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# SoBi - Social Bicycles

Added by Kenney, Grace Rebekah, last edited by Kenney, Grace Rebekah on Jul 20, 2011

## Social Bicycles

A new generation of bicycle sharing includes the special "kiosk" with the bike itself - as the lock!

Users find a bike location near where they are, reserve it, and have 15 minutes to punch in the special code to access the bike.

The code unlocks the bike, and you can park a bike for 15 minutes and still use the same access code as previously or let it go to reset for the next user.

It is powered by GPS - allowing users to take a bike anywhere around town.

Features, taken from [engadget](#):

a main rear-mounted lock unit, containing a U-lock, rear wheel immobilizer, GPS tracking chip, GSM modem, and a hub dynamo electrical generator. The new version's unit will be much more compact, two-thirds lighter, and will include an integrated solar panel for keeping the electronics powered up even when the bike isn't moving.

Features, taken from [psfk.com](#)

The original SoBi bikes integrated a GPS system that allows bikers to track the nearest available bikes, individual travel habits, fitness metrics, and can calculate how they've reduced their carbon footprints.

From the website - Info on how to use the system:

Redistribution of the bikes will mostly be handled by the users themselves through a dynamic incentive system. Operators can select the system zone and hub locations and set these boundaries in our database. When a user locks the bike outside of a hub location, they are charged a fee. This fee is posted to the map and the next person to take the bike and return it to a hub receives a credit. This ensures that bikes are consistently returned to hubs, but allows the flexibility to bike directly to any destination within the system area. However, if someone locks up outside the system zone, they would be charged a larger recovery fee for taking the bike too far from the system core.

From [Wired magazine](#), August 2010 edition:

SoBi founder Ryan Rzepecki says that the startup costs are a fraction of those using traditional infrastructure-based systems, like the Velib in Paris or Bicing in Barcelona. Rzepecki says that these cost around \$3,000 to \$4,000 per bike to set up. SoBi costs less than \$1,000 per bike.

From [Kickstarter.com](#):

Possible prices:

Social Bicycles would work at hotels and tourist destinations where you may pay a flat hourly rate, but would also work for citywide deployments that are subsidized by the government or operated by a non-profit.

We like a membership + use model. For example:

\$10/month to subscribe

1 hour of free time each day

\$5 each additional hour.

Regarding question of if only smartphones can be used to access this product:

No, you do not need a phone to access the bikes. Simply enter your entire account number and pincode into the keypad on the lockbox, and the bike will send your information to the server for authorization. We are also working on text, automated call, and RFID-based access paths.

#### Theft and Vandalism Issues:

The high rates of theft and vandalism reported by the Velib system in Paris have not been observed in North American systems.

Our bikes will feature non-removable parts and the locking mechanism is pry and pick resistant. The bike is of distinctive design and will be easily identifiable if stolen. In addition, a thief would not only have to defeat the mechanical lock, they would also have to disable the GPS tracking.

Ultimately, any lock can be broken with the right tools and enough time. Maybe it's naive, but we are hoping that by creating a strong community, people will be more likely to respect and protect the bikes.

#### Regarding SoBi Beta Program:

Individuals, organizations, or companies can now become SoBi Beta Partners. Since our system is scalable, this opportunity works for many types of partners  $\zeta$  a student association, non-profit, bike shop, corporate campus, or transit authority.

This program will allow you to lease SoBi beta bikes to test and help build community support to launch a full-scale system. Each bike will be \$1500 for a 3-year term. You can receive multiple bikes by pledging an additional \$1500/bike.

As a backer through Kickstarter, we will include 3 years of wireless connectivity and service. Additional contractual terms will be required, including an NDA, since you will be receiving early access to the product.

#### From [Reuters, August 2010](#) - CRITIQUE and follow-up:

##### 1. Pros:

- a. No need for dedicated parking spaces - bikes can go anywhere with a rack
- b. No need for paid contractors to move bikes every night - make incentive for users to bring them back to places in need

##### 2. Cons:

- a. Maintenance costs
- b. Ability to track bikes down

No labels