Craigslist Buying and Selling

1) Open a web browser to get to Craigslist and go to our local Craigslist
   - Double click to open a web browser such as Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, or Safari on a Mac.
   - Type chicago.craigslist.org into the long bar across the top of the screen, and then press the Enter key on your keyboard.

2) Craigslist's homepage and about Craigslist
   - Craigslist has many sections which are listed on their homepage:
     - Craigslist is a popular site that helps people buy and sell local products and services.
3) Buying
- Left click **For Sale** on the main [chicago.craigslist.org](http://chicago.craigslist.org) page.
- Click into the search bar and type in something you’re interested in and hit **Enter** on your keyboard. Advanced search options on the left let help us with specific queries.

4) Narrow down to our part of the suburbs
- But by default, the search you’re doing in that **search** box or with the **advanced search** options are of “all chicago”. We need to narrow down the location further.
- To do that, click on the ▼ arrow by **all chicago**, and then click **northwest suburbs**.
- Be very careful to click the correct area within Chicagoland! If you click on the wrong one, your results will not be local! *(You can always click this option to switch it again.)*

5) Narrow by category
- Now that we’re searching the **northwest suburbs**, we’re getting closer.
- To narrow by category, click on the ▼ arrow by **all**, and select a category from the list.
- You may have to try a few. This categorization, done by sellers, is imperfect.
6) Search by keyword
- Once you’ve narrowed by category, you still may be shown a large number of results.

An example search showing 2500 results! Click next > and < prev to navigate between pages
Click << to go back to the first page of results

- You can search [your category] by keyword too.
- Click into the bar that says search [your category], type in a few words describing what you’re looking for, and then click the magnifying glass button to the right or press the Enter button on your keyboard.

- Do multiple searches until you’ve found the keywords that others are using in posts for items you’re looking for.

7) View a result
- Scroll up and down through the results, browse through them until you find a good one.
- Once you’ve found a result you’re interested in looking at in more detail, simply click on its picture or on the blue text of its title to be taken to its dedicated page.
8) Evaluating listings

- **Location** – if your search doesn’t turn up many results, sometimes Craigslist will automatically include results from further away.

- **Price** – do you think the item is worth the price that it’s being offered at?

- **Quality** – many items on Craigslist come used, but was the item lightly used? Or is it worn down?

- **Title and Description** – does these make you confident in the item and the seller? You may also need to decrypt some lingo like “OBO” (or best offer) in some descriptions.

- **Pictures** – do the pictures illustrate the type of item you want to buy? Bad posts may have no pictures, good posts will have several pictures.

- **Posting date** – if it was posted long ago, that typically means other users of Craigslist saw the item but did not find it appealing for some reason. If others aren’t buying what a post is selling, should you…?

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**Reply button**

**Posting date**

**Location**

**Price**

**Pictures** – click each rectangle to see that picture above

**Description** – this description isn’t very good, look for ones with more detail

**Posting date and updates**
9) Reply to a seller saying you’re interested (likely via Craigslist email relay)
   - When you’re ready to contact a seller, click the reply button toward the upper left of the post.
   - Most sellers on Craigslist use something called Craigslist email relay
     - Craigslist email relay creates a fake email address like 4j8h2-6041266088@sale.craigslist.org and associates it with the sellers real email address to give sellers some degree of privacy.
     - Potential buyers like you can see 4j8h2-6041266088@sale.craigslist.org type email addresses, but only Craigslist knows which of these temporary relay email addresses correspond with which real email addresses.
     - When you email one of these email relay addresses, the real person behind the posting will NOT see your actual email address. They will see something like rcc9la26d7534400a6a03514c34f9200@reply.craigslist.org. They may see your name if your email provider includes that with your address. More information on Craigslist email relay: https://www.craigslist.org/about/help/email-relay
   - When one of the email relay accounts receives an email, Craigslist automatically forwards it on to the real seller email address.
   - Click the Reply button.

   ![Reply button](image.png)

   - The webmail links will take you directly to the listed email services and automatically start an email to the long 4j8h2-6041266088@sale.craigslist.org addresses for you so you don’t have to worry about any typos.
   - Or you can manually highlight and then copy+paste (Ctrl+C copy, Ctrl+V paste on a PC, Cmd+C copy, Cmd+V paste on a Mac) the reply by email address from the text box at the bottom to put into an email if you have an account with a different email service.
   - If you don’t want to send an email to a seller right now, you can follow along as the instructor types out an example response.

   - Craigslist transactions tend to move quickly. Respond to posts quickly to have the best chance of getting the item in question.
10) Example response to seller

- Make sure the Craigslist relay email address is entered into the To field correctly.
- Give the message a Subject related to the post, or if you used one of the webmail links, the title of the post will be copied over automatically (if there are typos or misspellings in the post, there’s no need to correct them.)
- Write a brief message.
- There’s no need to ask if an item is still available. If the item is still available, the seller will respond. If it isn’t the seller won’t.
- If you have any questions or concerns, ask them, but keep it brief. The seller is likely receiving a lot of messages from other potential buyers. You want to be an easy buyer to work with from the perspective of the seller.
- Don’t delete the link at the bottom of the email (or if you’re writing up the email from scratch, include the link to the item at the bottom). This helps the seller know which item you’re referring to if they’re selling multiple items (it can get confusing).

Hi there,

I saw your Uncle Sam piggy bank post on Craigslist and am interested in purchasing it.

Is there any flexibility in price?

Where and when can I buy it from you?

Thanks,
Your name
Any other contact information you’re comfortable giving them

http://chicago.craigslist.org/chi/cls/6041266088.html

- Hopefully the seller will respond to you.
- Be ready to negotiate a time and place to pick up the item.
11) Tips for safely buying items
- Know what you’re looking for – don’t get pressured into accepting misconstrued items.
- Know your price (free/$) – and only carry the amount of cash you need to buy the item.
- Don’t buy without seeing a picture – and evaluate the item when you meet.
- Pay in cash – other methods of payment are often scams.
- Meet in person – you can always back out if something seems fishy.
- Don’t go to a second location with the seller – complete the transaction at the first place you and the seller meet. Being asked to go to a different location is sometimes a sign of a potential scam.
- Bring a friend/family member for safety
- Let someone else know where you’re going before you leave
- Meet in a public place if possible – some large items you’ll have to pick up at a house, but many smaller items can be transferred easily in places like police department or library parking lots.
  - And you’re also free to use the Ela Library parking lot, but we do not have constant camera surveillance like the police department does.
- [https://www.craigslist.org/about/scams](https://www.craigslist.org/about/scams)

12) Advanced search options
- Maybe you weren’t ready to message a seller when we did in #9-11.
- There are advanced search and view options for you to be even more specific.
  - Click the newest ▼ button to reorganize the list by price ↓ (highest to lowest price) or price ↑ (lowest to highest price)
  - Click the gallery button to switch the view to a list of titles only, smaller thumb nail pictures, gallery (the default, large photos), and map.
• In the **map** view, click numbers to see what other Craigslist users are offering where.

• **all**, **owner**, and **dealer** are options for sorting through types of sellers.

• **Company dealers** sometimes list their items of Craigslist.

• **Owner** means random members of the public who own and are looking to get rid of whatever item you’re looking for.

• Below the seller options are checkbox limits

• **search titles only** does not search the descriptions of items, instead only the titles, when you do a keyword search. The idea here is that the title is likely the most relevant text in any listing.

• Checking **has image** will omit any posts that do not have pictures.

• The **posted today** option will eliminate any posts older than the current date, making sure you’re looking through fresh items.

• Enter a number of **miles** in and then specify **from zip** like 60047. This is great to narrow searches even further than and might eliminate the need to use the **map** view.

• Enter in a price **min** and **max** to say you want items $0-50

• Click **condition** or **[other search option names]**. Some categories of Craigslist will add additional options, like **propulsion types** for boats or **mobile operating system** for cell phones.

• After entering in any of these options, the search results should update automatically. But if they don’t, click the **update search** button to manually reload your search with the options applied.
13) Setting up your Craigslist post
- Before selling, you should probably have pictures of your item ready.
- If you take pictures on a smart phone, the easiest way to transfer them to a computer is often to email them to yourself.
- Go to https://chicago.craigslist.org/ in your web browser.
- Click the post to classifieds button in the upper left corner
- Craigslist asks a lot of questions and setting up a post takes a bit of time, but their questions help make sure your post is a good one.
  - Each time we click an option, Craigslist should automatically take you to the next one.
  - If it doesn’t, there are usually continue buttons at the bottom that will take you to subsequent steps.
  - First, Craigslist asks us what type of post we want to make. Odds are, you want a for sale by owner post type.
  - As we saw when browsing through categories as potential buyers, there are lots of categories to choose from when we’re starting to sell our items. Choose wisely. Note the free stuff, and garage & moving sales categories.
  - After you’ve selected a category, it will ask you to be more specific with your location.
  - Lake Zurich / Ela area posts should probably go in the northwest suburbs location.
  - Selecting the location should take us to the editor where we will actually write up our post.

14) Writing your Craigslist ad
- It really is an advertisement, even though you don’t have to pay for it.
- The vast majority of Craigslist ads are placed for free, except for a few isolated categories. These few categories are how Craigslist supports itself. See https://www.craigslist.org/about/help/posting_fees for more information.
- Most Craigslist posts automatically expire after a week. See https://www.craigslist.org/about/help/posting_lifespans for a few exceptions to that.
- Type in a posting title. It should be clear and descriptive but fairly short and catchy.
- Enter a price too.
- specific location can be an exact street address, or it can be left off. Parts of the form in green are required. So here you have to give a postal code, but not a specific location.
- Type in a posting body. This is free form. You can write whatever you want, but you do want the main text of your ad to describe your item so that someone else will want it. You can describe the quality of the item, how old it is, color, why you’re selling it, etc.
• Some categories may prompt you for posting details, like brands for cars and boats, model names and numbers, size, mobile operating system for cell phones, etc.

• If you have other items for sale and want people to see links to them in your post(s), click the include “more ads by this user” link checkbox.

• Next, enter Your email address once and then Type email address again. They’re just making sure you’re not typo’ing your own email address.

• Leave CL mail relay selected.

• If you want to list your phone number, you can click the checkboxes next to either one or both of users can also contact me: by phone or by text. And then you will need to enter your phone number, extension (if applicable) and contact name. But we do not recommend listing your phone number in your ads.

• If you want a map to show up with your post, leave show on maps checked, and then fill out your location. You can be specific or general as to your location, since the street and cross street boxes are optional. City, however is not optional so people can at least know at a glance that you’re local. (If you leave it blank, city is extracted from postal code, which was a required field earlier.)
• Make sure to leave **ok for others to contact you about other services, products or commercial interests** unchecked as it is by default. You don’t want to receive random spam from people who have seen your **CL mail relay address** for the week it’s valid.

  ![Map showing location](image)

  - **ok for others to contact you about other services, products or commercial interests**

• Click **continue** once you’ve finished all of that. You’ll can edit this information later if necessary.

• If you left **show on maps** checked, the next screen will be a preview of where your location will be displayed. Only entering a zip code can result in locations that are not very accurate. However, you can change that location by dragging the on-screen pin.

• You can drag both the pin and the map if the location is very far off.

  ![Map showing location](image)

• Click **do not show on maps** to change your mind, enter in street and cross street if you want to add more information, or click **continue** to move on to the next step.

• Next, they allow you to **Add Images**. Click the **Add Images** button and it will open up a menu for you to browse folders and files on your device to find the image(s) you’re looking for. The first image you upload is featured. Depending on which image you want to feature, you may have to click the **Add Images** button more than once. Image previews appear to the right of the **Add Images** button and once they’re fully uploaded appear larger below the previews. Click the **red and white x** to remove a picture.

• Click **done with images** to move on to the next step.
• Most Craigslist posts automatically expire after a week. See https://www.craigslist.org/about/help/posting_lifespans for a few exceptions to that.

• Next it gives you the opportunity to preview your post before you publish it.

• If you want to change anything, click edit post, edit location, or edit images.

![This is an unpublished draft.](https://www.craigslist.org/help/posting_lifespans)

- If you click edit post, edit location, or edit images, Craigslist will take you back to the same editing menus we saw before. But what you entered before will already be added. You can make changes and then click back through to this stage.

- Once you’re done making changes, click publish. You should be taken to the message below:

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**IMPORTANT - FURTHER ACTION IS REQUIRED TO COMPLETE YOUR REQUEST !!!**

You should receive an email shortly, with a link to:

- publish your ad
- edit (or confirm an edit to) your ad
- verify your email address
- delete your ad

Email sent to: [Email Address]

If you don't receive this email, please consult our help pages.

Your email provider might misfile this mail as spam. Check your spam folders.

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• To protect themselves from spam, Craigslist requires you to go to your email account, and click a link to actually publish your post.

• This also makes sure that you can receive messages through Craigslist email relay.
- Open a new tab of your web browser by clicking a + button (usually to the right of the last tab) or by using the keyboard shortcut Ctrl+T on a PC or Cmd+T on a Mac.
- Use the address bar to go to and then log into the email account you gave Craigslist.
- You should’ve receive an email from Craigslist that looks something like this:

**IMPORTANT - FURTHER ACTION IS REQUIRED TO COMPLETE YOUR REQUEST !!!**

**FOLLOW THE WEB ADDRESS BELOW TO:**

- PUBLISH YOUR AD
- EDIT (OR CONFIRM AN EDIT TO) YOUR AD
- VERIFY YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS
- DELETE YOUR AD

If not clickable, please copy and paste the address to your browser:

**THIS LINK IS A PASSWORD. DO NOT SHARE IT** - anyone who has a copy of this link can edit or delete your posting.

[Click here!](https://post.craigslist.org/u/Xo80lwsb5xGcAzWBu9L)

**PLEASE KEEP THIS EMAIL** - you may need it to manage your posting!

Your posting will expire off the site 7 days after it was created.

**WARNING!! *** WARNING!! *** WARNING!! *** WARNING!!**

- Click the link they sent you. On the page that loads, click **ACCEPT the terms of use**.

- Clicking **ACCEPT** will take you to a page with the actual address of your post and a link to **Manage your post**. Click **Manage your post** next.

**Thanks for posting with us. We really appreciate it!**

- [Manage your post](http://chicago.craigslist.org/nwc/sys/6.scss13.html)
- [Return to your account page](http://chicago.craigslist.org/nwc/sys/6.scss13.html)
• **An account isn’t required for Craigslist**, but having one can be helpful. If you lose the email they send you without an account, you’ll have no way to edit your post! If you click **Return to your account page** you can either **Log in** or **Create an account**.

![Log in](image1)

• If you clicked **Manage your post**, you’ll be taken to a page with a box like this one:

![Manage your post](image2)

- Your posting can be seen at [http://chicago.craigslist.org/nwc/sys/6956593.html](http://chicago.craigslist.org/nwc/sys/6956593.html).
- You can make changes to the content of your post.
- Add or remove images attached to this posting.
- Change how this posting appears on a map.
- This will remove your posting from active listing.

• Again, there are links to **Edit this Posting**, **Update Images**, or **Edit locations**.
• If you’ve sold the item, changed your mind, etc., click **Delete this Posting**.

![Delete this Posting](image3)

**This posting has been deleted from craigslist. [?]**

- This post is less than 48 hours old, and so can be undeleted. This will put it back in its original place in the listing; the post will not go back to the top.
You can **Undelete this Posting** within 48 hours.

If you make edits after fully publishing your post, you’ll again be taken to a preview. Click **publish** again to submit your edits. This time, however, you won’t be asked to go to your email and click a link.

You’ve successfully posted to Craigslist!

Be ready to field responses from the Craigslist community!

You’ll likely get responses quickly, especially for popular items.

**15) Example post**

- This post might almost be too detailed.

  - Craigslist has some lingo, like “OBO” for **or best offer**.
  - Google any acronyms you don’t understand in Craigslist post.
  - You can use line returns to help make your post more readable.

  - The pictures only show one side of the object. Potential buyers may suspect that something is wrong on the other side.

  - However, the pictures in this example are good in that they don’t reveal a specific location.

  - What else do we think about this post?
11) Tips for safely selling items

- Don’t post your phone number or address initially – arrange sale meetups individually
- Take pictures that don’t reveal your location or you – crop or retake revealing photos
- Be clear on your terms, price – large or expensive items may require special care
- Free, or require the buyer to pay in cash – this lets them know you’re legit
- Complete the sale in person – somewhere you’re comfortable
- Have a friend or family member there
- [https://www.craigslist.org/about/help/faq](https://www.craigslist.org/about/help/faq)
- [https://www.craigslist.org/about/terms.of.use](https://www.craigslist.org/about/terms.of.use)