Online markets

Lead-in

1 **Work in pairs. Look at the logos and discuss the questions.**

1 What type of sites are they? Match each site with a description.

- **a** _____ is a global online auction and shopping site for individuals and small businesses.
- **b** _____ is China's biggest e-commerce and shopping website.
- **c** _____ is an online food delivery service.
- **d** _____ started as an online , it's now the largest online retailer in the USA.

2 How can an individual earn money using e-commerce websites and apps?

2 **Read the article quickly. How many internet sites are mentioned?**

Who wants to be a sofapreneur?

By Sarah O'Connor

Alibaba is used by hundreds of millions of people around the world. Thanks to e-commerce sites like this anyone can be an import–export magnate* without leaving the sofa. Thanks to Airbnb, anyone can be a hotel manager. Today there is a growing number of 'sofapreneurs' making money from websites like Alibaba, eBay and Airbnb, and many of them are not even doing it full time. Freelancer sites like PeoplePerHour say many of their users are office staff who log on after work.

It is estimated that one percent of U.S. adults earn money from these websites. JPMorgan Chase says of this group that most of them rely on the sites for less than a quarter of their income. Still, that is valuable in a world of weak economic growth, low wages and insecure employment. In some cases, these sites are giving people who might have difficulties doing a traditional job a way to earn money, for instance because of health reasons or caring responsibilities. They can also offer lower prices to consumers. However, governments will have to make sure sofapreneurs cannot compete unfairly with other small businesses by simply avoiding tax.

One of the biggest benefits is the hardest to measure. Many of the people I've interviewed who sell products on these sites say that it gives them a sense of satisfaction they do not have in their day jobs. Last year I spoke to Einar Parker, who spent his days working on the production line at a car seat factory. He began making jewellery in his spare time and set up his own shop on Etsy. The site was started twelve years ago to sell homemade goods. 'You don't think a lot when you're on an assembly line, but I've got something to think of, coming up with ideas,' he explained. 'That is my escape.' Sofapreneurship seems to be making people a little richer and a little happier, and that is no bad thing.

*rich and powerful person in business

3 **Read the headline and the article again and answer the questions.**

1 What is a 'sofapreneur'? Someone who ...
- **a** earns money online while working from home.
- **b** spends a lot of time sitting on his/her sofa.
- **c** runs an online business which sells furniture.

2 What two employment statistics are mentioned from the USA?

3 Which two groups have difficulties doing traditional jobs?

4 What is the risk to other small businesses from sofapreneurs?

5 What does the writer think governments must do? Why?

6 How does Einar Parker feel about his full-time job?

7 Why does he enjoy his jewellery business?

8 Is the writer in general positive or negative about sofapreneurs?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

4 Work in pairs and discuss the questions.

1 Can you think of one more benefit and disadvantage of online marketplaces?
2 Do you think that websites like PeoplePerHour are changing the way companies employ people?
3 Do you know anyone who sells products or gets freelance work via online marketplaces?

5 Talk about your addiction.

6 Talk about these topics or words from the article. What will the article say about them? What can you say about these words and your life?

Internet / shopping / bargain / treat / addiction / mental illness / medical / disorders / colleagues / patients / population / anxiety / depression / gratification / marriages

7 DISORDER: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "disorder".

8 SHOPPING: Rank these with your partner. Put the best places to shop at the top.

- Online
- Shopping malls
- Markets
- Airports
- Local stores
- Other countries
- Newspapers
- Charity shops

9 Listen to the audio and fill in the gaps with the missing words.

The Internet makes shopping (1) _____. However, shopping can be addictive. Experts say online shopping (2) _____ mental illness. Researchers from the Hannover Medical School (3) _____ "Buying Shopping Disorder" (BSD). They say the doctors (4) _____ as an illness, not just as (5) _____ "impulse control" disorders. Dr Astrid Müller said: "It really is time to...accumulate (6) _____ BSD on the Internet."

Dr Müller conducted research on 122 patients (7) _____ for BSD. She said five per cent of people (8) _____ it. Younger people are more (9) _____ it, and be more anxious and depressed. People with BSD act unnaturally. They (10) _____ they don't need, keep and (11) _____ they buy, buy things for instant gratification, and end up in debt. BSD (12) _____, relationships and mental health.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

a. The Internet has made shopping at home more uncomfortable. **T / F**
b. Experts say that online shopping addiction is a form of mental disorder. **T / F**
c. The research described in this article was conducted in Germany. **T / F**
d. A psychotherapist said we needed to accumulate further knowledge. **T / F**
e. Researchers looked at data on over 1,000 BSD patients. **T / F**
f. A researcher said nearly 10% of people may suffer from BSD. **T / F**
g. People seek instant gratification by shopping online. **T / F**
h. Researchers say people can end up in credit because of BSD. **T / F**

Discuss the following questions.

1. What do you buy for yourself as a treat?

2. Why do you think shopping is an addiction?

3. Is shopping more addictive for men or women?

4. Do you think shopping addiction is a mental illness?

5. How can doctors treat people who suffer from BSD?

6. Why might BSD lead to anxiety and depression?

7. How would you help a friend who had BSD?

8. What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Role A – Online

You think online is the best place to shop. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their places to shop. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): shopping mall, market or charity shop.

Role B – Shopping Malls

You think a shopping mall is the best place to shop. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their places to shop. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): online, market or charity shop.

Role C – Markets

You think a market is the best place to shop. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their places to shop. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): shopping mall, online or charity shop.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Role D – Charity Shops

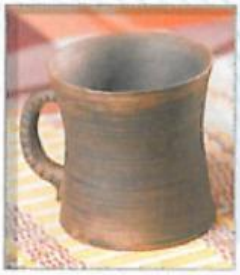
You think a charity shop is the best place to shop. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their places to shop. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): shopping mall, market or online.

6 **Complete the listings on an e-commerce site with the active or present passive form of the verbs in brackets.**

These personalised necklaces [1]_____ (make) of wood. Orders [2]_____ (deliver) within 72 hours in the EU.

Each handmade ceramic bowl [3]_____ (paint) by hand. It [4]_____ (not recommend) to put them in the microwave, oven or dishwasher. We [5]_____ (ship) worldwide.

Our high-quality cotton T-shirts [6]_____ (print) specially to order and [7]_____ (dispatch) within two days. Just [8]_____ (select) your size and colour and the words you [9]_____ (require).



These coffee cups and mugs [10]_____ (design) by me and [11]_____ (pack) in a gift box. If your items [12]_____ (need) by a certain date, please contact me.

7A **Complete the passive sentences with the past or present passive form of the verbs in brackets.**

1. Alibaba _____ (set up) by Jack Ma, who is said to be one of China's richest men today.
2. Sellers using Alibaba's and eBay's sites _____ (not charge) a commission on goods sold.
3. Airbnb's headquarters _____ (base) in San Francisco, California.
4. Hotels _____ (not allow) to advertise rooms on the Airbnb site.
5. Some homes/offices on the website _____ (own) by Airbnb.
6. When eBay _____ (create) in 1995 it _____ (call) AuctionWeb.
7. eBay _____ (buy) by Google in 2016.
8. Very little money _____ (need) to start an Etsy shop online.

B **Decide if the sentences in Exercise 7A are *true* (T) or *false* (F). Check your answers**

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Present Simple and Past Simple passive

1 Complete the sentences using the active or passive form of the verb in the Present Simple or Past Simple.

1 Our new website _____ (launch) last month and it has been very successful.

2 Stella McCartney _____ (run) her own fashion house.

3 The Dutch plant _____ (build) in just over twelve months and opened in May.

4 Hundreds of aircraft _____ (make) by Boeing every year.

5 They _____ (recommend) contacting them by email, but I never got a reply.

6 When they arrived at the hotel, they _____ (give) the wrong room.

7 During the storm, all flights to New York _____ (divert) to Washington.

8 It _____ (think) that there are more phones than people in the world.

2 Read the text and complete the sentences using the correct form of the verbs in the box. Use both active and passive forms of the Present Simple or Past Simple.

In 1996, Geert-Jan Bruinsma had the idea of connecting hotels and guests via the internet and founded a small company with this aim. From an office in Amsterdam he developed a website called Bookings.nl and for the next few years the company experienced steady growth. The growth was noticed by an American company now called Booking Holdings Inc., who acquired them in 2006 for just over $130 million. Priceline kept the original management team and let them continue to develop the product. They were merged with another Priceline subsidiary called Active Hotels later the same year. Until then, most hotels got customers through travel agents but the arrival of this new business model changed travel for ever. Since then, Booking.com™ has become an internet phenomenon. It is said to be the largest advertiser on Google and is known as one of the easiest and most reliable websites in the world. Its webpages are translated into over 40 different languages and users book around a million room nights daily through the platform.

book	buy	connect	found	grow	merge	say	translate

1 With Booking.com, hotels and guests _____ via the internet.

2 The original company _____ in Amsterdam in 1996.

3 Over the next few years, sales _____ steadily.

4 The company _____ by The Priceline Group in 2006 for just over $130 million.

5 The two subsidiaries, Active Hotels and Bookings.nl _____ by Priceline in 2006.

6 People _____ that Booking.com is the largest advertiser on Google.

7 Booking.com currently _____ its webpages into over 40 different languages.

8 Around a million room nights _____ every day.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

3 **Complete the questions and answers.**

1 **A:** When _____ ?
B: The company was founded in 1996.

2 **A:** How did the business grow for the next few years?
B: It _____ steadily.

3 **A:** Who _____ by in 2006?
B: They were bought by The Priceline Group.

4 **A:** How much did Priceline pay for Booking.com?
B: They _____ just over $130 million.

5 **A:** Who _____ with?
B: They were merged with Active Hotels.

6 **A:** How many languages _____ into?
B: Its webpages are translated into over 40 languages.

8 **Work in pairs. Imagine you want to be a sofapreneur. Look at the examples in Exercise 6 again. Think about what products you could make and sell online or what services you could offer. Write a short description of your products or services for an e-commerce site. Write 60 to 80 words.**

LIVEWORKSHEETS