



# VIRTUAL MARKETPLACE



## PRELIMINARIES:

If you want to buy or sell items on the Internet, you will need to have an e-mail account. You can establish a free e-mail account at <http://www.yahoo.com/>, <http://www.google.com/>, or [www.hotmail.com](http://www.hotmail.com).

You should consider establishing a PayPal account at <https://www.paypal.com/>. PayPal is an online method to pay for items you purchase as a buyer and to get paid for items you sell. It is fast, convenient, and there are safeguards in place to protect buyers and sellers. You can sign up for a free personal account, which does require that you have an e-mail address. You will link your PayPal account to your credit card, debit card, or bank account. There is no charge to use PayPal to pay merchants. PayPal does charge fees if you are a seller; these fees are assessed for each transaction.

There is an entire section of PayPal's website devoted to "Security and Protection." You can immediately go to "I Need to Resolve a Problem," if you have a problem as the buyer or the seller. There are established procedures to follow. If you are a buyer and your item never arrives or is "significantly different than advertised" you have 45 days from the date you made your payment to open a dispute. If attempts to resolve the problem with the seller are unsuccessful, you can escalate your case to a claim (there are time limits here, also), in which case PayPal reviews your case and renders a final decision within 30 days. If you want to learn more about security specifics, you can click on "I Want to Learn about Security and Protection."



describes itself as the "world's online marketplace." Visit eBay at <http://www.ebay.com/>. Essentially there are two ways to buy and sell on eBay. The first is an auction type listing. A seller lists an item and chooses to accept bids on it. The bidding opens at a price specified by the seller, and the auction is open a set number of days. Buyers place bids, and at the end of the auction period, the buyer with the highest bid wins. Sellers can set a *reserve price*, which is a hidden minimum price—essentially, the lowest price that the seller is willing to accept for the item. If the listing ends without any bids that meet the reserve price, the seller is not required to sell the item.

The second method sellers can use is the *Buy It Now Option*. The seller sets a fixed price for the item, and the first person to pay the seller's asking price gets the item.

You will need to register to buy and sell on eBay; registration is free and an email address is required. Buyers do not pay fees to purchase items. Sellers may pay fees to list an item; some

eBay fees will be changing in July 2012. For a current seller overview, quick start guide, video tutorials, and online classes go to

<http://pages.ebay.com/sellerinformation/howtosell/sellingbasics.html>

For help with buying basics including searching for items, understanding the different methods for purchasing an item, help with bidding, and more go to

<http://pages.ebay.com/help/buy/basics.html>

If you are the buyer, compare prices. There are often listings for the identical item from different sellers. Be sure to look at the shipping charges you will pay. Look at the seller's return policy and the seller's feedback ratings and score. Notice how the seller wants to be paid (e.g., PayPal, credit card, etc.). Be sure to read the fine print! Once you confirm your bid you are entering into a legally binding contract to buy the item.

If you want to sell on eBay, consider if the item is worth selling. Research similar items for sale and consider the selling fees you will pay. Do you want to use the auction format, *Buy It Now*, or offer both options? Do you want to set a reserve price? Think about how you will ship the item and what you will charge. What is your return policy? How do you want to be paid?

Remember, you are entering into a legally binding contract to sell your item.

eBay offers very organized and complete online information to help you get started. Go to <http://pages.ebay.com/help/account/gettingstarted.html> for information on how to buy and sell, eBay rules and policies, and safeguards for buyers and sellers. *eBay Buyer Protection* covers items purchased on eBay with eligible payment methods that are not received or not as described in the listing. Go to <http://pages.ebay.com/coverage/index.html> to learn more.



describes itself as “your place to buy and sell all things handmade, vintage, and supplies.” Visit Etsy at <http://www.etsy.com/> There are specific guidelines for what kinds of items can be listed on Etsy: handmade items must be created by the seller (or group of sellers) operating the Etsy shop; vintage items must be at least 20 years old, but they are not required to be handmade; the supplies category is for both handmade and commercially produced crafting supplies.

You will need to register for an Etsy account, which is free; an email address is required. Once you have an account, you can purchase items, add items to your favorites, send messages to other members and participate in online *Community Forums* and *Virtual Labs*.

If you want to be a seller, you will need to upgrade your account to seller status. Etsy charges fees to sellers. There is a listing fee for each item, and when an item is sold, there is a transaction fee based on the final sale price. For complete information on selling go to

[http://www.etsy.com/sell?ref=so\\_sell](http://www.etsy.com/sell?ref=so_sell)

Buyers can search items by category -- bags and purses, clothing, housewares, holiday, jewelry, needlecraft, toys, and many more. If you're looking for a specific kind of item, you can do a keyword search and, if you want, you can limit the search to just handmade items, just vintage items, or crafting supplies to make that item. You can also search for a particular seller or shop.

Buyers and sellers can leave feedback about each other. Buyers can choose to keep their shopping history private, including feedback from sellers. Shop owners cannot make their sold order history or feedback from shoppers private. If you purchase an item and have a problem with the transaction, Etsy has processes in place to handle those situations.

Etsy has a *Help* section on their site where you can find online assistance for setting up an account, making a transaction, setting up a shop, reporting problems, and using the site features, such as chat rooms, forums, blogs, etc. Go to [http://help.etsy.com/app/home/?ref=so\\_help](http://help.etsy.com/app/home/?ref=so_help) for help.



Craigslist defines itself as “local classifieds and forums—community moderated and largely free.” Users will find “jobs, housing, goods, services, romance, local activities, advice - just about anything really.” Visit craigslist at <http://stlouis.craigslist.org/> Postings are organized by category, and the site is fairly simple to use. Postings are generally free with the exception of job postings, brokered apartment rentals in New York, and postings for therapeutic services. You will need an e-mail address to use craigslist. You can post a free ad without setting up an account, although establishing an account, which is free, makes the process of creating posts, editing and deleting them, and re-posting expired ads easier. Classified ads in the St. Louis area expire in 45 days. You may post to one category and in one city, no more often than about every 48 hours. In some categories, you can add a picture to your posting. Craigslist is not an auction site, nor do they want users posting items and then directing people to an auction site, such as eBay. If you post an item, you are asked to set a price for it.

Craigslist is a well known and popular resource, but it is important to take some precautions. Be aware of the condition of the item you're considering purchasing; most items come “as is” unless stated otherwise. If possible, go and look at the item. Be aware of the type of payment that is required. Do not send cash or a check and hope you will receive the item. If you are the seller, be aware that there have been problems reported with out-of-state cashiers' checks and money orders that turn out to be counterfeit. Craigslist offers safety tips at <http://www.craigslist.org/about/scams>. They explicitly state that “**CRAIGSLIST IS NOT INVOLVED IN ANY TRANSACTION**, and does not handle payments, guarantee transactions, provide escrow services, or offer "buyer protection" or "seller certification."

Craigslist is not a site like eBay or Etsy or Amazon, and you will not have the same protections those sites offer.

 When Amazon <http://www.amazon.com/> opened for business in July 1995, it was a small operation dedicated to selling books. Now, almost 17 years later, Amazon is one of the largest online retailers in the world, and you can buy everything from organic pinto beans to Rolex watches. As an individual you can also sell items on Amazon. Information for sellers is at [http://www.amazonservices.com/content/sell-on-amazon.htm/ref=as\\_hn\\_soa?id=hml&id=AZSOAMakeMAmznServAS#!how-it-works](http://www.amazonservices.com/content/sell-on-amazon.htm/ref=as_hn_soa?id=hml&id=AZSOAMakeMAmznServAS#!how-it-works)

If you plan to sell fewer than 40 items per month, click on the “Sell Your Stuff” link, and you will find an overview of the selling process. Please note that at this time individual sellers must search the Amazon catalog for the items they want to sell. Currently, if the item is not in the catalog, individual sellers do not have the ability to create a “new” item—only professional sellers can do that. Detailed instructions for creating a listing are at <https://www.amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=1161238>

Some of the factors you will need to think about are the condition of your item, the price you want to set, and how you plan to ship the item. Keep track of the fees you will pay to Amazon. The “Help” pages on the Amazon website offer additional information for sellers including specific details on fees [http://www.amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html/ref=hp\\_bc\\_anchor?ie=UTF8&nodeId=1161232](http://www.amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html/ref=hp_bc_anchor?ie=UTF8&nodeId=1161232) Click on “Policies and Agreements” from the list of topics on the far left of the screen; “Fees and Pricing” are listed under that topic.

Amazon offers a full range of policies and procedures for buyers and sellers (including in the Amazon Marketplace which is where new and used items are offered for sale by individuals and businesses) regarding problems, complaints, returns, etc. For information on Amazon’s A to Z Guarantee see <http://www.amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=13832201#chargeback>

*If you need assistance with these sites or we can help with any other questions, please ask us!*

[www.edwardsvillelibrary.org](http://www.edwardsvillelibrary.org)

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