



Instead of going to a laundrette, hire out the appliances for yourselves with Upkeep | Photo source [Aaron Meacham on Unsplash](#)

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AN APPLIANCE RENTAL SERVICE MODEL

 RETAIL

A design student has developed a circular model for appliance rental to encourage people to reduce waste by renting instead of buying

Spotted: There has been a lot of focus on ways to use fewer resources through renting or sharing consumer goods such as clothes, tools and swimming pools, instead of buying them. Now, a product design student at London’s Southbank University has developed a model for an online platform, called Upkeep, that allows users to rent large household appliances.

Of course, renting appliances has a long history, and is available almost everywhere, but the Upkeep rental service would operate on a subscription model, which is more unique. The designer, Dominika Ptach, [proposes](#) three levels of subscription – “Neo” for new appliances; “Denovo” for certified refurbished appliances; and “Care” to allow repair or safe disposal of users’ existing appliances.

The idea is that a focus on different stages of the appliance lifecycle would help users get out of the habit of continuously buying new ones. This, in turn, will create a circular market for appliances. Ptach points out that, although e-waste is a rapidly growing problem, the subject is very complex, and requires new models.

The site would also encourage users to learn more about the problem of e-waste and engage with solutions. [According to](#) Ptach, “Upkeep could be a valuable educating tool as well as a paradigm change in replacement purchasing ... Upkeep calls the manufacturers and the users to take mutual responsibility and work for a sustainable future.”

The sharing economy has continued to boom over the past few years, and here at Springwise, we have seen a number of innovative ideas for reducing waste by allowing people to share goods rather

than buying anew. These have included smart rental rooms in apartment buildings, and an Airbnb-like scheme to allow users to rent privately-owned [swimming pools](#) by the hour.

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Takeaway:

Although Ptach suggests that there are no similar models available, there are in fact a huge number of websites and stores offering appliance rentals. What is new here is that, instead of paying per appliance, users pay a set subscription fee. This could encourage people to simply rent all of their large appliances in perpetuity, rather than only renting when they can't afford a new product or when they are unsure of their long-term needs. It is this change in attitude that lies at the heart of this project and a change that is welcome in efforts to reduce e-waste in the long-term.