MORE OPTIONS. 
SHIFTING MINDSETS. 
DRIVING BETTER CHOICES. 

#ThinkandRide

The Uber app was created to ensure reliable access to safe rides whenever, wherever. But a first-of-its-kind, comprehensive study conducted by Uber and Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) reveals that Uber is more than just a convenient transportation option. The choice, reliability and flexibility it affords also make Uber a powerful tool in the quest to protect families from drunk driving. Uber is proud to partner with MADD as part of a broader effort to raise awareness around drunk driving and reduce the rate of alcohol-related crashes.
A SOBERING SITUATION

Since 2012, nearly 300,000 people have driven drunk every day. To put that in perspective, that’s enough to fill University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale more than four times over. It’s estimated that every 52 minutes someone is killed in a drunk driving crash.

Drunk driving is a scourge on our society. It wrecks lives, shatters families and puts communities and innocent bystanders at risk.

Not too long ago, options were limited for getting home after a night out. Taxi services were often limited, and confined to dense urban landscapes. With ridesharing services like Uber, that is beginning to change. Now, you can tap a button to request a safe, reliable ride home.

Uber and Mothers Against Drunk Driving are working toward a world where more options empower more people to make the right choice; where a safe, reliable ride home is always within reach.

Drunk driving affects everyone who shares the road, and we all have a role to play in making it a thing of the past. While much work remains, we are making progress, together, toward that goal. This report is an attempt to outline our progress to date.

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THE “UBER EFFECT” IN SEATTLE

In May 2014, Uber set out to answer a simple but important question: what, if any, effect did the availability of safe, reliable rides on the Uber ridesharing platform have on drunk driving in Seattle, where prior to Uber’s arrival in 2013, approximately 76 people per day—or 2,750 per year—were arrested for driving under the influence.

Using publicly available data and a simple econometric model, we discovered Uber’s entry into the Emerald City was associated with a 10% decrease in DUI arrests. The results were robust and statistically significant, providing meaningful evidence of the power Uber’s network of safe, reliable rides has on drunk driving in major metropolitan cities.
IMPACT AT SCALE

Heartened and energized by what we discovered in Seattle, we asked ourselves a bigger, more audacious question: if Uber is having such a tremendous impact in Seattle, what effect is Uber’s network of safe, reliable rides having in other markets where Uber operates?

We discovered that when people have more options, they make better, safer choices.

Our study examined data and trends in several metropolitan cities across the United States. While intuition led us to believe that the reliability and flexibility of Uber makes it easy to make the responsible choice, we did not have a way to quantify this effect. But, there is evidence that riders use Uber to get home from bars and restaurants after drinking.

In Miami, Uber ridership peaks at the same time as historical drunk driving crashes. The graph below shows how the distribution of Uber requests on the weekend in Miami coincides closely with drunk driving crashes.
AND THE PATTERN IS THE SAME IN CITIES ACROSS AMERICA

In Pittsburgh, we found further evidence of Uber’s popularity as a form of late-night transportation. Here, bars close at 2AM. Thus, we’d expect to see a temporary and unusual spike in requests at closing time if people were using Uber as a method to get home after drinking. Indeed, our findings show that demand for Uber spikes right around closing time.

Our findings show that demand for Uber spikes right around the times bars close.
WHAT IS MORE: THIS PATTERN IS REPLICATED IN ALMOST EVERY CITY WHERE UBER OPERATES

Of course, this isn’t hard proof that requests were coming from drinking establishments such as bars and restaurants. So we dug deeper.

In Chicago, we identified whether rides were requested within 50 meters of a bar, restaurant, or hotel that serves alcohol. Our findings revealed that a disproportionate number of weekend, late-night Uber requests come from businesses with liquor licenses, with 45.8% of rides requested from these locations coming during the peak drinking hours of 10PM and 3AM, compared to 28.9% at off peak times.

A disproportionate number of weekend, late-night Uber requests come from businesses with liquor licenses.

Trips from alcohol-serving establishments peak in Chicago late at night.
FLEXIBILITY = RELIABILITY

One of the reasons that Uber is able to coordinate so many late night rides from drinking establishments is the flexibility of supply on the platform. Uber’s model works to ensure supply keeps up with demand. Driver-partners are free to log on to the platform at any time, and higher demand serves as a strong incentive to log on and drive.

This is noteworthy given that in Austin (one of the few cities for which we could find any publicly-available taxi supply data), the average number of taxis actually drops at midnight due to restrictions on supply, leaving many ride-seekers stranded and more likely to make unwise driving decisions.

In Austin, taxi supply decreases when people most want rides, and when DUI arrests are most common.

Taxi supply decreases when people most want rides, and when DUI arrests are most common.

The freedom and flexibility of the Uber platform—in which driver-partners are free to log on or log off whenever they want—does not suffer from this problem. Supply increases when demand increases, and people have a safe, reliable option to get home.
UBER: DRIVING BETTER CHOICES

Uber is a young company (driving a small fraction of the nation’s trillions of yearly vehicle miles). However, we see some evidence in publicly available crash data in our most mature markets that Uber is having a measurable impact on driving down alcohol-related crashes.

San Francisco was the first place Uber launched both UberBLACK and uberX, and in California, Uber has become increasingly available in markets across the state. Inspired by Nate Good’s analysis—which demonstrated a clear downward trend in alcohol-related crashes in Pennsylvania’s youngest cohort once ridesharing was available—we decided to replicate that study in California at large using data procured from the State.

What did we find? Using a “difference-in-differences” regression to control for seasonality and other factors, our findings uncovered that monthly alcohol-related crashes decreased by 6.5% (or 59.21 per month) among drivers under 30 following the launch of uberX ridesharing in California in markets where Uber operates.

As the total number of crashes for the age groups are often different, the graph has normalized the total number of crashes, with 0 being the average for the age group (a negative number of crashes means that for that month crashes were below normal).
In other words, we believe there is a direct relationship between the presence of uberX in a city and the amount of drunk driving crashes involving younger populations.

Our findings revealed this pattern is not seen at all in areas of California where Uber isn’t operating. Outside Uber-serviced parts of California, there are an average of 697 alcohol-related crashes per month, with the above-30 crowd averaging 353.8 vs. 343 for below 30.

**CALIFORNIA:**
ALCOHOL-RELATED CRASHES
IN MARKETS WHERE UBER DOES NOT OPERATE
- 30 AND OVER
- UNDER 30

Source: California Highway Patrol
SHIFTING MINDSETS

In light of our findings, a simple but important question remained: What shift in mindsets is behind these outcomes? To answer that question, a survey was conducted to better understand concerns and attitudes around drunk driving and the perceived role ridesharing platforms like Uber play in reducing it.

First, the survey—conducted by the Benenson Group—aimed to uncover the level of priority people placed on ending drunk-driving in more “mature” Uber cities.

Here’s what we found:

86% of respondents are concerned about drunk driving, and far more than other transportation issues, people want their elected leaders working toward solutions that reduce it.

A solid majority of respondents (65%) said elected officials should prioritize reducing drunk driving as a way to keep streets safe for drivers and passengers.

The majority of adults already believe services like Uber meaningfully reduce drunk driving in their cities. And they have reason to, as:

88% of respondents over the age of 21 agree with the statement that “Uber has made it easier for me to avoid driving home when I’ve had too much to drink.”

78% of people say that since Uber launched in their city, their friends are less likely to drive after drinking.

57% of transportation network service users agreed with the statement: “Without Uber, I’d probably end up driving more after drinking at a bar or restaurant.”

And after hearing about Uber’s impact on drunk driving already, 93% of people would recommend a friend take Uber instead of driving if the friend had been drinking.

The results of our survey show that the availability of additional, reliable transportation options is shifting mindsets and driving people to make better, safer choices.
THE ROAD AHEAD

Uber offers a safe and convenient transportation alternative that didn’t exist just 5 years ago and is growing rapidly. Indeed, just one year ago, Uber operated in 60 cities and 21 countries. Today, Uber is connecting riders and drivers in over 260 cities and 50 countries around the globe. And Uber is proud to partner with MADD as part of a broader effort to raise awareness around drunk driving and reduce the rate of alcohol-related crashes.

This study and survey provide strong evidence that Uber is having a meaningful and positive impact on mindsets and the rate of drunk driving. Our mission isn’t complete, but we are making progress together toward the goal of reliable rides and safer roads for everyone. This is the future we are working toward: one in which more people in more cities around the nation are empowered with more options that lead to better, safer choices.
About Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Founded by a mother whose daughter was killed by a drunk driver, Mothers Against Drunk Driving® (MADD) is celebrating its 35th anniversary by creating a future of NO MORE VICTIMS™. MADD is the nation’s largest nonprofit working to end drunk driving, help fight drugged driving, support the victims of these crimes and prevent underage drinking. MADD supports drunk and drugged driving victims and survivors at no charge, serving one person every ten minutes through local MADD victim advocates and at 1-877-MADD-HELP. Learn more by visiting madd.org or calling 1-877-ASK-MADD.

About Uber Technologies, Inc.

Uber is evolving the way the world moves. By connecting riders to drivers through our apps, we make cities more accessible, opening up more possibilities for riders and more business for drivers. From our founding in 2009 to our launches in over 260 cities today, Uber’s rapidly expanding global presence continues to bring people and their cities closer.

Survey Methodology

The survey results included in this report are from a poll conducted by Benenson Strategy Group. The interviews took place from December 1-4, 2014 and included 807 interviews with a representative general population sample from the largest cities where Uber operates. All interviews were conducted over the internet. The margin of error for the entire data set is 3.38% at the 95% confidence level.