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# Why Uber shouldn't lose its license

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Everybody around me stops dancing when the music is slowly fading away. Security guards are showing people the exit and when I finally make it outside the club, I can feel the ache in my feet that I have been ignoring all night, my head continues to pound to the beat of the music and my stomach tries to expel all of the alcohol I have just consumed. All I want to do is to get home and fast.





In 2012, the American taxi company Uber launched in London at perhaps the best time a company could ever launch in the capital city. This was back in those dark days before the Night Tube and the “Hopper fare” was a thing of the future.

Now, the innovative company has added much-needed convenience to the life of Londoners, as a ride can be provided and tracked in a matter of minutes.

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Regardless, Transport for London (TfL) has refused to renew Uber’s license because they do not consider it to be [a “fit and proper” operator](#).

In the past, Uber has been stamped as an immoral company, as it did not only treat its drivers as [“sweated labour”](#), but also performed [insufficient background](#) checks on their employees, which put some of its users in danger.

It has also come to light that the private taxi operator is [using Greyball](#), a software that can be used to block regulatory bodies from gaining full access to its app.

It can be very easy to dislike the company on ethical grounds, but Uber remains wanted, as seen by the many protesters that stood up in response to the revoked license and the petition in defence of Uber that has been [signed by over 16.000 people in under an hour](#).

[Greg Hands](#), Trade Secretary and Minister for London, also defends Uber and believes that: “At the flick of a pen Sadiq Khan is threatening to put 40,000 people out of work and leave 3.5 million users of Uber stranded.”



Uber has often been the go-to application for many people who are in need of transport, such as wheelchair users who only have access to fewer than 30 percent of tube stations. The US private taxi company also [has nearly 50% more drivers](#) than regular taxi companies (i.e. black-cabs), making it much more accessible to the daily traveller.

Steve McNamara, General Secretary of the Licensed Taxi Drivers’ Association, has, however, criticised Uber for not taking any responsibility when it comes to the safety of their passengers. In July, for example, an [Uber driver was sent to jail](#) for sexually harassing three women while they were passed out in his car.

In no way can this be condoned, but no form of transport is entirely safe. Many people feel that London’s tubes and buses do not have enough police patrolling, especially at night.



Uber's global position also makes it more difficult for them to take risks, unless they want to ruin their reputation, thus making it perhaps [safer than any other private car hire](#).

Thus if TfL does not want to welcome Uber to England, then they should put in the effort and the finances to make the transport they provide better, safer and more convenient.

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After all, there will be more demand for public transport, such as Night Tube and the Night Bus system with 3.5 million customers needing to find alternative modes of transport.

TfL was right to recognise and deal with the corrupt way in which Uber acts, but the way they handled the issue has just made life for London's residents and visitors that much more difficult.

Whilst the fall of the black cab industry has been extensively documented, it is important to look at the issue in context.

The Knowledge, the test that black cab drivers all have to pass, is a hard thing to accomplish and credit must be given to those that conquer it. However, with the advent of Google Maps, SAT-NAVS and the like, such an in-depth knowledge of the city isn't really required anymore.

Black cabs also tend to charge a lot more and we've all heard stories featuring cabbies - "I'll be there in 15, mate" - and 25 minutes later, they're not there. "I'm not going that way" is another one.

Uber has been successful because it gives consumers a competitive choice - a vital part of a free economy. It's cheaper and you can see exactly where your driver is and how long it will take them. It's thus no surprise it was preferred by so many. No system is perfect, but Uber on the whole worked and made the lives of many that little bit easier.

Now 40,000 drivers will be put out of work, which along with the stranded customers will put a larger strain on public resources - these 40,000 drivers may be forced to claim jobseekers' allowance for a while.





It may even result in significant numbers of people going out less and thus spending less money in local bars and clubs, the [Mayor's Office](#) itself states £26.3 billion of London's GDP comes from the night economy, with an eight of jobs relying on it.

Once all this is considered, the decision to revoke Uber's license seems foolish. There doesn't seem much to gain but plenty to lose. Which is why the sensible thing is to overturn this ban.

This article was co-authored by [Gursimran Hans](#).

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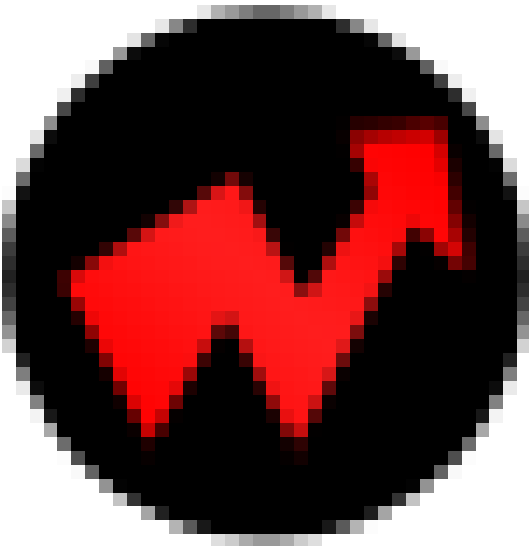
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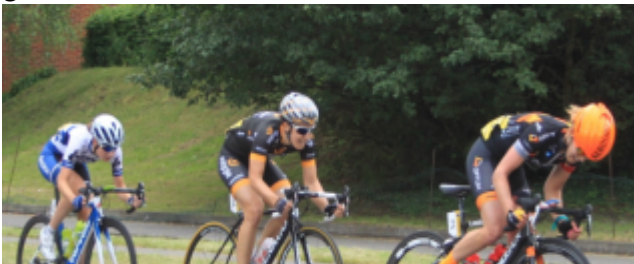


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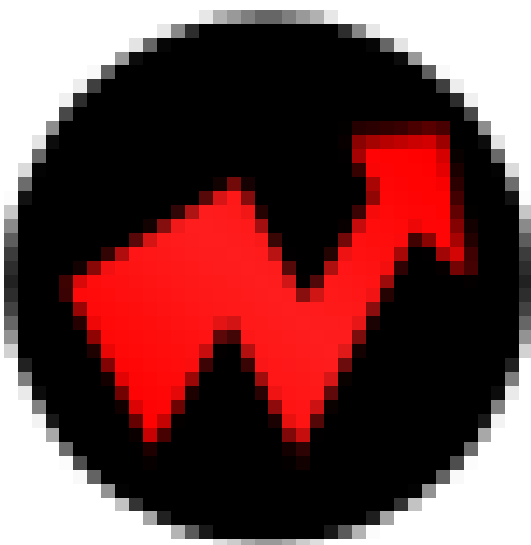


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