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From the South Florida Business Journal:

<http://www.bizjournals.com/southflorida/news/2016/05/25/hundreds-of-south-florida-homeownersrent-out.html>

Hundreds of South Florida homeowners rent out properties through Airbnb almost every day of the year

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Hundreds of South Florida homeowners have essentially turned their properties into full-time hotel rooms thanks to **Airbnb**, according to a lodging industry-funded study.

The study from the **American Hotel & Lodging Association** and the American Hotel & Lodging Education Foundation found that the practice of frequently listing multiple properties on Airbnb was more prevalent here than in the nation's other large metro markets.

Although hotel occupancy and room rates are up across South Florida, these Airbnb rooms could eat into the profits of traditional lodging businesses.

The study used Airdna to track Airbnb data from October 2014 through September 2015 in 14 major metro areas, including South Florida. Hospitality research firm Kalibri Labs sorted the data. The findings were analyzed by **Penn State University** researchers.

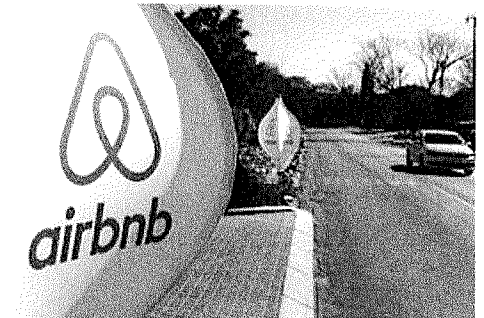
The study placed Airbnb hosts into four main categories: Full-time operators who rented out their units 360 days or more per year, multi-unit operators who rent out two or more units, variable operators who rent out multiple units 360 days or more per year and mega operators who rent out three or more units. Of course, these categories can overlap when people with multiple units frequently list them for rent.

South Florida joined New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco with the largest number of full-time Airbnb operators. In South Florida, 62 percent of Airbnb's revenue, or \$76.2 million, came from multi-unit hosts, who accounted for 30 percent of operators. That's by far the largest percentage of the other four major metro areas. Second largest was San Francisco, with 32 percent of its revenue coming from multi-unit hosts, who made up 14.9 percent of operators.

Airbnb spokesman Christopher Nulty said the date from the lodging industry-funded study is not accurate. In fact, there were zero listings in South Florida booked for more than 360 days during that period and only 1 percent of listing were booked more than 300 days.

In 2015, 87,000 people visited Miami with Airbnb and stayed an average of 4.8 nights, Nulty said. The typical Airbnb host made \$6,400 sharing their space over 42 nights of the year.

This practice is especially concentrated in the 33139 zip code of South Beach, which leads south Florida with 1,427 Airbnb operators and 2,930 properties listed. They generated \$45.7 million in revenue.



WALDO SWIEGERS/BLOOMBERG

Stefano Fritella, owner of the 29-room Pelican Hotel on Ocean Drive in this Miami Beach zip code, said his business has fallen 22 percent in the past years, mostly due to competition from companies like Airbnb. He recently saw a one-bedroom apartment a block from Ocean Drive listed on Airbnb for \$59 per night, plus a service fee for up to four people.

"The key is to make sure people run the lodging business by the same set of common-sense regulations that protect the community and the general public," Fritella said. "This is exacerbating the housing crisis in South Florida."

The four other zip codes in South Florida with the most Airbnb property listings are 33140 in Miami Beach with 833, 33160 in Golden Beach/Sunny Isles Beach with 704, 33141 in north Miami Beach/North Bay Village with 617 and 33131 in Downtown Miami/Brickell Key with 424.

However, the Travel Technology Association, which represents online travel companies and short-term rental firms including Airbnb, called the study "deliberately misleading" and full of "mischaracterized data."

"[The] report purposefully conflates short-term rental listings with bookings to inflate the number of 'full-time operators' and labels property managers as 'multi-unit hosts,' knowing full well that numerous rentals are listed on behalf of individual homeowners by property managers," said Matt Kiessling, who heads short-term rental policy for the Travel Technology Association. "Miami officials should see through the hotel industry's desperate attempt to denigrate short-term rentals and instead establish a framework that capitalizes on the significant economic impact that results from a flourishing peer-to-peer economy."

It's okay for people to occasionally share and rent their homes, but these frequent Airbnb listers are flouting the law by not adhering to the same regulations as hotels, because they're not paying local taxes, said Troy Flanagan, VP of state and local government affairs for the American Hotel & Lodging Association. Airbnb is encouraging owners of multiple residential properties, even apartment building owners, to use the service because it's a growing revenue stream, he said.

"Miami and Miami Beach already have local ordinances in place to regulate short-term rentals," Flanagan said. "What is lacking is transparency and willingness to work with regulators."

If Airbnb had paid bed taxes and state sales tax during that period, South Florida municipalities and the state would have collected about \$15.9 million, according to the study.

Nulty said Airbnb collects and remits hotel taxes to the State of Florida and has agreements to do so in 27 Florida counties. It's in conversations to do so in Miami-Dade County, he added.

The study found that South Florida has 311 full-time Airbnb operators with properties they list for rent at least 360 days a year. They accounted for 6 percent of its local operators and generated 39 percent of its local revenue. A total of 1,412 operators listed properties for rent more than 180 days a year, representing 28 percent of local operators and generating 76 percent of local revenue from Airbnb.

Nulty said that's not accurate. Only 14 percent of Airbnb listings in South Florida were booked for more than 180 days during that period.

Given that South Florida has many seasonal residents and investment properties, that means many homes aren't occupied full-time year round so they're more available for Airbnb listings. However, the Flanagan said it's clear from the study that many residential property owners are acting like commercial hotel operators without complying with hotel regulations.

Florida law requires properties that regularly advertise as short-term rentals to be licensed and comply with laws regarding fire alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other rules, said Carol Dover, president and CEO of the **Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association**. Not only does this put visitors at risk, it hurts the quality of residential neighborhoods when Airbnb guests engage in unruly behavior, she said.

The Travel Technology Association said that short-term renters stay longer and spend more than traditional hotel visitors. It encouraged Miami to establish public policies to accommodate these travelers.

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