, the study provides findings that validate existing theories of the first two evolution steps and extend the understanding of the phenomena with a third step of evolution. By building on the findings of Constantiou et al. (2016) study, the findings contribute on the generalization of the theory on Sharing Ecosystem Platform evolution.

However, some factors related to empirical data and case selection limit the study. Although the selected cases are comparable in terms of timeline length, key dynamics of their product and phases of evolution, there are differences in the amount of data available during their life cycle. In the thesis, 399 blog instances are used to analyse Lyft’s timeline, as for TaskRabbit the number is 80. Compared to the rich dataset used for analyzing Lyft, the smaller dataset for TaskRabbit made it more challenging to identify distinct phases in evolution of the platform. In addition, the lower amount of data available for TaskRabbit can have an effect on the validity of some findings, because there are not enough instances to triangulate individual findings. As the reason for a smaller sample of data is simply the platform’s popularity in media, future research could focus on cases which have been more equally covered in public blogs. In addition, having other data sources, such as interviews of case company managers, could provide better means to analyse the decisions made inside the companies. Another limitation is the end-scenario of the cases. Whereas Lyft stayed independent by conducting an IPO, TaskRabbit was acquired by another company. In future research, the definition of success in terms of long-term business sustainability should be more exact, and the study could be repeated with a case having conducted the same end-scenario, thus increasing the case comparability. For example, if Airbnb or Uber conduct an IPO in the future, it would be interesting to conduct a study on the third step of its evolution and compare it to the findings made on Lyft.

As the field of Sharing Economy matures, future research could also find interest in diving deeper into more specific case studies on the most important individual tactics that

enable Sharing Platform growth, including supply-side user acquisition and -retention, building trust among the user base through features and elements of platform offering, as well as horizontal- and vertical integration with complementing platforms.

All in all, the commercial sharing phenomenon has proved that it is here to stay. The Sharing Economy model has captured its commercial promise in a handful of industries up to this date, for example in transportation (Lyft) and hospitality (Airbnb). In addition, the phenomenon is of interest to traditional industry incumbents as well, which the TaskRabbit acquisition by IKEA clearly shows. As the managerial interest on Sharing Economy is on the rise, the field deserves more attention from the academia. To meet that need, the results of this study contribute to existing scientific research by creating a framework for future research to build on, and by highlighting new, practical findings that could offer insights for managers of start-ups and industry incumbents alike.

References

Books and reports

- Sundararajan, A. (2016). *The Sharing Economy: The End of Employment and the Rise of Crowd-Based Capitalism*. MIT Press, 2016.
- Gansky, L. (2012) *The Mesh: Why the Future of Business is Sharing*. Portfolio; Reprint edition (February 28, 2012).
- McAfee, A. and Brynjolfsson, E. (2017) *Machine, Platform, Crowd: Harnessing Our Digital Future*. 1 edition. W. W. Norton & Company.

Articles

- Armstrong, M. (2006) 'Competition in two-sided markets', in *RAND Journal of Economics*. doi: 10.1111/j.1756-2171.2006.tb00037.x.
- Bar-Ilan, J. (2005) 'Information hub blogs', *Journal of Information Science*. doi: 10.1177/0165551505054175.
- Belk, R. (2014). You are what you can access: Sharing and collaborative consumption online. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(8), 1595–1600. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2013.10.00>
- Belk, R. (2007) 'Why Not Share Rather Than Own?', *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 611(May 2007), pp. 126–140. doi: 10.1177/0002716206298483.
- Belk, R. W. (2010) 'Sharing', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36(5), pp. 715–734. doi: 10.1086/612649.
- Benkler, Y. (2004) 'Sharing nicely: On shareable goods and the emergence of sharing as a modality of economic production', *Yale Law Journal*, pp. 273–358. doi: 10.2307/4135731.
- Botsman, R. (2014). Sharing's not just for start-ups. *Harvard Business Review*. <http://doi.org/www.pwc.co.uk>
- Boudreau, K. J. and Hagiu, A. (2008) 'Platform Rules: Multi-Sided Platforms as Regulators', *SSRN Electronic Journal*. doi: 10.2139/ssrn.1269966.
- Bucher, E., Fieseler, C. and Lutz, C. (2016) 'What's mine is yours (for a nominal fee) - Exploring the spectrum of utilitarian to altruistic motives for Internet-mediated sharing', *Computers in Human Behavior*, 62, pp. 316–326. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2016.04.002.
- Caillaud, B. and Jullien, B. (2003) 'Chicken andamp; Egg: Competition among Intermediation Service Providers', *The RAND Journal of Economics*. doi: 10.2307/1593720.
- Cennamo, C. and Santalo, J. (2013) 'Platform Competition: Strategic trade-offs in platform markets', *Strategic Management Journal*, 34(11), pp. 1331–1350.
- Constantiou, I., Eaton, B., and Tuunainen, V. K. (2016). The evolution of a sharing platform into a sustainable business. *Proceedings of the Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, 2016–March*, 1297–1306. <http://doi.org/10.1109/HICSS.2016.164>
- Constantiou, I., Marton, A. and Tuunainen, V. K. (2017) 'Four Models of Sharing Economy Platforms', *MIS Quarterly Executive*, 16(4), pp. 231–251.

- Cusmano, M. A. and Gawer, A. (2002) 'The Elements of Platform Leadership', *MIT Sloan Management Review*. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0015090.
- Cusumano, M. (2010) 'Technology strategy and management: The evolution of platform thinking', *Communications of the ACM*. doi: 10.1145/1629175.1629189.
- Davidson, E. and Vaast, E. (2009) 'Tech talk: An investigation of blogging in technology innovation discourse', *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*. doi: 10.1109/TPC.2008.2012285.
- Eaton, B. et al. (2015) 'Distributed Tuning of Boundary Resources: The Case of Apple's iOS Service System', *MIS Quarterly*. doi: 10.25300/MISQ/2015/39.1.10.
- Eaton, B. and Hanseth, O. (2014) 'Achieving Payoffs from an Industry Cloud Ecosystem at BankID', *MIS Quarterly Executive*.
- Eaton, B. D. (2012) 'The Dynamics of Digital Platform Innovation: Unfolding the Paradox of Control and Generativity in Apple's iOS', *Department of Management of the London School of Economics*.
- Edelman, B. G. and Luca, M. (2014) 'Digital Discrimination: The Case of Airbnb.com', *SSRN Electronic Journal*. doi: 10.2139/ssrn.2377353.
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (Stanford U. (1989). Building Theories from Case Study Research. *Academy of Management Review*. <http://doi.org/10.2307/258557>
- Eisenmann, T., Parker, G. and Alstyne, M. W. Van (2006) 'Strategies for Two- Sided Markets', *Harvard Business Review*. doi: 10.1007/s00199-006-0114-6.
- Evans, D. S. (2009). How catalysts ignite: the economics of platform-based start-ups. *Platforms, Markets and Innovation*, (September 2008), 99–128. <http://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1279631>
- Evans, D. S. (2003) 'Some Empirical Aspects of Multi-sided Platform Industries', *Review of Network Economics*. doi: 10.2202/1446-9022.1026.
- Farrell, J. and Klemperer, P. (2007) 'Chapter 31 Coordination and Lock-In: Competition with Switching Costs and Network Effects', *Handbook of Industrial Organization*. doi: 10.1016/S1573-448X(06)03031-7.
- Fraiberger, S. P., and Sundararajan, A. (2015). Peer-to-Peer Rental Markets in the Sharing Economy. *NYU Stern School of Business Research Paper*, 1–44. <http://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2574337>
- Frattoni, F. et al. (2014) 'The role of early adopters in the diffusion of new products: Differences between platform and nonplatform innovations', *Journal of Product Innovation Management*. doi: 10.1111/jpim.12108.
- Gawer, A. and Cusumano, M. A. (2008) 'How Companies Become Platform Leaders', *MIT Sloan Management Review*. doi: Article.
- Grisot, M., Hanseth, O., and Thorseng, a. a. (2014). Innovation of, in, on infrastructures: Articulating the role of architecture in information infrastructure evolution. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 15(4), 197–219. <http://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/17506200710779521>
- Habibi, M. R., Davidson, A. and Laroche, M. (2017) 'What managers should know about the sharing economy', *Business Horizons*, 60(1), pp. 113–121. doi: 10.1016/j.bushor.2016.09.007.
- Hagel, J., Brown, J. S. and Davison, L. (2008) 'Shaping Strategy in a world of constant disruption', *Harvard Business Review*.
- Hagiu, A. (2014). Strategic Decisions for Multisided Platforms. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 55(2), 71–80. Retrieved from <http://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/strategic-decisions-for-multisided-platforms/>

- Hai-hua Hu, Jun Lin, Yanjun Gian, J. S. (2018) 'Strategies for new product diffusion: whom and how to target?', *Journal of Business Research*, 83.
- Hamari, J., Sjöklint, M., and Ukkonen, A. (2015). The sharing economy: Why people participate in collaborative consumption. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, n/a-n/a. <http://doi.org/10.1002/asi.23552>
- Hanseth, O. and Lyytinen, K. (2010) 'Design theory for dynamic complexity in information infrastructures: the case of building internet', *Journal of Information Technology*, 25.
- Hanseth, O. and Lyytinen, K. (2004) 'Theorizing about the design of Information Infrastructures: design kernel theories and principles', *Sprouts: Working Papers on Information Systems*. doi: 10.2752/146069206789377159.
- Knote, R., and Blohm, I. (2016). Deconstructing the Sharing Economy : On the Relevance for IS Research. In *Multikonferenz Wirtschaftsinformatik* (Vol. 4).
- Lamberton, C. P., and Rose, R. L. (2012). When ours is better than mine? A Framework for Understanding and Altering Participation in Commercial Sharing Systems. *Journal of Marketing*, 76(4), 109–125. <http://doi.org/10.1509/jm.10.0368>
- Mahajan, V., Muller, E. and Bass, F. M. (1990) 'New Product Diffusion Models in Marketing: A Review and Directions for Research', *Journal of Marketing*. doi: 10.2307/1252170.
- Malhotra, A. and Van Alstyne, M. (2014) 'The dark side of the sharing economy ... and how to lighten it', *Communications of the ACM*, 57(11), pp. 24–27. doi: 10.1145/2668893.
- Malone, T. W., Yates, J. and Benjamin, R. I. (1987) 'Electronic markets and electronic hierarchies', *Communications of the ACM*, 30(6), pp. 484–497. doi: 10.1145/214762.214766.
- Monteiro, E. and Hanseth, O. (1995) 'Social shaping of information infrastructure: on being specific about the technology', in *Information technology and changes in organisational work*. doi: 10.1007/978-0-387-34872-8_20.
- Nerinckx, S. (2016) 'The "Uberization" of the labour market: Some thoughts from an employment law perspective on the collaborative economy', *ERA Forum*, 17(2), pp. 245–265. doi: 10.1007/s12027-016-0439-y.
- Noe, T., and Parker, G. (2005). Winner take all: Competition, strategy, and the structure of returns in the internet economy. *Journal of Economics and Management Strategy*. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1430-9134.2005.00037.x>
- Parker, G. G. and Van Alstyne, M. W. (2005) 'Two-Sided Network Effects: A Theory of Information Product Design', *Management Science*. doi: 10.1287/mnsc.1050.0400.
- Rochet, J.-C. and Tirole, J. (2003) 'Platform Competition in Two-sided Markets', *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 1(4), pp. 990–1029. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8462.2013.12020.x.
- Rysman, M. (2009) 'The Economics of Two-Sided Markets', *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. doi: 10.1257/jep.23.3.125.
- Sacks, D. (2011). The Sharing Economy. *FastCompany Magazine*, (May). <http://doi.org/10.1177/1536504214567860>. WINTER
- Schor, J. (2014). Debating the Sharing Economy. *A Great Transition Initiative Essay*, (October), 1–19. <http://doi.org/10.7903/cmr.11116>

- Shapiro, C. and Varian, H. R. (1999) *Information Rules: A Strategic Guide to the Network Economy*. 1998th edn. Harvard Business School Publication Corp.
- Shim, J. and Bliemel, M. (2018) 'Ignition of New Product Diffusion in Entrepreneurship: An Agent-Based Approach', *Entrepreneurship Research Journal*. doi: 10.1515/erj-2016-0014.
- Shy, O. (2002) 'A quick-and-easy method for estimating switching costs', *International Journal of Industrial Organization*. doi: 10.1016/S0167-7187(00)00076-X.
- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990), *Basics of qualitative research – Grounded theory procedures and techniques*, Sage Publications, Newbury Park Ca.
- Thebault-Spieker, J., Terveen, L. and Hecht, B. (2017) 'Toward a Geographic Understanding of the Sharing Economy: Systemic Biases in UberX and TaskRabbit', *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction*. doi: 10.1145/3058499.
- Yin, R. K. 2009. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (4th ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Vaast, E., Davidson, E. J. and Mattson, T. (2013) 'Talking about Technology: The Emergence of a New Actor Category Through New Media', *MIS Quarterly*. doi: 10.25300/MISQ/2013/37.4.04.
- Van Alstyne, M. W., Parker, G. G. and Paul Choudary, S. (2016) 'Pipelines, platforms, and the new rules of strategy', *Harvard Business Review*. doi: <https://hbr.org/2016/04/pipelines-platforms-and-the-new-rules-of-strategy>.

A separate part of a collection, handbook, or conference proceedings

Internet-references

- Barr, J. (2005), 'Amazon's Mechanical Turk: The First Three Weeks', *AWS News Blog*, Available at https://aws.amazon.com/blogs/aws/amazons_mechani/, [28.4.2019].
- Bercovici, J. (2016), 'TaskRabbit Quadruples Its Business, Says It Will Turn Profitable in 2016', *Inc*, Available at: <http://www.inc.com/jeff-bercovici/taskrabbit-becoming-profitable.html>, [12.2.2017].
- Burns, J. (2017). 'Lyft Could Beat Uber to Profitability'. *Forbes*, Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/janetwburns/2017/01/13/lyft-could-beat-uber-to-profitability-according-to-insiders/#4dd68f655e95>, [12.2.2017].
- Frommer, D. (2018), 'Lyft says it passed \$1 billion in revenue last year – and is growing faster than Uber', *Vox*, Available at: <https://www.vox.com/2018/3/12/17110924/lyft-2017-revenue-billion-growth>, [28.4.2019].
- Kerr, D. (2018) 'Lyft Grows Gangbusters in 2017, Bringing Competition to Uber', *CNet*, Available at: <https://www.cnet.com/news/lyft-sees-massive-growth-brings-uber-competition/> [2.5.2019]
- Kosoff, M. (2015). 'Leaked Document Reveals Details of Uber vs. Lyft Battle', *Inc*, Available at: <https://www.inc.com/business-insider/leaked-document-gives-insight-into-uber-vs-lyft-battle.html> [28.4.2019]
- Lawler, R. (2013). 'Ahead of Expansion, Lyft Parent Zimride Closed \$15M In New Funding From Founders Fund And Existing Investors', *TechCrunch*, Available at: <https://techcrunch.com/2013/01/30/lyft-zimride-15m-series-b/>, [28.4.2019]
- Lundgren, I. (2017), 'Airbnb closes 1B Round at 31B Valuation, Profitable as of 2H 2016, No Plans for IPO', *TechCrunch*, Available at: <https://techcrunch.com/2017/03/09/airbnb-closes-1b-round-at-31b-valuation-profitable-as-of-2h-2016-no-plans-for-ipo/>, [27.7.2017]

Mannes, J. (2016), ‘CrunchBase Pro brings new search and analysis features for power users’. *TechCrunch*, Available at: <https://techcrunch.com/2016/09/12/crunchbase-pro-brings-new-search-and-analysis-features-for-power-users/>, [27.7.2017]

Price Waterhouse Coopers (2015), ‘The Sharing Economy’, *Consumer Intelligence Series*, Available at: <https://www.pwc.com/us/en/technology/publications/assets/pwc-consumer-intelligence-series-the-sharing-economy.pdf>, [21.4.2019].

Trefis Team (2018), ‘What is Lyft’s Long-Term Growth Potential?’, *Forbes*, Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/greatspeculations/2018/10/16/what-is-lyfts-long-term-revenue-growth-potential/#51022a255312>, [28.4.2019].

Appendix A: Sharing Platform evolution - relevant theories

	Creating a network of users	Augmenting the platform	Sustaining the platform business
Sharing Economy	<p>Life Cycle of the Mesh companies - Gansky (2012)</p> <p>Market & organisational coordination mechanisms - Constantiou et al. (2016)</p> <p>Evolution of Sharing Platforms – Constantiou et al. (2016)</p>	<p>Life Cycle of the Mesh companies - Gansky (2012)</p> <p>Market & organisational coordination mechanisms - Constantiou et al. (2016)</p> <p>Evolution of Sharing Platforms – Constantiou et al. (2016)</p>	<p>Life Cycle of the Mesh companies - Gansky (2012)</p> <p>Market & organisational coordination mechanisms - Constantiou et al. (2016)</p>
Platform Economics	<p>Initial investment, economies of scale - Shapiro and Varian, (1999); Hagiu, (2014), Van Alstyne et al., (2016); McAfee and Brynjolfsson, (2017)</p> <p>Chicken and egg problem - Evans (2003), 2009; Rysman (2009); Constantiou et al., (2016)</p> <p>Number of sides in the platform - Evans (2003), Hagiu (2014)</p> <p>Strategies for igniting catalytic reaction - Evans (2009)</p> <p>Product diffusion, user groups – Rochet and Tirole (2003), Evans (2009)</p> <p>Network effects - Shapiro and Varian, (1999)</p> <p>Pricing strategies for MSP’s, cross-side network effects - Hagiu (2014)</p> <p>Word of mouth - Shim and Bliemel, (2018)</p> <p>Targeted marketing, promotion intensity - Hu et al., (2018)</p> <p>Platform neutrality - Rochet and Tirole (2003)</p>	<p>Platform neutrality - Rochet and Tirole (2003)</p> <p>Network effects - Shapiro and Varian, (1999)</p> <p>Number of sides in the platform - Evans (2003), Hagiu (2014)</p> <p>Openness and compatibility of the platform - Rysman (2009)</p> <p>Pricing strategies for MSP’s, cross-side network effects - Hagiu (2014)</p> <p>Strategies for two-sided markets - Rysman (2009)</p>	<p>Platform market structures - Evans (2003)</p> <p>Strategies for two-sided markets - Rysman (2009)</p>
Information Infrastructure theory	<p>Bootstrap problem - Hanseth and Lyytinen (2010)</p>	<p>Cultivation strategy - Grisot et al. (2014)</p> <p>Adaptability problem - Hanseth and Lyytinen (2010)</p>	
Platform Strategy	<p>Competitive edge of Sharing Platforms vs. incumbents – Botsman (2014)</p> <p>Platform market entry, early mover- and late mover advantage - Evans (2003); Eisenmann et al. (2006); McAfee and Brynjolfsson, (2017)</p>	<p>Platform pricing - Eisenmann et al (2006)</p> <p>Platform regulation - Boudreau and Hagiu, (2008)</p> <p>Switching costs, homing costs, user lock-in - Eisenmann et al. (2006)</p> <p>Farrell and Klemperer (2007)</p> <p>Four business models of MSP’s - Evans (2003)</p>	<p>Winner-takes-all market dynamics - Evans (2003); Eisenmann et al. (2006); Rysman (2009); Cusumano (2010); Hagiu (2014); Van Alstyne et al. (2016); Cennamo and Santalo (2013)</p> <p>“Bet the company” decision - Eisenmann et al. (2006)</p> <p>Switching costs, homing costs, user lock-in - Eisenmann et al. (2006)</p> <p>Farrell and Klemperer (2007)</p> <p>Envelopment strategy - (Eisenmann et al., 2006)</p> <p>Tipping- and coring strategies - Gawer and Cusumano (2008)</p> <p>Platform regulation - Boudreau and Hagiu (2008)</p> <p>Shaping strategy - Hagel et al. (2008)</p>

Appendix B: Overview of coding process, adopted from Strauss and Corbin (1990)

Evolution step	Theory	1st order categories	2 nd order categories	Core categories: Lyft	Core categories: TaskRabbit
1. Creating a network of users	<p>Bootstrap problem (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010)</p> <p>Chicken and Egg problem (Evans, 2003; 2009)</p>	<p>“feature”, “user”, “partner”, “payment”, “regulation”, “pricing”, “acquisition”, “funding”, “launch”, “market”, “competition”</p>	<p>1) What are the platforms strategic actions towards the demand side?</p> <p>2) What are the platforms’ strategic actions towards the supply side?</p>	<p>“building the supply side”</p> <p>vs.</p> <p>“building the demand side”</p>	<p>“building the demand side”</p>
2. Augmenting the platform	<p>Adaptability problem (Hanseth and Lyytinen, 2010)</p> <p>Reaching Network Effects (Evans, 2003; 2009)</p>	<p>“feature”, “user”, “partner”, “payment”, “regulation”, “pricing”, “acquisition”, “funding”, “launch”, “market”, “competition”</p>	<p>3) How do the platforms provide supporting services to the participants?</p> <p>4) How do the platforms provide value-added services to the participants?</p>	<p>“incremental improvements in the platform”</p> <p>vs.</p> <p>“extending the value of the platform”</p>	<p>“organizing platform services in new ways”</p>
3. Sustaining the platform	<p>Number of sides and compatibility (Rysman, 2009)</p> <p>Platform competition (Eisenmann et al., 2006; Rysman, 2009)</p>	<p>“feature”, “user”, “partner”, “payment”, “regulation”, “pricing”, “acquisition”, “funding”, “launch”, “market”, “competition”</p>	<p>5) What are the platforms’ strategic interactions with complementors of the platform?</p> <p>6) What are the platforms’ strategic interactions with its competitors?</p>	<p>“Integrating with complements”</p> <p>vs.</p> <p>“Competing with rival platforms”</p>	<p>“competing for survival”</p>

Appendix C: Timeline of Lyft's evolution

Date	Article Name	Article Name URL	Author	Publisher	Category 1: Topics	Category 2: Relationship
2019-03-29	Lyft valued at \$24bn ahead of share market debut	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/9903851c-5883-496d-a7a0-d45cf7149ceb	BBC News	BBC	competition, funding	6
2019-03-28	How Lyft Survived a Cutthroat Money-Raising Battle With Uber	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/794b4966-8ec5-4377-b38f-485e6c91e42c	Corrie Driebusch	WSJ Blogs	competition, funding	6
2019-03-13	Game Theory behind Lyft's IPO: Implications for Uber, Didi and Ola	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/a142fdd8-2e04-4f9b-b53d-71d49ab2f722	DJ Kang	e27 News	competition, funding	6
2019-03-10	Lyft and blockchain company Solve.Care partner on ridesharing solution	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/bf9deb5b-79c2-478e-8d39-5f75e94025c1	Erin Dietsche	Med City News	partnership	5
2019-03-02	Lyft goes public with IPO filing, reveals plans for autonomous cars	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6b0be49f-375a-441e-8a7d-00b65d047f56	AJ Dellinger	Digital Trends	competition, funding	6
2019-03-01	Lyft heads for IPO after losing \$911M on revenues of \$2.2B in 2018	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/455b1e7e-af94-466a-b1e9-73f502325dd5	Maria Deutscher	Silicon Angle	competition, funding	6
2019-03-01	Lyft becomes the first ride-hail company to go public, beating Uber	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6b9498b2-40a1-4bf7-b577-04f6cf56bb46	Andrew J. Hawkins	The Verge	competition, funding	6
2019-03-01	How Lyft stacks up against Uber	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/8a9d1207-2e20-4529-9f57-3d639dbe0502	Alison Griswold	Quartz	competition, funding	6
2019-03-01	Lyft's IPO filing shows surging revenue, widening losses	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ca8a158b-74ca-4d5b-b7a3-e975484a8bae	Heather Somerville	Reuters UK	competition, funding	6
2019-02-27	Lyft commits to going 'all-in' with AWS to support autonomous vehicles push	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/20750ed0-4f43-422c-8387-41a50f69bcc2	Caroline Donnelly	Computer Weekly	competition, feature	5
2019-02-26	Lyft Kicks Off Price War with Uber Ahead of IPOs	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/feef3011-cdad-4e9b-9e51-d6ddc24b55b2	Amir Efrati	The Informationist	competition, pricing	1
2019-02-25	Uber and Lyft Are Officially Part of the Healthcare System	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/623e2c72-3dd0-45a6-88e0-761e089ace3e	Ankita Rao	Vice - Motherboard	competition, users	4
2019-02-21	Lyft plans to go public in March	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/62274ff2-2cc7-4759-a8ed-c7b39d0266b3		PitchBook Blog	competition, funding	6
2019-02-20	Lyft launches surge-free, shared rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/2d433fd6-91fc-44e9-8abe-5b0740c1f616	Megan Rose Dickey	TechCrunch	feature, pricing	1
2019-02-20	Lyft rolls out its own version of Uber Express Pool called 'Shared Saver'	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d3f07c33-fde1-4016-af18-13cbcd96ec72	Sasha Lekach	Mashable	feature, competition	4
2019-02-20	Lyft reportedly will beat Uber to IPO	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e836f286-1f98-4f05-9570-a62e3931e7fa	Sasha Lekach	Mashable	competition, funding	6
2019-02-08	Lyft offers free rides to Black history museums in Memphis	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f13f493c-f0db-42eb-9a1c-aa4249a863e3	Phillip Jackson	Memphis Commercial Appeal	pricing, users	1
2019-02-07	Lyft acquiesces to New York's rules, agrees to pay drivers at least \$15 per hour	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ceb	Cohen Coberly	Tech Spot	pricing, users	2

		7c5d6-2ac6-40bb-86ba-09641054768f				
2019-02-06	Lyft offers electric vehicle options for riders, drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/8e8017d3-9f97-46d3-b15a-3e6866d5e1fb	CATHY BUSSEWITZ	Charlotte Observer	feature	4
2019-02-05	Lyft says it will give drivers their raise	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7be7d7b8-9ff7-4ee1-b668-d209693f70a6	Matthew Flamm	Crain's New York	pricing, users	2
2019-02-05	Uber and Lyft are in a battle for user loyalty, and riders may win	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/bb8262b0-7fcd-45f7-9cf7-02255c468fd7	Rani Molla	Re/code	competition, users	2
2019-02-02	Uber and Lyft trips just got more expensive in NYC. Here's why.	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/341ff661-0800-4161-b7dd-7528f3b7c6fa	Sasha Lekach	Mashable	pricing	1
2019-01-30	Lyft and Juno are suing New York City over new minimum wage requirements for drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e6647dae-3b28-452a-b21a-4422522db21d	Graham Rapier	Business Insider	regulation, users	2
2019-01-30	Lyft is no better than Uber	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/fc43b701-6b68-4c3d-8a0f-3b9625757d93	Alison Griswold	Quartz	competition	6
2019-01-24	Uber and Lyft are having a devastating effect on public transportation, new research shows	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/3b8bbfda-890b-446d-984c-99bd7a2267d4	Graham Rapier	Business Insider	users	5
2019-01-24	Lyft economic impact report: NJ riders explore more, spend more on local biz	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/5da4b6f1-fd55-409a-a943-d11aa1bfc1f0	Kevin Dowd	PitchBook Blog	users	2
2019-01-24	Toronto Lyft spent an additional \$25.9 million in Toronto community in 2018	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b07a94e3-a0b0-448d-9891-14431e5425d2	Shruti Shekar	Mobile Syrup	users	2
2019-01-22	H&M and Lyft Offer Free Rides for New Yorkers to Recycle Clothing	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/805f1532-58cc-4cbd-af0b-b16e498e4c9b	H&M	PRNewswire	users, pricing, partnership	1
2019-01-21	Lyft partners with PATH to offer discounts during weekend shutdowns	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/862bc280-b7ed-404d-94d5-02c63ea7b397	NJBIZ STAFF	NJBiz	users, pricing, partnership	1
2019-01-21	Magna-Lyft AV team takes it slow and steady	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e5776bc8-2935-48a7-a56a-6409128afd15	Pete Bigelow	Automotive News Canada	feature, partnership	5
2019-01-18	Lyft and Aptiv, A's self-driving car program has come a long way (but not far enough)	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/8400d368-0b0c-4bb4-91b8-ddc881c9b95e	Stephen Edelstein	Digital Trends	feature	5
2019-01-16	Lyft, KRE group announce partnership in Jersey City	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/a35d6d81-3020-46a7-a341-46bb106f2505	Linda Lindner	NJBiz	partnership	5
2019-01-10	Lyft partners with Segway to deploy more durable scooters	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d5722972-67f1-4c93-ad3d-02a824f282f3	Megan Rose Dickey	TechCrunch	partnership	5
2019-01-08	Cabbies Unite! An App Challenges the Uber and Lyft Overlords	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/88e48d0a-3c9a-4411-a784-b18d3ebb3287	Alex Davies	Wired	competition	6
2019-01-08	A Third of Americans Use Ride-Hail. Uber and Lyft Need More	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f2f2e9ba-940e-465f-9506-e54ec46a8cf9	Aarian Marshall	Wired	competition	6
2018-12-31	LegalRideshare to Reimburse NYE 2019 Uber/Lyft Rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f64142f3-986f-4695-9c87-17c3aef58269	Press Release	iNews Wire	pricing	1
2018-12-23	New Year's Eve in Phoenix: Free rides from Valley Metro	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d1a	Garrett Mitchell	Arizona Central News	pricing	1

	and discounts from Lyft and Uber	8aa17-3281-41a4-9da5-b1f6b28accd0				
2018-12-19	Old Navy Customers Receive Discounted Lyft Rides To Pick Up Their Online Orders	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/77a24561-8017-48e1-a917-a69ff4eea94a		PSFK	pricing	1
2018-12-14	Nearly 100 Lyft drivers sue, complaining of illegally being paid too little	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d643ff34-a3bb-4da0-971a-2339644a4c03	Cyrus Farivar	Ars Technica	driver, regulation, user	2
2018-12-12	Lyft Grocery Access Program brings discounted rides to grocery stores	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/fc44a455-57df-4526-9d18-70b67acadd94	Brittany A. Roston	Slash Gear	pricing	1
2018-12-11	Lyft to be "exclusive" rideshare company at Waterside Power Plant	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/0db5122b-6e1d-420c-b670-0cb7d4ae7cb6	Kimberly Pierceall	Hampton Roads Business Journal	competition	1
2018-12-11	iLingo2.com launches Triage Transportation in partnership with ride-hailing service Lyft	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/20c44c90-8426-49b5-9a4d-0036cf34f06a		PRNewswire	partner, user, feature	1
2018-12-04	Lyft Launches Electric Scooters and Bikes in Austin	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7eb7e01e-67a2-4f51-997c-674dda130d10	lalorek	Silicon Hills News	market, launch	5
2018-12-04	New York Puts the Heat on Uber and Lyft With Driver Minimum Wages	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/a95133c3-f5f0-4fed-9ccd-b9d520052b30	Erik Sherman	Inc.com	driver, regulation, user	2
2018-11-28	Lyft partners with the Vancouver Canucks	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/2a562efd-50d7-4918-a614-febf1a5d0de8	Brad Bennett	Mobile Syrup	partner, user, feature	1
2018-11-19	Lyft offering 35 percent off stress-free Black Friday shopping rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/330828e7-fa3c-4ef2-b30b-ebd5a673ec35	Paul O'Donnell	Dallas Morning News	pricing	1
2018-11-16	Lyft's driver-focused update will come to Canadians as well	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/bdf1ef1ef-be8d-4dc7-895d-c4ce4e93495f	Jonathan Lamont	Mobile Syrup	driver, user, feature	3
2018-11-15	Lyft to add default tipping to its app and automatic 5-star driver ratings starting in December	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7cbe2997-3f0f-4851-becf-946688af2bcc	Frank Catalano	GeekWire	feature, pricing	3
2018-11-12	Lyft To Debut Ridesharing Rewards Program	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7adf7e10-c8ab-4721-ab12-d85994968fbd	PYMNTS	Pymnts	feature	3
2018-11-02	Class-action lawsuit says Lyft drivers should be considered employees	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f49e0b72-f6c1-4bd6-b494-c3d76901e7d9	Cohen Coberly	Tech Spot	driver, regulation, user	2
2018-11-01	Carpooling start-up Scoop partners with Lyft	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/803a041c-846b-42b1-beb0-4f70d8c9f4c2	Megan Rose Dickey	TechCrunch	partner, user, feature	5
2018-11-01	AAA offers free Lyft rides to customers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ed5bd453-c89e-454d-ae2d-d33fdc074a49	Christian Hetrick	Philly.com	pricing	1
2018-10-24	Lyft makes self-driving tech acquisition	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6b734b4f-ee74-442d-89c7-3bd51cc3e4b9		PitchBook Blog	acquisition	5
2018-10-18	Lyft offering free rides to help Toronto residents get to the polls	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d54603e9-60c6-4245-b825-fce38479c804	Brad Bennett	Mobile Syrup	pricing	1
2018-10-16	Lyft's \$299 subscription plan is launching to the masses	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/88fe6190-de01-4dc1-ac7e-6801b8c8c6b5	Megan Rose Dickey	TechCrunch	pricing, feature, launch	1
2018-10-10	Lyft to offer half-off rides to Rogers Park residents after fatal shootings	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/30a	Sun-Times Staff	Chicago Sun Times	pricing	1

		652c4-31ae-4e66-abd1-8d5ab10ef4b6				
2018-10-09	Lyft to ring in October 17 marijuana legalization with \$10.17 off rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f6a5833f-3649-4eea-ae73-34198e87e0b9	Bradly Shankar	Mobile Syrup	pricing	1
2018-10-01	Lyft lets riders give mid-route feedback on shared rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ef441461-f507-4fe8-9743-335f589c3dce	Sasha Lekach	Mashable	feature	3
2018-09-27	Judge Hands Uber Win in Lyft Driver's Suit Over Hacked Mobile App	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/43d01669-e67b-4adf-8606-bf82079688f4	Ian Lopez	Law Technology Review	driver, regulation, user	6
2018-09-18	Some Lyft drivers at Disney World put brakes on union	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7e48bf23-c93b-42da-b1f9-db884d379f1d	MIKE SCHNEIDER	Miami Herald	driver, regulation, user	2
2018-09-18	Lyft hits 1 billion rides a couple of months after Uber hit 10 billion trips	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/81aacf57-d3a0-4f42-94ea-98806bf42e32	Megan Rose Dickey	TechCrunch	rides	1
2018-09-18	Lyft Launches Scooter Rentals In Santa Monica	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/bc909f4f-dfc6-4463-9fc2-c7c4fd90e88a		SoCal - Tech	launch, feature, market	4
2018-09-16	Lyft offers discounted rides on Emmys night even if you're far from the red carpet	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/4d2a1ce0-7617-4037-b3e8-efefcc10a680	Sasha Lekach	Mashable	pricing	1
2018-09-11	Students can catch free late-night Lyft rides at this NJ university Source: NJ.com	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/39c060cb-8808-49ce-9271-c9ed1435c5e0		NJBIZ	pricing	1
2018-09-07	Formativ Health Teams Up With Lyft For Patient Rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/40275bf6-e2cf-4428-b366-ef11d35f09e	PYMNTS	Pymnts	partner	1
2018-09-06	Lyft launches its scooter business in Denver	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/3a10d6c9-6f5f-4d37-8589-5edf25265eab	Kirsten Korosec	TechCrunch	launch, feature, market	4
2018-08-31	Denver's new Lyft partnership will make it easier to catch a ride home from Red Rocks	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/035e0eee-b311-4a93-83ca-8dc2b1568d31	Judith Kohler	Denver Post	partner, user	3
2018-08-23	Lyft to offer voters free or reduced price rides to polling stations on Election Day	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/4e4d2005-258d-4e6b-afa6-3cffe91d2e09	William Gayde	Tech Spot	pricing	1
2018-08-21	Lyft racks up 5000 rides with self-driving cars	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/04d77eac-f3f0-4ed4-8b15-74daa49c1442	Thomson Reuters	Reuters UK	rides	1
2018-08-16	Indians hail Lyft as their official rideshare partner	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/3bc4ca69-e434-4868-9db5-ddd9c3345550	CRAIN'S CLEVELAND BUSINESS	Cranes Cleveland	partner, user	1
2018-08-16	Express Drive Program Allows Lyft Drivers To Rent Their Cars	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e013f2a9-0222-45ff-9bf9-8ab9b7a35f81	Todd Neikirk	PSFK	driver, user, feature	3
2018-08-10	Lyft opens recording studio for its Atlanta drivers to make tracks	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/2c85b836-58ae-4e1a-93fa-0091c3c05a3a	Ben Brasch	AJC	driver, user, feature	4
2018-08-06	Lyft beefs up car rental program for drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/eb633c94-e809-410f-bd43-dae93df72a32	Megan Rose Dickey	TechCrunch	driver, user, feature	3
2018-08-01	Lyft Launches Challenge Highlighting A Car-Free Lifestyle	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/40400545-cb5e-485d-a49a-658670383020	Daniel Golightly	Android Headlines	launch, user	1

2018-07-30	Lyft Personal Plan subscriptions lock the price for regular routes	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/797b63c3-f518-43e3-8e49-2f3a5a85ba4b	Brittany A. Roston	Slash Gear	pricing, user	1
2018-07-25	Lyft considering a "zen mode"™ for users who like quiet rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/40068d98-87de-413f-9b0a-25cbad7128c9	Bradly Shankar	Mobile Syrup	user, feature	1
2018-07-20	CLEAR partners with Lyft in new promo	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/2171780e-844e-43e3-893f-b452afcd7006	Chris McGinnis	SF Gate	partner, user	4
2018-07-17	Lyft wants to partner with cities to add bike and scooter sharing	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/8bc7f787-3613-4675-ae58-e88d97a26ce2	Bruce Brown	Digital Trends	partner, user, market	5
2018-07-13	Lyft says launch in Saskatchewan "nearly impossible"™ due to license requirements	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7b00d99e-7f20-45aa-8784-4d9db3f1c3d2	Bradly Shankar	Mobile Syrup	launch, market, regulation	2
2018-07-13	Lyft introduces new feature for deaf passengers and drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e74b79f2-1d05-452e-a94e-70d6e1808d0a	Andrea K. McDaniels	Baltimore Sun	feature, user	3
2018-07-12	MEDIA ALERT: Dacorun Strategies and the Adams County Sheriff's Office Announce Lyft Partnership to Offer Discounted Rides to Driver Impairment Awareness Day	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/a2f3a567-c87b-4fc4-899f-4f50302a0e97	Dacorun Strategies	PRNewswire	partner, user, pricing	1
2018-07-11	RedCap partners with Lyft to help dealerships eliminate wait times and create a seamless automotive service experience through innovative transportation solutions	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d8df9e45-c7d0-48ca-bb3c-f89ff9ef4407	Solera Holdings Inc.	PRNewswire	partner, user	3
2018-06-27	Lyft valuation hits \$15.1 billion after fresh \$600 million in funding	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/192ff6e9-784d-4ddf-b4b1-ef0ed3baa07e	Kirsten Korosec	TechCrunch	funding	6
2018-06-19	Lyft's™ app code reveals unlaunched bike or scooter feature	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6caddc5c-6d3e-4c00-a968-f16de20965bf	Josh Constine	TechCrunch	launch, feature, market	4
2018-06-19	Comprehensive Vehicle Service Contracts Designed for Uber and Lyft Drivers Now Available on RideShareKnight.com	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b2c69c0d-ccd2-4210-a4d6-d633fb63714a		PRWeb	regulation	3
2018-06-19	Greenphire Partners with Lyft to Support Clinical Trial Patient Retention and Access	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f5b7e8d2-34b6-4967-9fb9-bde84ac5b21b	Greenphire	PRNewswire	partner, user	3
2018-06-08	Major Lyft app update pushes carpooling and public transport features	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/9d74fd20-f006-4729-8ef2-b736e23e33dc	Duncan Elder	Android Authority	feature	5
2018-06-06	Lyft pledges \$5 discounts on rides to the Pride parade	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/a4ff630a-b356-4e38-b0cf-3471cef15def	Doug MacCash	New Orleans	pricing	1
2018-06-03	Lyft and Hackensack Meridian Health team up to create rideshare command center	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/53c383fd-6478-4f1d-b5cc-71ee386a9498	Erin Dietsche	Med City News	partner	4
2018-06-01	Princeton University selects Lyft as official ride-share partner	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/44419694-b548-4516-a8c2-469414f3142f	David Hutter	NJBIZ	partner, user	1
2018-06-01	Lyft is closing in on a potential acquisition bike-share company Motivate	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b1589804-9e6a-4052-bf14-bd6cac264e6d	Ruth Reader	Fast Company	acquisition	5
2018-06-01	Lyft offering discounted Bunbury rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d5b	Cameron Knight	Cincinnati Enquirer	pricing	1

		8acf8-244b-49f8-b7e1-ca2419f7cc06				
2018-05-29	Super-cheap rides are making Lyft less reliable	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/4787998e-f804-4e8d-9370-fc726e23da69	Alison Griswold	Quartz	pricing, regulation	1
2018-05-23	Lyft Spending \$100 Million On New Network Of Driver Hubs	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/0d491502-643c-4058-a067-bb1d9a6e596b	Adnan Farooqui	Uber Gizmo	driver, regulation	5
2018-05-22	Lyft Looking To Launch Electric Scooters In San Francisco	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e872263d-74ea-442f-afcf-2492f95e1335	Henry Jom	Epoch Times	launch, feature, market	5
2018-05-17	Lyft and Caritas Offer Rides to Those Once Homeless	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/22ef276b-56af-49df-a55a-d5ac99c0aaa4	Alice Hao	Epoch Times	partner	1
2018-05-15	Lyft Has 35 Percent Of US Rideshare Market	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/3c6660bd-5e7d-4e50-b148-ca652939a13a	PYMNTS	Pymnts	competition	6
2018-05-14	Official: Lyft drivers at Disney World can join union	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d9ca86fd-f2b3-4879-9eed-1dd56cdc6943	Mike Schneider	Seattle PI	driver, regulation	2
2018-05-11	Uber-Lyft Driver Union Law Faces "Hard Road Ahead" After Ruling	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d29d3f81-e6c3-4ba5-92c8-b956d54b0ba8	Josh Eidelson	Bloomberg	driver, regulation	2
2018-05-10	Lyft launches monthly plans in Denver, includes 30 rides for \$200	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b998f0de-d41d-4265-bdc4-1f0df992717f	Tamara Chuang	Denver Post	launch, pricing, market	1
2018-05-03	Lyft Will Offer Autonomous Rides in 3 Years if Urban Planning Improves	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/2c3292d3-2f5e-4bd1-83e6-b2f05e964e05	John Bonazzo	Observer	market	5
2018-05-03	Gen Con Reaches Agreement with Lyft as Official Rideshare Partner for 2018 Convention	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/8d39ae48-2446-4c5c-9a19-ffd17f2e06eb		PRWeb	partner, user	1
2018-05-02	Aptiv Launches Fleet of Autonomous Vehicles on the Lyft Network	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/47cc787f-360d-485e-ab55-8359090d9b58	Aptiv PLC	PRNewswire	launch, partner, market, feature	5
2018-04-23	LeasePlan USA and Lyft Partner to Offer First-ever Integration of Fleet and Ride Hailing	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/252fda2a-829d-4297-99ab-0c9b782090e3		PRWeb	partner, feature	4
2018-04-23	Lyft offers free Line rides up to \$15 at Line 4 subway stations in wake of van attack	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/42748c30-ff11-44cb-b6ed-a25fe04157b3	Dean Daley	Mobile Syrup	pricing	1
2018-04-21	Lyft is gearing up for an eventual Alberta launch	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/a82027da-533b-4b56-ac3c-b79cc81fa9a6	Helen Pike	The Star	launch, market	1
2018-04-20	High on 4/20 day? Lyft teams with "Super Troopers" to offer discount rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/2f9aeefc-85ec-450d-a74a-59fdde084fff	Rex Crum	Mercury News	pricing	1
2018-04-19	Uber Scores an Early (Mostly) Win in Lyft Drivers' Privacy Suit	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/2de94184-09d2-4cec-9329-076e74e65626	Ross Todd	Law Technology Review	driver, regulation	2
2018-04-16	Lyft reaches \$500 million in driver tips	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/5436632d-fc73-4917-9fb4-e49524229940	Sasha Lekach	Mashable	driver, regulation, payment, pricing	1
2018-04-03	Lyft Launches New Carpool Feature in Toronto	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/8ce4e391-5ff5-4684-b657-221a6f93e1c9	Max Greenwood	Tech Vibes	feature, market	4
2018-03-29	Lyft adds to its medical transportation portfolio of	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/5be	Stephanie Baum	Med City News	partner, user, market	1

	partnerships with Acuity Link deal	54b62-e2ff-4c74-b144-5c339df635a5				
2018-03-29	Sound Transit settlement will subsidise Uber and Lyft rides to Mercer Island transit center	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ae003b04-fbda-4456-85ee-2879581ad486	Mike Lindblom	Seattle Times Business	pricing	1
2018-03-20	Global Alzheimer's Platform (GAP) Foundation Launches Partnership with Lyft to Transport Clinical Trial Participants to and from Clinical Research Facilities across North America	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/53e92c29-7044-49f8-b56b-dfe0e1340769		PRNewswire	partner, user, market	1
2018-03-17	Lyft tests subscription plans for frequent users	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b7452bec-bd70-4e90-89a4-741600dde156	Sasha Lekach	Mashable	user, payment	1
2018-11-15	Lyft launches in Ottawa	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/127f1759-ab03-4a1d-abfb-ae323037e39b	Sameer Chhabra	Mobile Syrup	launch, competition, market	1
2018-03-15	Lyft ramps up in readiness for SXSW partnership	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/96821ec2-065b-4049-86c0-5a8a5cb66c61	Marisa Garzia	TNooz	partner, user	1
2018-03-14	Lyft to Bring Driverless Car Tech to Broader Auto Industry	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/dd0008ca-94ba-469f-b1c9-80300d1917d6	DAISUKE WAKABA YASHI	New York Times - Deals	driver, market	5
2018-03-14	Lyft partners with auto-supplier Magna to scale self-driving car business	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ed34a190-0433-4680-a5b5-51f26a4586bb	Ruth Reader	Fast Company	partner, user, market	5
2018-03-13	How Lyft is supporting the Austin music scene with free rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/1dd2bfb5-6662-4edf-b80f-5ffa7a5cf631	Stephen Lepitak	The Drum	pricing	1
2018-03-08	Lyft begins testing its own self-driving cars on a private 5,000-acre campus	https://www.fastcompany.com/40541471/lyft-begins-testing-its-own-self-driving-cars-on-a-private-5000-acre-campus	Ruth Reader	Fast Company	competition	6
2018-03-05	Lyft Partners With Allscripts to Help Patients Get a Ride to the Doctor	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d13ce47f-9897-4a92-b707-6e32a259a35e	PYMNTS	Pymnts	partner, user, market	1
2018-03-02	Seated App Users Can Now Earn Lyft Credit	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/1ae34b2a-9ceb-400e-9a2c-7852ade24c93	Kimberly Ricci	UpRoxx - Tech	user, feature, payment	1
2018-03-02	Lyft Is Offering Free Rides To Attendees Of Pro-Gun Control Marches Across The U.S. On March 24	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/a07d2f5e-4d8b-4528-a7f9-848d4ff3feb1	Kimberly Ricci	Fast Company	pricing	1
2018-03-01	Lyft dramatically grew its active driver numbers in 2017	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/2037cdb0-ecb8-44e6-8dfb-a3c06e23f2c3	Sissi Cao	Observer	driver, competition	2
2018-02-21	New York Lyft Drivers Can Now Take Coffee Breaks at a WeWork-Like Space	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/cec345b-ad89-4cb5-8049-573b68699968	Daily Herald Report	Daily Herald	driver, Regulation	3
2018-02-15	Lyft gets into bike-sharing through partnership with Baltimore	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e14eb798-cb84-4273-bca1-bd08185f7035	Cheryl Miller	Law Technology Review	partner, feature, market	5
2018-02-14	Lyft Settles SF's Demand for Driver Data	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/067d305d-138f-4f99-bcea-0874ff0cd272	Gary Ng	iPhone in Canada	driver, Regulation	2
2018-02-12	Lyft Launching in Ottawa in 2018 - Coming Weeks Confirms Company	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/flca99cd-da9d-4f99-a1e4-976f189e2067	Megan Rose Dickey	TechCrunch	launch, competition, market	1

2018-02-08	Safety Tips for Uber and Lyft Drivers Using TLC Leasing or Rentals	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/efc4ad48-0caf-4178-a34a-cb04f0574d10	Deirdre Bosa	CNBC	driver, Regulation	3
2018-02-05	The new tax law creates a huge boon for Uber and Lyft drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6abd93f7-3a2c-4a80-8e1b-ed56eb08cd0e	Paayal Zaveri, Deirdre Bosa	Las Vegas Review Journal	driver, Regulation	2
2018-02-01	Lights FC announce partnership with Lyft	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/2606a9e1-999f-4754-93bf-fdd61db789fa	Gary Ng	iPhone in Canada	partner, user	1
2018-02-01	Lyft Offers \$3.25 Rides in Toronto During TTC Subway Weekend Closures	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/c6487358-ae15-47d1-8195-12b231d6b91d	St. Jude Children's Research Hospital	PRNewswire	pricing	1
2018-01-30	St. Jude Children's Research Hospital® and Lyft Partner to Allow Riders to Round Up & Donate to Help End Childhood Cancer	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/0971156c-5b5c-4eb6-b55f-27c41daf5776	St. Jude Children's Research Hospital	PRNewswire	partner, user	2
2017-12-26	Lyft Gives Year-End Love to Its Drivers Who've Truly Changed People's Lives	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/9a15ba91-34d7-4b0c-8e9b-edaaef31d37	Angela Natividad	AdWeek	driver, Regulation	2
2017-12-19	Lyft announces a new partnership with Aira to make ridesharing easier for the visually impaired	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/bd363981-4e38-49c1-bac2-b39732e01f98	Ryne Hager	Android Police	partner, user	3
2017-12-13	Lyft Rejiggers Leadership Team as It Tackles Driver Costs	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/1cccf3c6-46d0-4221-b11e-710c461e5c8f	Amir Efrati	The Informationist	driver, Regulation	2
2017-12-12	Lyft Launches in Toronto, Says They Treat People Better	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/4afd255f-f89c-42ff-afc9-98e9ea80440c	Gary Ng	iPhone in Canada	launch, competition, market	6
2017-12-11	Lyft partners with Guild Education to offer drivers tuition discounts	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/2e70cb80-ed6b-46f1-9d56-050dee2b9755	Megan Rose Dickey	TechCrunch	driver, Regulation	2
2017-12-05	Health transport company Circulation announces partnership with Lyft	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/3a098165-547d-4186-b35b-4b1ab1b8f572	Laura Lovett	Mobil Health News	partner, feature, market	1
2017-12-05	Lyft's fresh funding round brings valuation to \$11.5 billion	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/c7198bf9-4acb-4d99-8bcc-540cb78832a6	Reuters Staff	Reuters UK	funding	1
2017-12-02	Driverless Lyft rides coming to Seaport	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/2693edd4-6eb7-4d0e-a262-d5b9a815b405	Adam Vaccaro	Bost.com	driver, launch, market	5
2017-11-30	Biki partners with Lyft	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/9c26d72b-9efb-48b8-a29e-93f9cdfde9ce		Hawaii Star Advertiser	partner	5
2017-11-23	Lyft raises another \$500 million in additional round of funding	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/9700fffb-530d-433b-8ba0-b1562d1596d4		Fox Business	funding	1
2017-11-13	Lyft to offer first drivers 25% bonus when it brings ride-hailing service to Toronto next month	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/12d2eb1d-094c-449b-9f76-14fa3fe52394	The New York Times	Financial Post	market, launch, pricing	2
2017-11-13	Lyft to Launch in Toronto Next Month as Uber Competitor Expands to First City Outside of United States	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/db743ffa-7527-42a9-bc11-482a8017a5e1	Joe Rossignol	MacRumors	launch, competition, market	6
2017-11-08	Lyft is testing a new rider experience with a small percentage of users	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/9affd72c-3269-483f-872f-39b31fb67438	Darrell Etherington	TechCrunch	user, feature	3
2017-11-02	Generali Global Assistance Partners With Lyft For Non-Emergency Medical Personnel Transportation	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/3426963b-ae21-4a89-bb77-dbdc0f5914b2	Generali Global Assistance	PRNewswire	partner, feature, market	1

2017-10-30	Lyft Partners with Stranger Things To Offer Scary Rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b13545b2-9ad6-4798-928c-8773a02da901		PSFK	partner, feature	1
2017-10-27	Uber just added a feature Lyft has had for a year	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/abfa5df9-4d05-47ec-913c-2397ae70bb2f	Avery Hartmans	Business Insider Australia	feature	6
2017-10-19	Lyft raises \$1 billion in funding round led by Alphabet's venture arm	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/618837a0-5b4d-4e84-87c0-9cfd28d71fc3	Andrew J. Hawkins	The Verge	funding	5
2017-10-12	Lyft says it will use Google Maps as its default navigation tool for drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/cc5020e0-160f-4fe1-b2e3-335247775fd5	Andrew J. Hawkins	The Verge	driver, feature	3
2017-10-12	Lyft's new in-app navigation for drivers knocks out one more previous Uber advantage	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f86f692e-be40-4079-81d3-7db061d36088	Johana Bhuiyan	Re/code	driver, feature	6
2017-10-11	Uber and Lyft Resist California Regulators' Appeal for Data Sharing	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/64f251ae-5616-47b9-bad7-2c20929bab02	Cheryl Miller	Law Technology Review	regulation	2
2017-10-11	Lyft has now delivered half a billion rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b98d4049-f0d5-4393-9fad-827244d1c53b	Paayal Zaveri	CNBC	rides	1
2017-10-10	Snapchat Context Cards will let users Uber or Lyft to places their friends are at	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e2b5c12c-1a6c-44c0-86a9-ad291d7f091e	Jules Wang	Pocket Now	user, partner, feature	3
2017-10-03	Lyft to be rideshare partner for American Cancer Society	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/14a9d9b1-71ec-4df7-b05d-ac245730ddfe	Nancy Dahlberg	Miami Herald	partner	1
2017-09-26	Ford and Lyft partner to deploy self-driving cars by 2021	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/bdb5c04a-abf9-4743-aeab-2d85f3341eff	Reuters	Venture Beat	partner, feature, market	5
2017-09-25	Lyft ups its driver game	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/820d11e6-f335-4f9e-a222-dbbf165a58fb	Dara Kerr	CNet	driver, user, feature	2
2017-09-25	Lyft's app for drivers is getting a major overhaul	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/a5b3a20a-81d5-4994-9ab0-af44554fd9f3	Andrew J. Hawkins	The Verge	driver, user, feature	3
2017-09-25	Lyft offers drivers 24/7 access to support services	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ff3e448e-994a-4ce7-abb9-6c24fed9ce75	Mallory Locklear	Engadget	driver, user, feature	2
2017-09-18	Lyft requests will light up phones for deaf drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e6e19cf0-f27-4650-841c-b82fbb3e2ba6	Mariella Moon	Engadget	driver, user, feature	3
2017-09-14	Ridesharing service Lyft might be coming to Canada by the end of the year	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/8a9ae353-ccb3-4c7c-ade2-bd1e3be36e85	Shameer Chhabra	Financial Post	market, launch	1
2017-09-08	Uber is under FBI investigation over software it used to track Lyft drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/4d4e27c0-18ae-4fcb-8da1-9ab44ab37366	Sean O'Kane	The Verge	competition, driver	6
2017-09-07	Lyft Is Launching a Fleet of Self-Driving Cars in San Francisco	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/25383460-55e4-4a0a-adf6-63effcb6df87	Alex Davies	Wired	launch, market, feature	1
2017-09-07	Lyft and Drive.ai partner on Bay Area self-driving ride-hailing pilot	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/9cd0e08b6-05eb-73ba-35af-16cbeca995e4	Darrell Etherington	TechCrunch	partner, feature, market	5
2017-08-31	Migo launches transportation search engine app with Lyft and car2go payment integration	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/61c0c491-1513-4610-ba36-446f6b54a2c3	Taylor Soper	GeekWire	launch, partner	3

2017-08-31	Lyft expands ridesharing	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d9257348-c22b-4d2d-931b-02df2f56df8f	Roger Fingas	Apple Insider	market, feature	6
2017-08-28	Uber and Lyft drivers can now operate almost like taxi drivers at LAX	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d0c914d9-8113-4f70-99a4-8cdd899108f0	Hugo Martin	LA Times	regulation	2
2017-08-25	Landmark Uber-Lyft driver union law can move forward after federal judge tosses lawsuit	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/274c4bec-1c29-43ae-b8bd-8d7ddbaba49	Nat Levy	GeekWire	regulation	2
2017-08-24	Ride-sharing firm Lyft partners with retirement community	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/8f7b4e0e-7f9b-4c99-8065-bbcb36ed4a05	Jeff Ostrowski	Palm Beach Post	partner, user	1
2017-08-22	Uber and Lyft drivers to protest low pay at LAX	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/48677fc0-71a7-44f8-bb25-35b8303d555f		San Gabriel Tribune	pricing, regulation	2
2017-08-20	Lyft Is Partnering With An Anti-Discrimination Group To Train Drivers On Handling White Supremacists	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/dda2a3f9-d024-4997-a605-5d73aafb371e	Salvador Hernandez, Caroline O'Donovan	Buzzfeed	partner, user	3
2017-08-16	Solar eclipse 2017: Lyft discounts rides 21 percent to prime viewing spots Monday	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/64c97135-acb5-46cb-a6a5-cb857cfeea4c	AJC Homepage	AJC	pricing	1
2017-08-14	Lyft: Autonomous Cars Will Not Leave Drivers Unemployed	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/4a9d3aa7-4500-4fb9-ade3-ea1eefc5840b	Alexander Maxham	Android Headlines	regulation, market, feature	2
2017-08-14	Lyft saw a 60 percent increase in new users during #deleteUber	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7f1f0342-aa8d-43f1-bb70-bf01fc0e3d69	Eric Johnson	Re/code	user, competition	6
2017-08-14	Lyft Acquires Two Companies In An Effort To Add Drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d87d6ea4-23a5-435d-a371-a6b5de857d6c	Mark Real	Android Headlines	acquisition, driver	6
2017-08-10	GM expands its car sharing service for Uber and Lyft drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/3eb17fac-06ab-945d-3a7c-404f982cda8b	Andrew J. Hawkins	The Verge	partner, market	5
2017-08-09	Med transport provider partners with Lyft	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/715ca6cb-7389-4c64-8f1a-721522b3a20b	John Stearns	Hartford Business	partner, feature	1
2017-08-04	Lyft-Hertz partnership marks 1 million rides in Southern Nevada	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/aba473-d63e-427b-82d2-3101d0941f12	Mick Akers	Vegas Inc	partner, feature	1
2017-08-03	Lyft Adds Three New Partners To Charity Program	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/66d0e0e2-9043-4243-b310-9a50ecb06b07	PYMNTS	Pymnts	partner, feature	4
2017-08-02	Lyft partners with WNY Medicaid providers to offer free rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/dda8fb8f-e888-4096-bcd9-14864741d55c	Staff	Buffalo News	partner, pricing	1
2017-08-01	Lyft partners with Amtrak for first- and last-mile trip tie-ins	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/a2c77659-2e5f-4145-8993-80e090cflc6e	Darrell Etherington	TechCrunch	partner, feature	4
2017-07-31	Lyft launches Minnie Van™ on-demand ride service at Walt Disney World	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ecb97991-bfd3-96ac-0446-56894b0308ba	Darrell Etherington	TechCrunch	launch, market	1
2017-07-25	Lyft is partnering with Taco Bell for late night munchies pit stops	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/5eed9b8d-11d7-48bb-a5a9-f6d19b89ff7a	Darrell Etherington	TechCrunch (China)	partner, feature	3
2017-07-21	Lyft Outlines Self-Driving Car Plans After Earlier Partnerships	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/1f10cfb4-c630-4413-afbec10cd44c3eb	Eric Newcomer	Bloomberg View	partner, feature, market	6

2017-07-21	Lyft launches a new self-driving division and will develop its own autonomous ride-hailing technology	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/23317f1d-3dd7-4e94-8777-68fa474c010e	Sarah Buhr	TechCrunch	launch, market	6
2017-07-21	SF city attorney seeks court order to force Lyft and Uber to hand over driver data	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/88eac5d-b9db-4a81-8220-f10d46053460	Megan Rose Dickey	TechCrunch	regulation	2
2017-07-19	Helicopters Over Uber And Lyft? Ridesharing May Change Due To Heavy Traffic	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/03300745-c5dc-4e36-b806-1859d1e9fb48	Steven Klett	IBT - Technology	competition	6
2017-07-19	Lyft Colorfully Took Over a Los Angeles Car Wash to Thank Its Drivers With \$1 Washes	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/16f8da0c-ab45-425d-9c3b-c5a4e31465f0	Tim Nudd	AdWeek	user, driver, pricing	1
2017-07-16	Deem + Lyft Partnership Brings Ride-Sharing to its Intelligent Ground Transportation Platform	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/785bdb73-9113-4256-9d12-f0eb1f888d84		NASDAQ Global Newswire	partner, feature	6
2017-07-12	Lyft Introduces Nexonia as a New Expense Management Partner	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/c55aa6c9-ef7d-41de-a995-a664f4530994		PRWeb	partner, feature, user	3
2017-07-11	Uber Doesn't Limit Drivers' Hours Like Lyft	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/46abf533-6e71-4272-b39c-73e64b47b6a3	Tanya Gazdik	MediaPost.com	competition, driver, regulation	6
2017-07-06	Lyft's growth is rocketing and the company is now doing a million rides a day	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/5e5553e3-6e31-49dd-b29c-1c810618e045	Biz Carson	Business Insider Australia	rides	1
2017-07-06	Root Insurance Partners with Lyft to Reinvent Claims Experience, Announces Rental Coverage	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/af33279e-87ce-4942-be73-cbc28e9c7dd1		PRWeb	partner, feature, user	3
2017-07-01	Lyft Is Opening Hubs Across the U.S. to Assist New Drivers Within Hours	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ad62b88c-3fc0-4114-b3c5-6d70b8fb2c84	Aric Jenkins	Fortune	driver, competition	2
2017-06-26	Lyft is trying to speed up rides by suggesting better pick-up locations	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/a6979ff9-6e36-433d-9480-849cfa3507e1	Brittany A. Roston	Slash Gear	feature	1
2017-06-19	Lyft rolls out new tipping prompts as drivers pass \$250 million in tips earned	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b6873c4f-84d5-493d-8d42-32ed97a91c7c	Darrell Etherington	TechCrunch	pricing, competition, driver	2
2017-06-15	Lyft wants to power 1 Billion autonomous rides per year by 2025	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7fcb2ab0-b2e1-47eb-ab15-59493b5721f6	Mudit Mohilay	The Tech Portal	rides, feature, market	6
2017-06-12	Lyft gets \$25M and a fleet of cars from new partner Jaguar Land Rover	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/5d034593-7c77-ae42-c3dd-1b2bd4209a17	Darrell Etherington	TechCrunch	partner, feature, market, funding	5
2017-06-08	Lyft to launch statewide in New York on June 29	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f66fa976-5c48-4e2e-bfa3-400bebe32e27	Jon Campbell	Democrat & Chronicle	launch, market	1
2017-06-06	Lyft plans to debut self-driving car rides for Boston customers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7fe97b07-94b0-4209-b2f2-71e8cdd7edac	Jordan Graham	Boston Herald	rides, feature, market	4
2017-06-06	Lyft and Nutionomy partner to bring first self-driving Lyft service to Boston	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b1db0c7d-72a6-c4e2-df7c-218b7f67af4b	Darrell Etherington	TechCrunch	partner, feature, market	5
2017-06-01	Lyft offering free rides for Las Vegas cancer patients	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/24660324-9284-49b8-abd6-7a376478db7b	Blake Appgar	Las Vegas Review Jurnal	pricing, user	1
2017-05-26	Lyft drivers can start planning pickups days in advance	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6ef6050b-c863-434b-b21c-7161ba276886	Edgar Alvarez	Engadget	driver, feature	2

2017-05-25	How Uber's funding and valuation stack up against competitors like Didi and Lyft	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/2bd-b4245-b378-4405-931d-cb06765ba05d	Johana Bhuiyan	Re/code	funding	6
2017-05-25	Uber and Lyft to Relaunch in Austin After Regulation Spat	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7e201784-cb46-4151-91a3-8c3f67704d89	Kate Conger	Gizmodo	regulation	2
2017-05-25	Lyft launches two high-end ride-hailing options, Lux and Lux SUV	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/88f0f9c2-067b-46ea-81a9-545baab92007	Techspot	Shawn Knight	launch, competition	6
2017-05-25	Lyft takes on Uber's black luxury car services by launching Lyft Lux	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d80464bd-aafa-45cc-a92c-1e30102a9a46	Tracey Lien	LA Times	launch, competition	6
2017-05-23	Blue Cross Blue Shield partners with Lyft to get patients to appointments	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6121c9d1-bec2-4578-9c86-1f9d9238a8d8	James Melton	Internet Retailer	partner, feature, user	1
2017-05-18	Texas May Soon Have a Statewide Law to Regulate Ride Hailing Companies Like Uber and Lyft	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/0cff67b-6475-4adc-a35c-723ad701a6b1	lalorek	Silicon Hills News	regulation	2
2017-05-18	HyreCar Partners With Lyft On Ridesharing Rentals	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ed9136b4-d862-4088-a62d-1ed5fc34f1a4		Tech Cocktail	partner, feature	4
2017-05-17	Delta and Lyft Team Up To Reward Customers with First-of-its-Kind Partnership	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/694af47-2fa9-4454-9dbe-e893fba93db9	Delta Air Lines	PRNewswire All	partner, feature, user	4
2017-05-16	Lyft Finally Launches A Standalone Driver App	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/aa55dcf4-5a5a-4abd-9f19-38a5979da51a	Tyler Lee	Uber Gizmo	driver, user, feature	3
2017-05-15	Lyft has finally matched one of Uber's big advantages with drivers by launching a new	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/03b3b0da-93f6-4331-b95c-95704a6b627a	Biz Carson	Business Insider (tech)	driver, user, feature	6
2017-05-15	Google's Waymo Gets a Valuable Autonomous Driving Partner in Lyft	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/285c6608-217b-4de1-acde-f53ee8ba0364	Eric Jhonsa	The Street	partner, feature, market	5
2017-05-14	Lyft to partner with Google's Waymo on self-driving cars	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/06f3f519-f325-4d0a-9475-95312db147bf	Mike Bambach	UPI	partner, feature, market	5
2017-05-12	D.C.-Based Home Care Company Launches Lyft Partnership	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/23605d9-e309-42f4-9a73-8c252a8e4bb7		iNews Wire	partner, user, feature	4
2017-05-12	Lyft and Connected Living Team Up to Offer Family Rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/68f22382-7d69-4fcc-9521-3adb00df464a	Lyft	PRNewswire All	feature, user	4
2017-04-20	Lyft announces two new product improvements in cooperation with the National Association of the Deaf Partnership	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/914c42a4-d2a3-aa74-6b82-6ba706203d42	Ryne Hager	Android Police	partner, user, feature	3
2017-04-13	Uber 'Hell' Program: Uber Reportedly Used Exploit To Track And Target Lyft Drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/c6a87175-c29e-9234-e9a8-3ed68b0951a6	AJ Dellinger	IBT - Technology	competition, regulation	6
2017-04-11	Lyft confirms \$600 million in new funding at \$7.5 billion valuation	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/bc4089f0-9087-c0d0-bb72-33d9537ca146	Ken Yeung	Venture Beat	funding	1
2017-03-29	Lyft Is Launching A Commuter Shuttle Service	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/3408a24d-6f68-e5b9-0895-b848c91b2095	Caroline O'Donovan	Buzzfeed	launch, user, feature	4
2017-03-27	Lyft will let users donate part of their fare to charity	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/77dc84c4-3112-cb2d-48b1-adf44caac079	Josh Levenson	Techno Buffalo	user, feature	4

2017-03-22	Lyft drivers received \$100 million in tips over the last 9 months	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/53186d0b-4a54-ba4c-1655-4bb486bfc56b	Ken Yeung	Venture Beat	driver, pricing	2
2017-03-17	US judge approves US\$27 million driver settlement in Lyft lawsuit	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/c1b77cc4-6107-7970-9164-1dc0a2d7e5ca		Channel News Asia - Tech	regulation, driver	2
2017-03-09	Lyft just met its goal of launching in 100 more U.S. cities in 2017	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/bd0a0da8-acf1-5d26-d48f-9a17f332de62	Darrell Etherington	TechCrunch	launch, market, competition	1
2017-03-09	Lyft launches in 10 more markets to meet 2017 goal of 100 in just 3 months	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d82aa73a-7629-5885-344b-a415677ccd29	Ken Yeung	Venture Beat	launch, market, competition	1
2017-03-08	Lyft feature will nab you a ride without a smartphone or account	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/697ee89f-65af-98e8-2b03-49ecccf13f56	Brandon Russell	Techno Buffalo	feature	3
2017-03-02	Lyft seeks \$6 billion valuation in funding round	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/63eb9127-6206-9984-cf2c-c1e7266ae1be	Katie Roof	TechCrunch	funding	6
2017-02-23	Lyft launches in 54 new cities as people #DeleteUber	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/418e516f-72b4-f8b5-03d3-0d8d817d5884	Levi Sumagaysay	SiliconBeat	launch, market, competition	6
2017-02-20	GM & Lyft Rumored To Launch Self-Driving Cars In 2018	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ea1878e4-9a04-8322-abad-42b443a2ce27	Tyler Lee	Uber Gizmo	partner, feature, market	6
2017-01-31	Lyft Can Now Book Rides Based On Your Calendar	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/81cb3e64-a10b-78bb-460c-6fa2ce3f0de9	Tyler Lee	Uber Gizmo	feature	3
2017-01-25	Lyft Rolls Out New Benefit That Could Save Carpool Users 40%	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/91b9720d-1456-ecc3-4b77-706fa6d60d99	Kirsten Korosec	Fortune	user, feature	4
2017-01-25	Lyft now lets commuters use pretax dollars for Line rides to and from work	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/abfe27d5-0d3d-15cd-8f66-e91d6b49ecd0	Ken Yeung	Venture Beat	pricing, feature	3
2017-01-25	Lyft Planning To Launch Service In 100 New U.S. Cities By End Of Year	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d6f54431-a483-2233-c055-12a355e46c4f	Mary Beth Quirk	Consumerist	launch, market	1
2017-01-25	Lyft to launch in 40 new cities this week, targeting 100 in 2017	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/eca1e0ac-4b68-94fa-683c-71e1ad7f2182	Ken Yeung	Venture Beat	launch, market	1
2017-01-06	Lyft tripled its rides in 2016	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/4ef9cc9b-05dc-78a4-9ce5-6e3a9e25f039	Biz Carson	Business Insider Australia	rides	1
2016-12-07	Lyft's feature to match drivers with riders along the same route is now available to all	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/208d2590-9879-18e1-8b7a-ecf878ba375c	Ken Yeung	Venture Beat	feature, user	3
2016-12-01	Lyft launches upfront pricing for all ride types	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/abc70d5a-51a0-bb9c-a600-d99165e408ad	Emily Price	SF Gate Tech	pricing	1
2016-11-16	Lyft launches ride request SDK for iOS	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ed461a73-5d03-f93c-8d67-dfc4367f89f3	Ken Yeung	Venture Beat	feature, launch	5
2016-11-16	PeerWell Partners with Lyft to Offer Safer Rides to Surgery and Rehab	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f6cf9def-d5dd-ebbf-4265-e2120ba87247		PRWeb Sitemap	partners, feature, market	1
2016-11-02	Lyft partners with JetBlue on rewards, app integration and JFK pickup zone	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/4759f360-acf6-7a33-b5de-f94d261be187	Darrell Etherington	Techcrunch	partner, user, feature	4

2016-10-25	Lyft picked up 17 million rides in October, up more than twice that amount from last year	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/11c76bf-b595-2f51-8023-63ed26a33320	Sarah Buhr	Techcrunch	rides	1
2016-10-12	Lyft partners with Brookdale to bring on-demand rides to senior communities	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/de11b56f-d735-986c-8217-029699f5319d	Lora Kolodny	TechCrunch	partner, user, feature	1
2016-09-19	Majority of Lyft rides to be self-driving by 2021	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7a5d11e5-0d2b-6211-3089-41b1013a72fc	Ronny Kerr	Vator.tv	rides, market	6
2016-09-19	Stripe launches Instant Payouts feature to all after pilot with Lyft	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e2b1427b-c09b-72f4-e40f-c8bb2e08c074	Ken Yeung	Venture Beat	feature, payment, partner	3
2016-09-13	Lyft teams with Budweiser to curb drunk driving with free rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/cfc6669f-ed91-80a2-8117-15b936be0f53	Ken Yeung	Venture Beat	rides, pricing	1
2016-09-06	Study: Lyft partnership reduces costs, waiting times for chronically ill seniors	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b31351ca-0eb0-34a9-360b-4ff0345c35b8	Mark Taylor	Med City News	partner	5
2016-08-30	Lyft partnership taps into widely underserved seniors' market	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/289a72cb-d4a5-671c-f5f1-3408208eb6da	Debora Lima	Boston Tech Flash	partner, user, feature	1
2016-08-25	Lyft now lets business users customize their expense reports	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6f6a07de-aa18-516d-1858-5eccd7f3f4ce	Paul Sawers	Venture Beat	user, feature, payment	3
2016-08-20	Apple reportedly among companies that held potential acquisition talks with Lyft	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e81e11a9-fcab-3398-766e-60f93bb5ebfe	Chance Miller	9to5Mac	acquisition, funding	6
2016-08-19	Lyft shuts down Bay Area carpool service five months after launch	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/01d18e4c-f259-de55-6a2a-d240db2e73be	Marisa Kendall	SiliconBeat	market	4
2016-08-18	Lyft Shuts Down Carpool Commute Feature As Drivers Opt Out	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f0ab6467-947f-d170-83a5-4acb58cec3b5	Brian Solomon	Forbes	feature, user	2
2016-08-17	Lyft beats Uber to the punch with local partnership	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/14398a4e-2be8-2eb7-119c-8b95b4ead1cd	Debora Lima	Boston Tech Flash	partner, user, feature	6
2016-08-17	One Call Partners With Lyft For Enhanced Customer Experience in Non-Emergency Transportation	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/4bd33c67-eba0-3c7e-342a-0ea381838219	Laura Land	Business Wire	partner, user, feature	5
2016-08-12	Lyft turned down an acquisition offer from General Motors	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/cb5d1433-47ce-8455-2d7c-98a5c7104679	Brittany A. Roston	Slash Gear	acquisition, funding	6
2016-08-10	Retracted: GM-Lyft Self-Driving Taxis Could Launch in 2019	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/3304c23f-e384-7427-7514-d9cdf244374	Mark Harris	IEEE Spectrum	market, launch, feature	5
2016-08-08	Lyft Will Allow Users To Add Extra Stops To Rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/54bad1ac-defa-50f6-7950-4f9fe7ad1810	Adnan Farooqui	Uber Gizmo	user, feature	3
2016-08-03	Lyft performed 14 million rides in July for a record month	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e9f1d2ba-3646-518f-afc7-19b568ed32e5	Avery Hartmans	Business Insider (tech)	rides	1
2016-08-01	Lyftâ€™s partnership with Didi is on the skids after Chinese app merges with Uber	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/8b620ccb-96f0-85c0-da57-e917900d4c4f	Andrew J. Hawkins	The Verge	partner, feature, market	5
2016-07-29	Uber competitor Lyft launches in Portland	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/c3d92c11-4a69-f9fb-e8af-4fbf797b48e6		MaineBiz	launch, market, competition	6

2016-07-25	Lyft breaks silence in Austin City Hall ridesharing standoff	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/a8397e70-ca30-2f83-15a0-ce01afe712a5	Michael Theis	Boston Tech Flash	regulation	2
2016-07-19	GM's Self-Driving Car Will Be Launched With Lyft	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b3dae9e7-e186-336f-7276-fbb27f560ffb	Adnan Farooqui	Uber Gizmo	market, launch, feature	5
2016-07-11	GM and Lyft to expand short-term rental partnership after it "dramatically exceeded expectations"	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/62ecf060-d2b4-32ee-742d-47846d1aa0d7	Reuters	Venture Beat	partner, feature, market	4
2016-07-08	Lyft debuts new high-end rides for business users	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/8267a532-216d-417f-57ae-438694d0bd22	Annie Gaus	Boston Tech Flash	user, feature	4
2016-07-07	Lyft Launches "Premier" Luxury Ride Service To Rival Uber Black	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/c8ccf2d-7954-46b3-c635-94365d719fe0	Mary Beth Quirk	Consumerist	market, launch	6
2016-06-30	Lyft and Hertz are expanding a deal to offer rental cars to drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/91b12b81-7c95-521e-423a-9d0d18799828	Chris Ziegler	The Verge	partner, driver	4
2016-06-16	T-Mobile Will Give Away Free Lyft Rides Instead Of Pizza After Domino's Struggles To Keep Up With Promo	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/1c66ab14-6341-86ae-9085-1ca2235d7a7c	Mary Beth Quirk	Consumerist	partner, pricing	1
2016-06-09	Uber rolling out Scheduled Rides in Seattle as app chases Lyft's similar feature	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/64ccacd-cb6d-2c2e-a537-bdacc80b7750	Kurt Schlosser	GeekWire	feature	6
2016-06-03	Walmart partners with Uber and Lyft for grocery delivery as it battles Amazon	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/44bf23ea-8492-4ba7-b13e-56505b99dbe8	Taylor Soper	GeekWire	partner, market, feature	4
2016-06-02	South-East Asia users can now Grab a Lyft in the US	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/609d28a3-527b-7028-9f1a-1599f03d93b1	Benjamin Cher	Digital News Asia (SE Asia)	user, market	5
2016-06-02	Shaq went undercover as a Lyft driver	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6fdb52bf7-679c-fff8-6407-94e4737e5365	Paul Schrodtt	Business Insider Australia	driver	2
2016-05-23	Lyft begins testing scheduled rides in San Francisco	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/354a9ea4-cbb9-7690-04faf385b1b1008	John Callaham	iMore	feature, launch	3
2016-05-23	Lyft Slashing Weekday Rides In NYC By Half	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/fd7b918f-f59b-e2d9-b35b-a03d8cddaeca	Ashlee Kieler	Consumerist	pricing	6
2016-05-12	Lyft agrees to more than double payment to drivers in court settlement	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/a96c2b5a-39b5-cfd4-819c-d66884b62648	John Ribeiro	Mac World	payment, regulation	2
2016-05-08	Uber and Lyft will shut down in Austin after losing vote requiring tougher background checks for drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7412ca0a-1d2c-e053-b7fc-09687bf1be2	Jon Herskovitz	Business Insider (tech)	regulation, market	2
2016-04-26	Ride-sharing service Lyft has launched its first TV ad	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/5566dd2f-5cc8-c81b-5729-99bb5f52e16e	Lara O'Reilly	Business Insider (tech)	user, competition, launch	1
2016-04-20	Lyft launches business profiles to make it easier to expense rides for work	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/8636a49c-495a-ffdd-462d-10fc7f4a9bd9	Ken Yeung	Venture Beat	feature	4
2016-04-19	Lyft has quietly eliminated its 3X cap on surge pricing	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/96343339-5966-ac59-d00c-04dd4aa80780	Alison Griswold	Quartz - Tech	pricing	1
2016-04-17	The 3 factors behind Uber and Lyft's regulatory win in California	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/54f	Lisa Rayle	TechCrunch	regulation, market	2

		efb8b-316d-ad77-1328-1b4d1df3edcc				
2016-04-15	Uber/Lyft drivers must register as businesses in SF	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7d045cfe-4704-c2c1-b5a1-006298d93783	Ronny Kerr	Vator.tv	regulation	2
2016-04-13	Uber expands UberPOOL in Seattle as Lyft launches its own carpooling service	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/893e2724-b873-bd0c-e88c-4547272b5313	Taylor Soper	GeekWire	launch, feature, market	6
2016-04-12	Users of Chinese ride-share giant Didi Kuaidi can now seamlessly hail a Lyft in the US	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/9b95657c-31b1-5b1c-502e-22c2976a0f09	Andrew J. Hawkins	The Verge	user, market	5
2016-04-07	Federal judge rejects \$12.25 million settlement in Lyft driver class action case	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ab9aa2e1-7169-7432-9bee-ea2f7616e0ea	Reuters	Venture Beat	regulation	2
2016-04-06	Lyft users love Uber	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/10156008-0e5c-292a-c641-0647e4e45776	Andrew J. Hawkins	The Verge	competition, user	6
2016-03-29	Lyft Launching Carpool Service In San Francisco Area	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/3083bdc4-2bab-68e8-6bc1-ea7056ea1024	Ashlee Kieler	Consumerist	launch, feature, market	4
2016-03-25	Waze integration for drivers rolls out nationwide in Lyft's mobile app	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7ca46307-5375-da24-cfdb-37f1e4cddaf2	Sarah Perez	TechCrunch	partner	5
2016-03-21	Lyft reportedly saved \$126 million by refusing to classify drivers as employees	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/5ce64200-d94c-178f-5e18-44c0cd7926ff	Andrew J. Hawkins	The Verge	regulation	2
2016-03-17	Uber Launches Instant Pay Pilot as It Battles Lyft for Drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/9ef3090b-615f-6dbf-de84-096a7eeb3920	Johana Bhuiyan	Re/code	user, competition	6
2016-03-16	Lyft drivers to rent GM cars in Chicago pilot	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/57a05a79-03ae-5485-6fe3-00e8ed2a42ed	Greg Gardner	Detroit Free Press	partner, launch	2
2016-03-15	Lyft and GM partner on Express Drive	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/449c886a-1e3a-fe61-8469-3022333764a9	Ingrid Lunden	TechCrunch	partner, feature, market	4
2016-03-15	Lyft and GM are offering free rental cars to get more drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/5a8b87c0-ad7d-52f4-2d82-64c6e431bfac	Andrew J. Hawkins	The Verge	driver, partner	2
2016-03-15	Lyft Will Subsidise Car Rentals for Drivers Who Do 65 Rides a Week	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/715391ba-dbeb-362e-0cde-95b0224b37cd	Johana Bhuiyan	Re/code	user, driver, pricing	2
2016-03-15	GM Will Rent Cars To Lyft Drivers For \$99/Week	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ab1e7fdd-36c5-3425-c4ec-d0174bba17f6	Ashlee Kieler	Consumerist	user, driver, pricing	4
2016-02-25	Angry Uber and Lyft drivers just launched their own app	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/4db10d6-72b4-d8c9-c86f-a1924f3c4983	James Billington	Business Insider (tech)	competition, user	2
2016-02-19	Lyft users will be able to hail rides in China in a matter of months	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/678e4d13-fc21-0e84-d34e-c64d9dc25f9b		e27 News	user, market	5
2016-01-27	Lyft agrees to give its drivers more than \$12 million to settle a proposed class action lawsuit	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/11109500-55b2-a57c-f967-755488265fe8	Dan Levine	Business Insider (tech)	regulation	2
2016-01-27	Uber and Lyft Are Still Trying to Avoid Acting Like Regular Employers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d5cbf392-755b-94c4-99cc-362f4bf03ae6	Michael Reilly	MIT Technology Review	regulation, user	2
2016-01-26	Googles Waze launches SDK for third-party transportation apps like Lyft	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7be	Paul Sawers	Venture Beat	launch, feature, market	5

		bd2d8-63fc-fb2b-6e91-6f0a9b018115				
2016-01-26	Waze partners with Lyft for driver directions	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e6a261f1-6556-b897-7a66-fa65b17793aa	Joseph Keller	iMore	partner, feature	4
2016-01-22	Uber and Lyft will cap surge pricing during the NYC blizzard if there's a state of emergency	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e744428d-dcb7-1178-26dd-97bc28c6bb87	Maya Kosoff	Business Insider (tech)	pricing	6
2016-01-15	Lyft Lowers Prices In Latest Rideshare War With Rival Uber	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/0d40e0ea-be9c-4cd1-c587-415918446cc0	Sarah Buhr	TechCrunch	user, rides, pricing, competition	6
2016-01-15	Lyft cuts fares on rides in 33 cities, days after Uber did the same thing	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/552b178a-b05d-5a10-80fd-30bf0e342dd	Ken Yeung	Venture Beat	user, rides, pricing, competition	1
2016-01-13	GMs Self-Driving Cars Will Be Launched With Lyft In Austin, Texas	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b399acb3-a353-d3fa-fe27-12056b1aa111	Adnan Farooqui	Uber Gizmo	launch, feature, market	5
2016-01-12	Lyft Announces Partnership To Help Seniors Without Smartphones Get Around	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/3376b457-7625-84bb-ae44-3701219c29ee	Lucas Matney	TechCrunch	partner, user	1
2016-01-12	Lyft NYC pilot project gives rides to doctor appointments	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f57e8340-b347-72bb-de2a-69ccd83f14f4	Brittany A. Roston	Slash Gear	user, rides	1
2016-01-06	GM's partnership with Lyft is really about Uber	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d94f3eeb-5e3a-c63c-fdd2-0313ff9b882f	Andrew J. Hawkins	The Verge	partner, market, feature, funding	6
2016-01-05	Lyft raises \$1b with \$500m from GM for driverless on-demand fleet	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f88d15d5-ba62-a85a-0c86-366723a7fbdd	Asha Barbaschov	ZD Net	partner, market, feature, funding	5
2015-12-29	Lyft creates a ridesharing award to promote its place in local communities	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b45ae18a-b693-4d9c-7f08-b5de3fecf524	Ken Yeung	Venture Beat	user	3
2015-12-28	Lyft rakes in \$105M in new funding from billionaire Saudi prince	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/a2106864-7cc8-84a3-48d1-e8e8ebe78245	Riley McDermid	Boston Tech Flash	funding	6
2015-12-22	Ridesharing App Lyft Gets Greenlight to Pick up LAX Arrivals	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/72ef9f68-a62d-4e46-bd48-7a834ad8257d	Ryan Parker	Hollywood Report	regulation, user	1
2015-12-21	Lyft Doubles Funding With New \$1 Billion Round	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/4c0dd27c-e727-bcf5-ce4a-ae0de929ce0a	Rolf Winkler	WSJ Blogs	funding	1
2015-12-21	All Lyft drivers can now get discounted gas at Shell stations	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d34ebb2a-9d7e-7c1d-5c93-163a615e67d8	Ken Yeung	Venture Beat	driver, partner	2
2015-12-21	Lyft seeks \$1B in funding as it ramps up 'driver first' programs	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/fa7ae1e2-571d-890c-1016-27e989dbb206	Annie Gaus	Boston Tech Flash	funding	2
2015-12-16	Facebook Messenger app can now directly request your Uber or Lyft rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/a0056437-f61a-3538-655d-63cd1370fd3	Oscar Raymundo	Mac World	partner, rides	3
2015-12-15	Lyft Just Changed How It Pays Driver Bonuses to Weed Out the Cheaters	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/399eb2f1-b1bf-d21f-9f06-36f48767b69c	Mark Bergen	Re/code	pricing, driver, regulation	2
2015-12-14	Uber and Lyft Drivers Can Now Unionize in Seattle	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/9599744f-0d1d-735d-a930-7cbc64f1e31d	Kate Knibbs	Gizmodo	regulation	2
2015-12-07	Lyft launches carpool service Monday in Chicago	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/321	Meg Graham	Chicago Tribune	launch, feature	1

		3333d-733d-ee88-09c8-9a221052413d				
2015-12-04	Carl Icahn Gives Thumbs up to Lyft Funding	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/bb1751cf-5975-d663-7811-79ddf47c95f5	Stephen Gandel	Fortune	funding	6
2015-12-03	Lyft partners with Ola, GrabTaxi to reach Asian markets	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ad909030-2985-a49c-bbe0-a24e4cd7cafc	Heather Somerville	Reuters	partner, market	4
2015-12-03	Lyft expanding to Asia by partnering with Uber's competitors	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f221c902-a8fb-1809-d3ec-54403c2b6b3b	Tracey Lien	LA Times	partner, market	4
2015-12-01	China's Didi bullish on US partner Lyft	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/eceb5c8e-7928-29e0-0940-99cc833e4dbc		Channel News Asia - Tech	partner, market	4
2015-11-03	Slack's Newest Feature Lets You Call A Lyft From Within Slack	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/3cb40dda-abc1-bdc5-a5d9-4f19b78e9d7e	John Paul Titlow	Fast Company	feature, partner	2
2015-10-19	Of course Lyft is offering DeLorean rides on Back to the Future Day	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6b294da2-bf7c-1791-d828-f1e0dae9e7a4	Andrew J. Hawkins	The Verge	rides	1
2015-10-08	Lyft Announces Instant™ Driver Payments Alongside Hertz And Shell Partnerships	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/82242f48-870a-63d7-239f-22fe7ec97de9	Sarah Buhr	TechCrunch	partner, payment	2
2015-10-08	Lyft amps up partnerships to keep drivers happy	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e592f623-a49c-7542-ce7c-9ab42f1c7356	Lauren Hockenson	The Next Web	partner, user	2
2015-10-08	Ride-hailing company Lyft partners with Hertz	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f26e1c95-eedc-3f00-d104-0ef8e1b65af4	Heather Somerville	Reuters	partner	4
2015-09-17	Lyft Announces Strategic Partnership With DiDi As Latter Confirms \$100 Million Investment To Take On Uber	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/41758813-354a-45fc-9036-735e6ca3c897	Vishal Srivastava	The Tech Portal	partner, market, funding	4
2015-09-15	Lyft And Uber Start Accepting Rides In Vegas	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/0738b03e-71d8-3087-e250-7f9729f31b89	Sarah Buhr	TechCrunch	rides, market, competition	6
2015-09-02	Lyft Line™s Express Re-Route Feature Aims To Get You Where You're Going Faster	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6df88296-cda1-95d2-ffaa-29ea2bc3ab22	Megan Rose Dickey	TechCrunch	feature	3
2015-08-25	Lyft Kills Off HotSpots as Uber Launches Copycat 'Smart Routes' Service	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/37471817-3743-3ae4-18c3-bee63433a86b	By Carmel DeAmicis	Re/code	launch, competition	6
2015-07-23	Lyft partners with Starbucks to offer rewards points to riders and coffee for drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6d4098cf-53c3-b81e-cccd-faadf52b8f9c	Nate Swanner	The Next Web	partner, user	2
2015-07-10	The ride share war continues: Lyft offers \$5 rides in Manhattan	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/0ed88a31-5f8c-0ed6-3268-025bcf44d746	Harrison Weber	Venture Beat	rides, competition, pricing	1
2015-06-26	Lyft Acqui-Hires The Team From Messaging App Leo To Improve Location And Other Features	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6ec174f1-d505-46a1-5b3e-85338a7047c9	Sarah Buhr	TechCrunch	feature, acquisition	3
2015-06-03	TaxiPocket launches to give traditional taxi services a fighting chance against Uber and Lyft	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/9f7346c5-3fa5-4e83-af7b-0bcc2bba3066	Brendan Maynard	Webrazzi	launch, competition	6
2015-05-15	Lyft Raises Additional \$150M in Funding	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b9a90bd4-38b6-4af2-8f7b-dfaf1f1384f0		FinSMEs	funding	1

2015-05-08	Being a Lyft driver can now lower your Verizon bill	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ef4ea059-3794-08ac-3a7c-5c9a2ad16d31	Yoni Heisler	BGR Boy Genius Report	partner, driver	2
2015-04-27	Lyft Is Testing A Feature That Will Make Line Cheaper If You're Willing To Wait Longer	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/777f5d48-8457-4d91-3500-ae7fab4d7657	Matthew Lynley	TechCrunch	feature, pricing	1
2015-03-26	Lyft is launching new profiles feature to help drivers and ride-sharers break the ice VentureBeat Business by Paul Sawers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/74c688fb-879d-070d-c0ea-7ba681f15674	Paul Sawers	Venture Beat	feature, user	3
2015-03-17	Lyft Adds Google Wallet as a Payment Option	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/c15717c8-ea66-38c5-9446-34a798fd04d5	Roberto Baldwin	The Next Web	payment	3
2015-03-16	Lyft CEO says Lyft Line now accounts for majority of rides in San Francisco VentureBeat Business by Daniel Terdiman	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/22823dbb-94dc-65f4-3acb-bf351858a92e	Daniel Terdiman	Venture Beat	competition, user, rides	1
2015-03-12	Uber and Lyft: Are drivers employees or contractors? A business model is at stake	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e9f8fd71-f3f5-d491-ff52-2538b348166b	Techworld Staff	Techworld	regulation, driver	2
2015-03-11	Lyft lands \$530M Series E round to push total funding past \$850M	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/2acf2da7-2f04-4348-9676-50d3b1d97dc4	Taylor Soper	GeekWire	funding	3
2015-03-10	Congress Presses Uber And Lyft On Driver Background Checks	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/5c14a9e6-57c4-a1ef-0c9c-f7f97f6e782e	Alex Wilhelm	TechCrunch	regulation, driver	2
2015-03-09	PayPal's One Touch payment app integrates with Lyft ahead of SXSW VentureBeat Mobile by Ruth Reader	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e9b1a1f8-44f7-34fb-f0ec-5c4b3f83d3e1	Ruth Reader	Venture Beat	partner, payment	3
2015-03-06	Lyft launches \$3 carpool rides in certain "hot spots"	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/c1f20d1d-34fc-6630-ac7a-8b83e6995217	Carmel DeAmicis	Gigaom	rides	1
2015-03-03	Lyft Launches Driver Perks Program	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e2dd9826-d0e4-46f7-9028-d2fef8aba3d5	Evie Nagy	Fast Company	launch, driver, feature	2
2015-03-02	Lyft rewards its drivers for picking you up more often	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/2a2d2c4d-edf4-f1dc-33f7-d0058ab40d2d	Jon Fingas	Engadget	launch, driver, feature	2
2015-01-26	Stripe and Intuit make being a Lyft driver during tax time less hellish VentureBeat Small Biz by Ruth Reader	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/8143bd52-8e4e-ac3c-671a-8d07af1d1ecc	Ruth Reader	Venture Beat	partner, feature, driver	2
2015-01-23	Lyft one-ups the hell out of Uber with \$2.25 rides VentureBeat Business by Harrison Weber	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b2c4ffb9-4ded-f774-7ef3-9388f23681a4	Harrison Weber	Venture Beat	rides, pricing	6
2014-12-10	Sidecar follows Uber and Lyft by adding \$1 "RideSafe" fee	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/cb2f701c-b852-4206-afa5-4cd43bf54fbc	Taylor Soper	GeekWire	rides, competition	2
2014-12-03	Lyft temporarily shuts down operations in Tacoma due to new regulations	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/4668c385-a6d4-4398-867a-17a7c0fa090d	Taylor Soper	GeekWire	regulation	2
2014-11-30	Lyft Sheds Some Of Its Quirks As It Seeks New Users	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/90822c8d-f392-749b-49d3-2e7caad43779	Ryan Lawler	TechCrunch	user, competition	6
2014-11-25	Lyft Appeals To More Casual Drivers By Matching Them With Passengers To Share Commutes	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/0be07d22-7c85-1e18-ea02-83a177c84c81	Ryan Lawler	TechCrunch	driver, regulation, user	2

2014-11-25	Lyft will offer cash to drivers if they carpool	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6adb0e4e-9ab9-3dea-42f1-31cf14cdfeca	Todd Wasserman	Mashable	driver, regulation, user	2
2014-11-13	Lyft for Work: Rideshare App Launches Program for Businesses	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e81a402d-b2b2-439e-9bf2-62400fd9d24a	Jordyn Taylor	New York Observer	launch, rides, market	4
2014-11-11	Lyft's cofounder imagines a future where strangers share driverless cars VentureBeat Business by Kia Kokalitcheva	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/a69483b0-d357-4f49-867f-4442351ecc21	Kia Kokalitcheva	Venture Beat	driver, competition	6
2014-09-16	Lyft brings carpool feature to Los Angeles	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ddb5ddc1-8129-4628-b235-9db39cd617c3	Dara Kerr	CNet	feature, market	4
2014-09-12	Shared Rides by Uber and Lyft Break California Law	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/bdc5e3a0-e48a-4f53-8e19-213cab5a4e48	Joshua Brustein	Bloomberg	regulation	2
2014-08-27	Uber & Lyft agree to insure drivers in-between rides in California VentureBeat Business by Harrison Weber	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/3c392be1-10e6-47ca-bcc4-9d3a026c9c57	Harrison Weber	Venture Beat	regulation, rides	2
2014-08-26	Uber Gave Contractors Burner Phones And Credit Cards To Create Fake Lyft Accounts And Recruit Drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/18c512bd-d088-498b-95d8-e6a9c63ce0a6	Ryan Lawler	TechCrunch	competition, user, driver	2
2014-08-06	Lyft launches carpooling service Line to make your commute cheaper	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/3de3701e-db35-4eb3-bb25-831c99d30cd7	Caitlin McGarry	TechHive	launch, feature, pricing	4
2014-07-27	Lyft Celebrates NYC Launch by Giving Away Thousands in Free Rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/66cd9dd3-0f6d-461f-a5dd-fcea34a50112	Kari Paul	Mashable	launch, rides, user, pricing	1
2014-07-25	Lyft Finally Launches in New York	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f0c6666a-9c70-4c91-b2e9-5bd96621fca8	Joshua Brustein	Bloomberg	regulation, market, launch	1
2014-07-14	Seattle votes to legalize ridesharing services like Lyft and Uber	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/a56237bd-88dd-435a-aebf-52ebb46fd79d	Jon Fingas	Engadget	regulation	2
2014-07-09	New York City taxi regulators halt Lyft's rush into the Big Apple (updated) VentureBeat Mobile by Jordan Novet	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/242e5d68-8a46-450d-b1a7-5c78add2b5c5	Jordan Novet	Venture Beat	regulation, market	1
2014-07-08	Lyft to roll out in New York City with free rides for new users - CNET	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/c7453f54-9950-48cc-b505-41627cad2da2	Dara Kerr	CNet	launch, pricing	1
2014-06-11	Uber starts paying users \$250 to convert Lyft drivers VentureBeat Business by Harrison Weber	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b6803128-55be-4135-904e-4af9b3470bf1	Harrison Weber	Venture Beat	competition, user	2
2014-06-05	Lyft Nabs Exclusive AnyPerk Deal To Give Drivers Tons Of Discounts	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/0f2e9eb0-fb7e-42ff-84e1-441d16d7923d	Josh Constine	TechCrunch	drive, pricing	3
2014-06-05	Lyft now offering drivers discounts on AT&T cell phone plans	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d9506e25-febd-413c-a158-3a196f659a0d	Taylor Soper	GeekWire	regulation, driver	3
2014-05-22	Uber & Lyft sued by legion of cab companies after launching in Connecticut VentureBeat Mobile by Harrison Weber	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/4d055f53-6339-4d87-8355-fc7117146a55	Harrison Weber	Venture Beat	competition, regulation	2
2014-05-08	Lyft Moves Into Uber Black's Territory With Fancy Premium Rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/9a2bf604-ec13-4f73-8fd9-234ca831ea0e	Chris Gayomali	Fast Company	competition	4

2014-05-06	Lyft partners with MetLife to develop insurance solutions™	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/c21ccf75-3b00-4569-855b-e42405028809	Taylor Soper	GeekWire	partner, market	4
2014-05-02	Uber will pay \$500 to Lyft drivers who start working for its company	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/41704c60-9173-484d-9c5c-371c38c2fc54	Taylor Soper	GeekWire	competition, pricing, driver	2
2014-04-24	Lyft Launches In 24 New Markets	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/487e50a7-e75d-4b15-b47d-2b149303bc9f	Ryan Lawler	TechCrunch	launch, market	1
2014-04-19	Lyft is Partnering with Slickdeals to Give People Free Cab Rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d10ac662-0708-4867-a096-04b2f075ee7	Sage Lazzaro	New York Observer	partner, pricing	1
2014-04-17	Lyft launches community program Lyft for Good™ to help improve cities	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6b044b37-03e6-4f69-9cfa-2bd9c5174ba8	Taylor Soper	GeekWire	launch, user	2
2014-11-19	Lyft ditches donation-based payment system in Seattle	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/477a257e-db9e-44cb-ae41-dec5e346688e	Taylor Soper	GeekWire	payment	1
2014-03-18	Lyft introduces Happy Hour™ feature that lowers price of ride when demand drops	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d172a811-6550-4ca0-9893-a46fe03af550	Taylor Soper	GeekWire	feature	1
2014-03-17	Seattle Deals A Blow To Uber And Lyft By Limiting The Number Of Ride-Sharing Drivers On The Road	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/db208179-dbea-4c1c-a840-4920ba8b97ea	Ryan Lawler	TechCrunch	regulation, driver	2
2014-03-13	On-Demand Ridesharing Start-up Lyft Adds Insurance Between Rides	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/852be491-0734-4b2a-9567-d29dd3c2e27	Ryan Lawler	TechCrunch	regulation	2
2014-03-08	Lyft Funding Official: Documents Filed for New \$150 Million Round	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7af39ee0-cbd0-4a3e-b204-a0b7fe66cac0	Ina Fried	Re/code	funding	6
2014-02-05	Lyft Announces Rideshare Insurance Coalition And Additional Coverage For Its Drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b5e9022e-995f-4352-97af-6adf3cf377dc	Ryan Lawler	TechCrunch	regulation, driver	2
2014-01-28	Flywheel raises \$14.8M to help taxi drivers keep up with Lyft	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/12b3e550-d302-5962-0536-3316536f70d2	Rebecca Grant	Venture Beat	competition	6
2014-01-17	A Big Lebowsky Lyft Is Giving People Free Rides at Sundance WIRED	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/dd82c6ae-25e6-483b-afcc-007fce351b8a	Angela Watercutter	Wired News	pricing	1
2014-01-06	Uber Hikes New User Referral From \$10 To \$20 Amid Increased Competition From Lyft	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/07324e7a-dc98-4332-a1e3-8ae01dd74303	Matthew Panzarino	TechCrunch	competition, user, pricing	1
2013-12-14	Lyft and Uber gear up for another political battle to defend ridesharing	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d22a7df5-4030-45ab-b000-b0cc6e44bd3f	Dylan Tweney	Venture Beat	regulation	2
2013-11-15	Lyft Tests Its Own Version Of Surge Pricing In LA	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/dc2c6aa5-d8c4-4753-86b4-58ec721da625	Ryan Lawler	TechCrunch	pricing	1
2013-09-11	Uber & Lyft have a secret weapon in the fight for regulatory approval: You	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/374b8a30-8f7b-4c45-b5a6-983b94cab975	Christina Farr	Venture Beat	regulation, user	2
2013-09-09	Lyft doubles rides per week as founders gear up for international expansion	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/17955f9f-6dc5-429d-8c93-5936777b9b5c	Rebecca Grant	Venture Beat	rides	1
2013-09-06	Uber and Lyft Both Sued for Allegedly Ripping Off Drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/49d74aad-fdce-a431-b6b6-28b5187d8f7b	Sam Biddle	Gawker - ValleyWag	regulation	2

2013-08-29	Lyft Launches Its Ride-Sharing Service In 3 New Markets: Indianapolis	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/2cc6f0ed-21d4-4a1f-9e33-348190bb3395	Ryan Lawler	TechCrunch	launch, market	1
2013-08-08	Lyft Hits A Million Completed Rides And Launches Service In Washington	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b16fc5da-1a32-3811-c9bc-439cda17716f	Ryan Lawler	TechCrunch	rides, launch	1
2013-07-03	Lyft Takes On SoCal: Launches In San Diego	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/28f8e411-9809-c2ab-7c4b-80e6ed0c6003	Ryan Lawler	TechCrunch	launch, market	1
2013-05-31	Lyft Hits The East Coast With A Launch In Boston	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f68ac26e-4205-3986-fabc-72cda9d2c1f1f	Ryan Lawler	TechCrunch	launch, market	1
2013-05-23	Rideshare Service Lyft Raises \$60 Million To Bring Pink Mustachioed Cars To More Cities	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/315a5f44-d7ae-4b98-944d-6046cccf30d9	Christina Chaey	Fast Company	funding, market	1
2013-01-30	Ride-sharing start-up Lyft reaches agreement with California regulators	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ba07be5e-6bc6-4687-a7be-8b07eae56cee	Bryan Bishop	The Verge	regulation, user, market	2
2012-09-06	On-Demand Ride-Sharing Service Lyft Adds \$1 Million In Excess Liability Insurance For Drivers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/dda8fc5d-a6ad-8fad-4791-596748f9ab20	Ryan Lawler	TechCrunch	regulation	2
2012-05-22	Zimride launches mobile real time ride sharing via Lyft	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7e3258c1-2901-4d70-b5ba-a30e5f3fead4	Katie Fehrenbacher	Gigaom	launch	1

Appendix D: Timeline of TaskRabbit's evolution

Date	Article Name	Link	Author	Publisher	Category 1: Topics	Category 2: Relationship
2018-12-06	Errand service TaskRabbit launches in six new UK cities	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6da1cbf0-6844-4fda-95b8-9dc91e54c769	Matthew Hughes	The Next Web	new markets, launch	1
2018-09-18	IKEA-owned TaskRabbit launches in Canada	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/82724065-a799-4ba8-9d33-c59d28fadf8e	Marcus Lawrence	Europen Business Review	new markets, launch	1
2018-07-17	The TaskRabbit for dog walking has arrived	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/91a13c9f-328b-40fe-9b58-7a7fe2dd44c	Amelia Heathman	The Standard	feature, users	6
2018-06-20	TaskRabbit Cuts Service Fee in Half, Lowers Prices	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/e73e4665-72fc-4ecb-8599-66998b040816	TaskRabbit	PRNewswire	pricing, feature	1
2018-06-17	TaskRabbit jumps into Memphis: What can it do for you?	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/5c1f0f2b-9142-436f-9d26-e2aea3405503	Patrick Graziosi	The Commercial Appeal	new markets, launch	1
2018-04-19	Ikea-owned TaskRabbit hit by apparent data breach	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/15447552-84df-4afa-8d2c-1a310d1fca5b	Dan Alaimo	Mobile Commerce Daily	users, regulation	3
2018-04-18	TaskRabbit is Back Online After Suspected Data Breach With Plans to Bolster Security	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/1f7839e9-ce9a-48af-85b7-26c8067bc497	Dell Cameron	Gizmodo	regulation, users	3
2018-04-16	TaskRabbit's app is offline while it investigates a	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f8d507	Catherine Shu	TechCrunch	regulation, users	3

	â€œcybersecurity incidentâ€	16-d1c8-424e-b51b-bc9d2fe4c3a7					
2018-03-13	IKEA U.S. Announces Plans To Roll-Out TaskRabbit At-Home Assembly Service	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/4a30cae1-6732-42c0-b327-427a4782f6be		PRWeb	feature, partnership, acquisition, tasker, user	5	
2018-03-13	TaskRabbit will now assemble your Ikea furniture on your behalf	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/8c6fdf0b-837f-4670-8f67-102e16461cfa	Lulu Chang	Digital Trends	feature, partnership, acquisition, tasker, user	5	
2018-03-10	Boring chore? Airtasker or TaskRabbit could help â€” at a price	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6d2263ab-a9f8-47fb-989e-293e52d13a3b	Emma Lunn	The Guardian	new markets, launch, competition	6	
2018-02-20	Ikea's Taskrabbitt to launch in Birmingham, Bristol and Manchester	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/8afb4137-2600-47dd-99bc-565afac0c6e0	Emily Tan	Campaign	new markets, launch	1	
2017-09-28	Ikea has bought TaskRabbit	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/01b1ede5-b2a9-ee42-7f5a-0de9580dc628	Kara Swisher	Re/code	acquisition	6	
2017-05-26	Pickle is a TaskRabbit-style app for Generation Z	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/0887297c-5bb4-4e93-9f34-f747b8665e6e	Mike Butcher	TechCrunch	launch, competition	6	
2017-05-25	TaskRabbit expands to Baltimore	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/5d7d59f7-b268-a975-6d02-9de4d79f42d7	Lorraine Mirabella	Baltimore Sun	launch, new markets	1	
2017-05-23	Assembly required? TaskRabbits can handle that. Odd-job service launches Thursday in Triangle.	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/46371cc3-7a70-46c6-83ed-73b45d4e4d46	Martha Quillin	Raleigh News	launch, new markets	1	
2017-05-22	TaskRabbit handyman app expands to Nashville	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/a37abee1-d418-4333-bf80-da2509c8cc78	Jamie McGee	Tennessean	new markets, competition, tasker	1	
2017-05-17	TaskRabbit CEO: "We want to be coast to coast"	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/1b49252d-9943-471d-ad27-5dceae136218	CBS News	CBS News - Tech	new markets, tasker	1	
2017-04-07	TaskRabbit is looking into selling itself	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/2936bba0-5f54-0294-df80-f631fa9a5ad7	Kara Swisher	Re/code	partnership, acquisition	6	
2017-04-07	TaskRabbit Is Exploring a Sale	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f0ba967e-1c36-2437-0980-68a40d99bbcb	Ellen Huet	Bloomberg	acquisition	6	
2016-12-24	TaskRabbit sharing economy revolution overshadowed by Uber	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/d340d722-92e4-f18c-ba82-2bfe49069454	Joshua Brustein	The Age - Australia	competition, partnership, new markets	6	
2016-09-15	Ditch TaskRabbit and do your own laundry	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/3b513f88-8d9e-dd3b-d2a8-5129a2f80102	Michael Zelenko	The Verge	regulation, users	2	
2016-04-14	TaskRabbit founder steps down from CEO spot again, ex-Googler takes over	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/a3a22fb8-a6dc-8a6b-0a00-45a49a73d10c	Biz Carson	Business Insider	competition	6	
2016-04-14	Brown-Philpot Tapped as New TaskRabbit CEO	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/aa455d3b-372b-1960-3a97-3fe857480af1	Kara Swisher	Re/code	tasker, competition	6	
2016-03-01	TaskRabbitâ€™s app update focuses on getting tasks done in under 90 minutes	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b3c78c3f-6c82-a6e7-7f74-acd57de13a44	Ken Yeung	Venture Beat	feature, tasker, users	3	
2015-12-23	OMD and TaskRabbit Hop Into Holidays With Digital Donation Effort	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/c45acc74-be77-6e14-b3c8-0a9f010e1b24	Steve McClellan	MediaPost.com	partnership, feature	5	

2015-12-23	LOVESPACE and TaskRabbit Launch 24 Carrot Partnership	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/cd52750c-5107-1cd3-2424-616f2dbb2918	LOVESPACE	PRLog	partnership, feature	5
2015-05-09	What entrepreneurs can learn from Amazons partnership with TaskRabbit	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f2adefe8-af21-fe5d-a3d1-66b6888fdb7d	TX Zhuo, Karlin Ventures	Venture Beat	partnership, competition	5
2015-03-30	Amazon Formally Launches Handyman and Installation Listings With Help From TaskRabbit	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/5e8acf5f-ac7d-0937-ddb8-61a90e8e3b21	Peter Kafka	Re/code	competition, feature	5
2015-03-30	Amazon takes on TaskRabbit with new home services platform for gardeners, goat-herders, and more	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/708cdd5d-3c3b-e06d-2369-1c8331aee7d2	VentureBeat	Paul Sawers	competition, feature	6
2014-08-11	Fiverr's \$30M funding shows that the TaskRabbit model is growing VentureBeat Deals by Kia Kokalitcheva	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b6986125-6b9c-42d5-8431-c805bef85059	Kia Kokalitcheva	Venture Beat	funding, competition, users	6
2014-07-10	TaskRabbit Adds Insurance to Make Trusting Strangers Easier	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/1b60c71a-c355-4761-97de-8920e5996699	Joshua Brustein	Bloomberg	regulation, feature, pricing, users, tasker	3
2014-07-10	TaskRabbit's new app brings you help on demand	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/3dc45310-16af-42cc-b0ef-2da8bcd9d297	CaseyNewton	The Verge	feature, pricing, users, tasker	3
2014-07-10	TaskRabbit users revolt as the company shuts down its bidding system VentureBeat Business by Harrison Weber	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b60d7e7e-ed0-47f4-97d5-47a65a73b479	Harrison Weber	Venture Beat	regulation, feature, pricing, users, tasker	4
2014-07-10	TaskRabbit pivots, launches on-demand service for cleaning, handiwork, moving, & errands	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ebcef55d-3e98-4c6d-999d-fd7012204ddd	Harrison Weber	VentureBeat	feature, pricing, users, tasker	4
2014-07-10	TaskRabbit Debuts Revamped Platform, Launches New Website And Mobile Apps	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f7b53216-411b-4174-a1cb-efe19e86653c	Colleen Taylor	Techcrunch	feature, pricing, users, tasker	6
2014-06-17	TaskRabbit: New Algorithms, One-Click Hires & More	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/248ca2ff-dac1-4715-86eb-ef4a02a74ecf	Paul Sawers	The Next Web	feature, pricing, users, tasker	3
2014-06-17	TaskRabbit is blowing up its business model and becoming the Uber for everything	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/770b5496-4ad7-49ce-b20d-0380bc0cc66a	Casey Newton	The Verge	feature, users, tasker, new markets, competition	5
2014-06-12	TaskRabbit CEO: Better Job Market Hasn't Dampened Appeal Xconomy	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b9913a5a-471f-4855-9253-2d3f50cd9b75	Elise Craig	Xconomy	new markets, users, tasker, competition	2
2014-04-10	TaskRabbit Launches on Android in the UK, iOS Arrives Too	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/3346e038-3972-484e-945d-8dfe3a5dfd9d	Paul Sawers	The Next Web	new markets, feature, users	3
2014-04-01	TaskRabbit For Business Service Portal Quietly Disappears	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/2a40905a-6f60-4721-98a2-57298a756830	Sarah Perez	TechCrunch	new markets, feature	4
2014-01-06	Walgreens Taps TaskRabbit to Deliver Cold Medicine to Shuttered Pharmacies	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6ff4b713-e2e1-4f65-98fd-fa71cb6bef74	Todd Wasserman	Mashable	partnership, new markets, feature	4
2013-11-20	TaskRabbit Takes Its Errands Marketplace	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/fcc8cf5	Ingrid Lunden	TechCrunch	launch, new markets	1

	To London For Its First Move Outside The U.S.	f-7cb3-4c02-b6f6-5f5a13f9933e				
2013-10-30	TaskRabbit Launches Service In Denver and San Diego	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/b5b7f9b8-f1c8-425d-9d8f-7f5ee6fa735c	Ken Yeung	The Next Web	launch, new markets	1
2013-08-19	TaskRabbit Launches On-Demand Errand Running Service In 5 New Cities, Expanding Its Footprint By 50%	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/275b99c5-c3c4-411e-a173-c4a5303bb578	Colleen Taylor	Techcrunch	new markets	1
2013-08-14	TaskRabbit Doesn't Want the Headache of Handling Your Money	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/431d2c6d-53f4-4d02-9e7e-db279a5f1869	John Tozzi	Bloomberg	payments, regulation, taskers	3
2013-07-08	TaskRabbit Confirms Layoffs As It Realigns To Focus On Mobile And Enterprise	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/9226bbdd-feac-0d30-f234-6e3d002059f7	Colleen Taylor, Anthony Ha	TechCrunch	new markets, funding, feature	4
2013-06-27	Need help with stock options or patents? UpCounsel wants to be a TaskRabbit for lawyers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/885e9e88-b90d-4187-8ff7-2b77c95de6e0	Jeff John Roberts	Gigaom	competition	6
2013-06-17	TaskRabbit Creates Jobs From Your Mundane Chores And Errands	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/4b2cf21d-acd2-478b-afad-bb67cc855c38	Danielle Sacks	Fast Company	funding, tasker, user, new markets	2
2013-05-23	TaskRabbit Launches New Offering To Help Find Temp Workers	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/74821f62-c318-494a-808a-f6901c49570c	Ken Yeung	The Next Web	feature, new markets, users, tasker	4
2013-05-23	TaskRabbit Debuts Tools For Hiring Ongoing Temp Work As It Hones Focus On Business Users	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/fcb817ff-4180-68ee-be9d-a982613f25a6	Colleen Taylor	TechCrunch	feature, users, tasker, pricing	4
2013-04-15	Sorted Pivots From A TaskRabbit Clone To Become A Profile-Driven Marketplace For Local Labour	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/66342f66-6b77-93ac-834c-286f38668f94	Steve O'Hear	TechCrunch	competition, feature	6
2013-03-27	Fancy Hands teams up with TaskRabbit to move beyond reservations and research with physical tasks	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/aa19bd29-97b3-4228-ad73-e2fd0cc87def	Harrison Weber	The Next Web	partnership, feature	4
2013-01-28	TaskRabbit Launches Business Dashboard Aimed At Companies Looking For Temp Workers At SXSW	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/a1cd9a58-11b4-ae39-0423-aff1876093e	Colleen Taylor	TechCrunch	launch, feature, users	4
2012-12-07	TaskRabbit's Holiday Role With the Gap: Spend \$75, Get \$25 For Service	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7049441e-571d-4535-8758-0bade445c95c	Ken Yeung	The Next Web	partnership, pricing, user	1
2012-12-07	TaskRabbit Partners Up With Gap, Giving Free Gift Vouchers To Customers Who Spend \$75 Or More In SF And NYC Stores	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7a096337-cb95-d026-09dd-ec5d4efe2f0b	Ryan Lawler	TechCrunch	partnership, pricing, user	1
2012-12-06	While TaskRabbit Ponders UK Launch, Two Local Competitors Emerge: TaskPandas And Sorted	https://techcrunch.com/2012/12/06/you-silly-rabbit/	Steve O'Hear	Techcrunch	competition, launch, new markets	6
2012-11-06	TaskRabbit Acquires Kids' Clothing Start-up One Jackson To Add Marketplace Expertise	https://techcrunch.com/2012/11/14/taskrabbit-one-jackson/	Colleen Taylor	TechCrunch	acquisition	5

2012-10-16	Pepsi and TaskRabbit Get Busy	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/1bfc2542-73ae-4947-8a9e-dfad09cb8d10	Lauren Indvik	Mashable	launch, partnership, users	1
2012-09-20	TaskRabbit Expands 'Deliver Now' Beyond iOS, Bringing On-Demand Courier Service To The Web	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/606ac828-010f-1f1c-85ea-d7177f458f5c	Colleen Taylor	TechCrunch	launch, new markets, pricing	3
2012-09-13	TaskRabbit: We'll sell ya a spot in the iPhone 5 line - CNET	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/8a45f303-bed8-4977-aca6-29c0a231640b	Josh Lowensohn	CNet	pricing, launch, tasker	1
2012-09-12	TaskRabbit Offers \$55 Line Jockeys for iPhone 5 Release Day Cult of Mac	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7dc251e0-7822-4ad5-8212-c0e7b1f09bef	Jose Feroso	Cult of Mac	pricing, launch, tasker	1
2012-09-08	How to use TaskRabbit for research recruiting	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/fb951aa5-3f79-49c8-940a-c6e4e0e1ba9f	Om Malik	Gigaom	feature, partnership	2
2012-08-06	TaskRabbit Will Get You In-N-Out for \$10	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/31a46af0-f1ef-4363-9ddd-49524ebf2204	Drew Olanoff	The Next Web	feature, users, pricing	1
2012-07-23	TaskRabbit takes on another \$13 million in funding as investors bet big on peer-to-peer marketplaces	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/7e0b6fc9-d2b0-4349-b5e5-86310e1613ee	Adrienne Jeffries	The Verge	funding, users, regulation, pricing	1
2012-07-07	TaskRabbit Launches On-Demand Courier Service Deliver Now in San Francisco	https://techcrunch.com/2012/06/21/taskrabbit-on-demand-deliver-now-service/	Colleen Taylor	Techcrunch	funding	2
2012-06-07	TaskRabbit Founder Leah Busque Takes Back The Reins, Stepping Back Into CEO Role	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/656acf72-b303-79d1-2df2-1c70b1711dc0	Colleen Taylor	Techcrunch	users, feature, launch	3
2012-05-30	TaskRabbit expands in the U.S. with an eye toward London	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/ec0219e6-c3f3-471d-9bbd-156a00ac16f9	Kerry Davis	TechHive	launch, new markets	1
2012-03-05	Bravo & TaskRabbit Jump into SXSW Interactive with Special Partnership	http://blog.360i.com/social-marketing/bravo-taskrabbit-sxsw-interactive-partnership	360i	360i Blog	partnership, launch	1
2012-03-16	TaskRabbit pushes collaborative consumption with a new web series	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/03d75a6f-0908-4988-8597-fce99820d756	Ryan Lawler	Gigaom	feature, user, tasker	2
2012-02-10	TaskRabbit Launches Public API So You Can Outsource Tasks From Other Platforms	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/8a1f926e-9274-43fc-8832-fa35d1a00867	Nitasha Tiku	New York Observer	feature, partnership	5
2012-01-10	People-hiring service TaskRabbit acquires service-auctioning site SkillSlate	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/5a7edf73-0164-ad98-4aee-0671a2631df1	J. O'Dell	Venture Beat	acquisition, new markets, feature, user	6
2012-01-10	TaskRabbit Burrows Further Into New York, Buys SkillSlate	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f74e9511-0df0-95b7-dc6e-09c7df0fab03	Xconomy	Wade Roush	acquisition, new markets, feature, user	1
2011-12-14	TaskRabbit Runs Down \$17.8M More for Expansion	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/f6c5b3e2-455c-425d-9814-fe41bf3c3fff	Gregory T. Huang	Xconomy	funding, new markets, taskers, users	1
2011-08-15	TaskRabbit Releases Its Amazing iPhone App	https://techcrunch.com/2011/07/28/taskrabbit-drops-its-amazing-iphone-app/	Alexia Tsotsis	Techcrunch	feature, user, tasker	3
2011-07-15	TaskRabbit Turns Grunt Work Into a Game	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6be51afa-12fe-46ca-8e4c-19124c64d1bc	Alexia Tsotsis	Wired News	user, tasker, pricing	2

2011-06-20	TechZulu â€œ TaskRabbit Lets You Outsource Tasks To The Community	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/91b577cf-6026-4b18-b3de-46837f0cf45e	Jay Torres	Tech Zulu	launch, new markets	1
2011-05-04	TaskRabbit Raises \$5M for Nationwide Expansion	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/380b740c-8b95-4d14-9768-079d35bc28f9	Colleen Taylor	Gigaom	funding	1
2010-08-25	TaskRabbit gets \$850K to cross errands off your to-do list	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/eae2c905-d250-cdd9-2f8a-f6810bf51eb3	Julie Klein	Venture Beat	funding	1
2010-06-22	TaskRabbit Kicks Off Errand-Running Service in San Francisco, Boston 'Burbs	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/6c66e1da-05e0-484a-a2eb-45b8e48dbf04	Xconomy	Wade Roush	launch, new markets	1
2010-04-08	RunMyErrand Is Now TaskRabbit	https://www.crunchbase.com/press_reference/cd5f2411-9022-4490-879e-1fce1a3afece	Erin Kutz	Xconomy	launch	x