

# SHAREABLE



Shareable is an online magazine about sharing. Founded in 2009 in the U.S.

**Revenue model:** grant funding, crowdfunding (project-based), donations, sponsorships

**www.shareable.net**

**Interview date:** February 24, 2016

**Interviewee:** Neal Gorenflo, cofounder and executive editor

*Profile written by Sarah Hinchliff Pearson*

In 2013, Shareable faced an impasse. The non-profit online publication had helped start a sharing movement four years prior, but over time, they watched one part of the movement stray from its ideals. As giants like Uber and Airbnb gained ground, attention began to center on the “sharing economy” we know now—profit-driven, transactional, and loaded with venture-capital money. Leaders of corporate start-ups in this domain invited Shareable to advocate for them. The magazine faced a choice: ride the wave or stand on principle.

As an organization, Shareable decided to draw a line in the sand. In 2013, the cofounder and executive editor Neal Gorenflo wrote an opinion piece in the *PandoDaily* that charted Shareable’s new critical stance on the Silicon Valley version of the sharing economy, while contrasting it with aspects of the real sharing economy like open-source software, partici-

patory budgeting (where citizens decide how a public budget is spent), cooperatives, and more. He wrote, “It’s not so much that collaborative consumption is dead, it’s more that it risks dying as it gets absorbed by the ‘Borg.’”

Neal said their public critique of the corporate sharing economy defined what Shareable was and is. He does not think the magazine would still be around had they chosen differently. “We would have gotten another type of audience, but it would have spelled the end of us,” he said. “We are a small, mission-driven organization. We would never have been able to weather the criticism that Airbnb and Uber are getting now.”

Interestingly, impassioned supporters are only a small sliver of Shareable’s total audience. Most are casual readers who come across a Shareable story because it happens to align with a project or interest they have.