

# Disruptors or service providers?

## Uber, Airbnb and now FastFast.

Apps that bypass traditional business models.

They are disruptors, causing long-established services to take up their cudgels to defend their turf.

Yet, in this day and age, they have become essential in providing a platform for information to be shared, matching demand with supply at a customer-to-customer level, joint managing director of TSMP Law Corporation Stefanie Yuen-Thio said in *The Business Times* recently.

“They enable individuals to monetise their unused time, skills and/or assets, and offer consumers interesting (and often cheaper) alternatives to the traditional options.”

She added that these ventures are “not without their risks and detractors”.

Professor of Information Systems (Practice) at Singapore Management University Arcot Desai Narasimhalu told *The New Paper*

that such services challenge traditional companies to change their game.

“It is similar to how Mustafa started a 24-hour service, forcing NTUC FairPrice and Cold Storage to also keep at least selected outlets open for 24 hours.

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“However, it will not cause well-established companies to become obsolete, if they have built up their brand and earned the trust of their customers, he said.

Agreeing, Adjunct Associate Professor Lynda Wee from Nanyang Technological University’s Nanyang Business School said: “Such apps will force existing businesses to leverage on technology to better deploy resources.”

Prof Narasimhalu added that in the cases of some apps, they could force a pricing war, or a larger, more established firm may buy over the disruptor.