

“Use entirely at your own risk.” Let’s talk about car-sharing.

Three reasons to avoid using car-pooling service BlaBlaCar.

Before you read the complete article, look at this vocabulary and find it in the text:

to hook up: to connect

carless: having no car

fool-proof: designed so well that it cannot go wrong

forged: false, imitated with the intention of deceiving

liable: legally responsible

onus: responsibility

disclaimer: a statement made to remove responsibility

hardly reassuring: not very comforting to hear

burden: weight, problem

BlaBlaCar connects people who want to go from one city to another with car owners going in the same direction so that they can travel together and share the cost of their journey. The name is a play on how talkative we are during a car journey. (When filling in their profile, members are asked to specify their level of chattiness on the scale “Bla”, “BlaBla” and “BlaBlaBla”.)

So it basically **hooks up** drivers with **carless** people wishing to travel in the same direction. This surely has some benefits - it creates a new market, and at the same time eases traffic congestion, and helps the environment. For the customer, it’s cheaper than renting a car, and drivers might even get to earn a bit for a trip they were already planning to make. However, there are three main reasons its business model is not **fool-proof**.

1. It’s susceptible to security risks.

The only means to validate the credentials of the driver besides consumer reviews is by verifying his/her social networking profile on sites such as Facebook and Twitter. In some countries, **forged** documents are only too easy to obtain, and let’s not forget that fake Facebook accounts can be created with minimal difficulty. If BlaBlaCar wants to enhance safety, rather than asking its users to pay in cash, it should ask for credit card details and ID, or use a two-step verification process for added safety.

If you take a look at their Terms and Conditions page, the company doesn’t carry out any background checks apart from validating the first name, last name, age, title, valid telephone number and email address. What’s more, “BlaBlaCar will not be **liable** to any Member in the event that any information provided by another Member is false, incomplete, inaccurate, misleading or fraudulent.” This hands-off approach means the **onus** is solely on the customer.

2. BlaBlaCar will not ensure that the driver’s car insurance provides adequate cover:

“It is up to each Car Owner and Co-Traveler to confirm with each other that the Car Owner is covered by valid insurance.” Such **disclaimers** are **hardly reassuring**.

3. There is no regulation to ensure standards of safety.

If you’re travelling with a stranger, you carry the entire **burden** of risk, as BlaBlaCar claims it cannot be held liable for erroneous information, cancellation, or people’s behaviour.

One interesting alternative is SmartMumbaikar, an Indian ride-sharing app almost half of whose verified users are women. To access the service, you need to register on the site and provide certain personal details. You can choose to travel with women only or otherwise. Once you decide to share a ride, the app is updated and SmartMumbaikar will accompany you until you’ve reached your destination.

Adapted from www.firstpost.com by ECP coach *Atison Keable*

Let’s chat about that!

Write your opinions in an email and send them to your ECP coach!

- Have you ever used a car-sharing service?
- What are the advantages of this kind of service?
- What are the dangers of getting into a car with a stranger?
- How much do you know about **Uber**, **Airbnb** and **Couchsurfing**?
- Do you think transport and travelling will be different in the future?



We love car-sharing at ECP!

We learn so much from each other

We chat, sing and discuss things as we travel around Álava on our English-coaching mission 😊



Who do you share your car with?
What do you talk about?



Social Events In English

Real-Life English in Vitoria-Gasteiz



iLook, iThink, iSpeak

Real Language to Express Yourself Better



CINEMA NIGHTS!
Come and socialise in English!

LIVE!English presents:

COFFEE SATURDAYS!



Come and socialise in English!



The last Friday of every* month from October to June, come to ECP to watch a film in English (with English subtitles) and talk about it afterwards.

October 26th - November 30th -
January 25th - February 22nd - March 29th - May 31st - June 28th

WhatsApp John for more details on: 657 73 13 54

Time: 19:30 to 21:30

Place: ECP Hub (C/San Ignacio de Loyola 15)

Price: Free!

Friends welcome

**Please note: there will be no Cinema Nights in December or April.*

The first* Saturday of every month from October to June, come to Panadería Bertiz, C/ Francia for a coffee and a chat in English.

October 6th - November 10th - December 1st
January 12th - February 2nd - March 2nd - April 6th - May 4th - June 1st

WhatsApp Alison for more details on: 608 42 64 92

Time: 11:00 to 12:30

Place: Panadería Bertiz, C/Francia

Price: Just bring enough for a cup of coffee!

Friends welcome

**Please note: Coffee Saturdays will take place on the second Saturday in November and January.*

Expressions about transport

on yer bike!

an impolite way of telling someone to go away

to be in the same boat

to be in the same situation (usually unpleasant) as other people.

car boot sale

an event in a public place where people sell their unwanted possessions, often from the backs of their cars

to drive a hard bargain

to negotiate an excellent deal for yourself

**to drive someone round the bend/
up the wall**

to make someone very angry or very bored

the top flight

the highest level in a job or sport

one for the road

to have one last alcoholic drink before leaving

off the beaten track

a place where few people go, far from any main roads