

REAL SIMPLE

life made easier, every day

Cash in Your Castoffs

Insider tips on the best places to sell your stuff—and how to make (real) money.

Clothes

The best marketplace: Not surprisingly, it's [eBay.com](https://www.ebay.com), which notches 10.3 million daily listings in this category. (A dress sells on the site every 15 seconds.) Why so popular? Simple: No other place makes it as easy to search for brand names (Coach, Juicy Couture, and Ralph Lauren are best sellers) and specific sizes, says eBay Power-Seller Debbie Imlay of Chatsworth, California. Other pluses: Shipping can be covered by the buyer, and commissions and fees are minimal.



Selling Points

Tom Schierlitz

- List your items for seven days, not three or five, to give them optimal exposure.
- Use a short, descriptive title that contains the following information, ideally in this order: brand, color, style, and size. For example: "Michael Kors shiny black A-line raincoat XL." If the item is brand-new and still has the tags, add "NWT" on the end.
- Include photos. Take shots from various angles, as well as close-ups of trim, detail work, and the label.
- Provide a bulleted list describing your item (some of which will duplicate wording in the title): brand, size, condition, if it comes with the tags, type of material, where it was made, original retail price, and other noteworthy details.

Get your belongings in salable condition with the help of the [Before-You-Sell Checklist](#).

Furniture

The best marketplace: [Craigslist.org](https://www.craigslist.org), which connects local sellers and buyers in 700 towns and regions nationwide. Posting ads on the site is free, and unlike on eBay, you don't have to pay a commission when you sell. Bargain shoppers and vintage-furniture hunters alike scan the listings, so



Household Goods and Electronics

The best marketplace: A garage sale is where you can unload everything from pots and pans to old TVs and computers, says Chris Heiska, founder of Yardsalequeen.com, a site that offers tips to buyers and sellers. Why? As a general rule, people buy on impulse at these sales, snapping up what catches their eye. And as a result of the lagging economy, they're looking for deals on practical, frequently used items, so inexpensive appliances, like a hand mixer, and older electronics (five years or older; newer models can be sold on Craigslist) should go quickly.



Tom Schierlitz

Selling Points

- Recruit your neighbors to offer up their stuff at the same time you do. A cluster of sales is more likely to attract foot traffic, says Heiska.
- Group smaller objects (silverware, cups) in lots, so people feel that they're getting a deal.
- Keep an extension cord handy to show that your electronics and small appliances still work.

Books, CDs, DVDs, Games

The best marketplace: Amazon.com, which boasts tens of millions of shoppers seeking new and used items daily. "Media inventory turns over faster here than anywhere else," says Michael Miller, author of *Selling Online 2.0* (\$15, amazon.com). What sells best? "Textbooks and recently published books," says Priscilla Welbourn of Mendham, New Jersey, who has sold more than 6,000 (!) books on Amazon since 2005. Titles that have just been made into films, such as Nicholas Sparks's *The Last Song*, sell briskly, Welbourn adds. Like eBay, Amazon charges a fee and manages the transaction for you.

Selling Points

- Price your book at a penny less than the lowest-priced copy, then check your listing daily to ensure you're still offering the best value.
- Be honest about condition. If a DVD is scratched and you say it's "like new," your seller rating (a report card from buyers who have purchased your items) will go down.
- At the post office, send items via "media mail," which is about half the cost of first-class service.

How to Sell Most Everything Else

Antiques

Fine furniture, jewelry, rugs, crystal, and artwork are best sold at auction. First have your item appraised (go to appraiserassoc.org to find an appraiser in your area). Auction fees can be steep, typically ranging from 10 to 30 percent. But the more your item sells for, the lower the percentage of commission you'll pay, says Chris Longly, a spokesperson for the National Auctioneers Association.



Decorative Items

Ebay is a good bet, but if the objects are too heavy to ship, opt for Craigslist. Kana Okada

Patio Furniture and Garden Equipment

Like decor items, outdoor furniture and tools are often too large or too heavy to ship, so post them on Craigslist or in your local classifieds.

Baby Furniture and Gear

List gently used items on Craigslist or in local classifieds. Check with the [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) for rules on what you can sell and to make sure your item has not been recalled.

Children's Toys

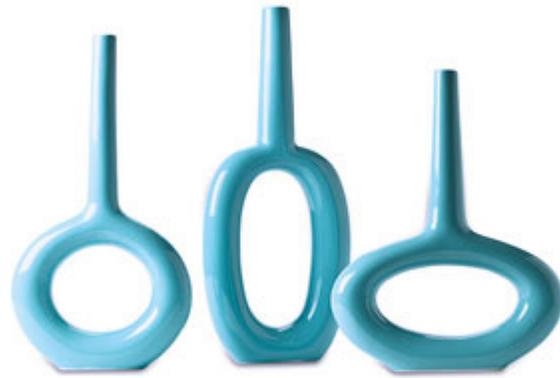
As long as they're in very good condition, playthings are popular items on Amazon. No luck selling? Hold a swap meet with friends and family and trade them for other items.



Jose Picayo

Collectibles

Old baseball cards, Hummel figurines, and the like will find takers on eBay. If you think your items are worth more than similar items are fetching there, consider offering them to a specialized auction, where buyers may have a more discerning eye. (Go to auctioneers.org to find a specialized auctioneer in your area.)



Jewelry (Nonantique)

Local jewelers will probably offer you the best deal on pieces made of precious metals or stones, but it may come in the form of a trade for something you want to buy. Immediate liquidation for cash will get you the lowest amount. If your item has a famous name and a pedigree (think Rolex Submariner), then sell it at auction.

Geoffrey Sokol

Sports Equipment

PlayItAgainSports buys, sells, and trades all kinds of athletic gear. (Visit the site to find a store location.) If the shop doesn't want what you're offering, your best option is, again, Craigslist.

Musical Instruments

Get cash on the spot for your old drums or guitar from [Music Go Round](http://MusicGoRound). (Go to the site to find a local store.) No location near you? Try Craigslist.



Give It Away

If you think you'll net less than \$5 for that paperback or old prom dress online, then consider donating it to a good cause. Below, find some reputable charities that accept used goods. Make sure you get an itemized receipt stamped with the charity's name. You can then write off your donation on your next tax return, as long as the item is in "good used condition or better," as required by the Internal Revenue Service.



Kana Okada

Dress for Success collects women's professional clothing and distributes it to disadvantaged women to help them compete in the job market and become economically independent.

Homelessshelterdirectory.org will direct you to a local shelter that will take nonperishable food, clothing, and personal-care items to benefit those in need.

International Book Project acquires books in excellent condition for literary programs around the world.

National Cristina Foundation accepts used computer equipment and directs donations to local nonprofit organizations, schools, and public agencies throughout the United States.

The National Furniture Bank Association collects good-quality used furniture for local organizations, including women's shelters and disaster-relief organizations.

The Salvation Army accepts clothing, furniture, household goods, and more. The items are then sold to the general public, and 82 percent of the proceeds help fund more than 150 adult-rehabilitation centers across the country.

The Vietnam Veterans Association will come to your house and pick up clothing and household goods, which are then sold to privately owned thrift stores. Sixty-eight percent of the proceeds go to Vietnam veterans and their families.

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