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HAVE YOU NOTICED...

Sharing's all the rage at preschool, and now grown-ups are getting on board, too. So say Rachel Botsman and Roo Rogers, coiners of the phrase 'collaborative consumption', and authors of *What's Mine Is Yours* (HarperBusiness). Forget everything you thought you knew about what it means to own something, they say. Instead, embrace the modern-day reinvention of bartering, gifting, swapping and lending.

"We're moving from being passive consumers to active participants," says Botsman. But it's not all about us; collaborative consumption is good for the community, too. "Users feel part of something bigger," explains Botsman, "and they're not just saving money; they're making money."

Take the peer-to-peer online loan program Lending Hub, which formalises loans between mates, and strangers. "We perform credit and background checks as banks do, but our rates often beat the banks'," says managing director Ivan Mantelli. "We let users call the shots."

Gregory Giraud says his Flexicar car-sharing system in Melbourne and Sydney gains more than 100 new members a month. "It's like having your own car without the hassle of registration, roadworthy certification and maintenance," he says. "It saves money and supports the environment."

And sharing can be fun, too. Yoga teacher Jo Stewart, 29, gets together with friends for clothing exchanges. "Everyone brings unwanted items and we play dress-ups," she says. "It's a great way to refresh your wardrobe without going crazy on the credit card." **VANESSA MURRAY**