

# Using Online Classifieds

Whether you are purging or bargain-hunting, it's easy.

by Kate Winn

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**W**ant to get rid of items you no longer need and make money doing it? Try selling your unwanted items through online classifieds such as Kijiji ([www.kijiji.ca](http://www.kijiji.ca)) and craigslist ([www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org)). Since kids go through their clothing and toys so quickly, these items are in demand, and just waiting in your basement, garage or closets to be turned into cash! You don't have to stop with kids' stuff though – you can list almost any item imaginable, including the kitchen sink! These ads are local (you just click on your city) and best of all, they're free.

## Selling Tips

**Tip # 1:** Baby items are among the hottest sellers, along with electronics (cell phones, digital cameras, computers), furniture, cars and collectibles. Keep this in mind as you're sorting through your "junk."

**Tip # 2:** Before placing an ad, browse the listings to get a feel for the right category and price for your item. Buyers are looking for a deal, so think yard-sale pricing. Check both sites to see which one seems more popular in your area, or try your ad on both. Note that because of safety or provincial/federal regulations, some items are prohibited. For example, Kijiji prohibits the sale of alcohol, tobacco, prescription drugs, lottery tickets and weapons.

**Tip # 3:** Group small items together as "lots." Arranging a sale for a \$3 toy is a hassle; selling a group of toys for \$15 might be worth your while. This also works well for clothing (group by size and season), kitchen accessories, tools and decorative items such as picture frames and candle holders.

**Tip # 4:** A well-written ad will generate interest and reduce the number of questions you receive. Include as much information as possible: the condition of the item, brand, model number, size, etc. It may help to mention the original cost, and unless you want offers, state that you are firm on your price. Be sure to mention whether a fabric item comes from a smoke-free home. You should also include any keywords for which buyers may be searching, e.g. stroller, Gymboree, etc. To make a good impression, watch your spelling and grammar.

**Tip # 5:** For large items, such as furniture, you may want to offer delivery for an extra cost.

**Tip # 6:** You have the option of paying a small fee to keep your ad at the top of the list, or to place it on the home page. This may be something to consider for big-ticket items, such as vehicles.

**Tip # 7:** Attach clear photos of the items. Take your

own pictures (don't use manufacturers' photos) on a simple background. A solid-coloured sheet works well.

**Tip # 8:** Potential buyers will be contacting you at your email address (they send a message through the site, which forwards it to you; your address is not seen by others) so check your email frequently and reply promptly.

**Tip # 9:** Because of the anonymity, be prepared for a lot of false leads and no-shows. "When I was selling a couch, I had two different people tell me they were coming at a certain time, and neither one showed up," says one Kijiji seller. "They didn't even call or email...but the next person who replied arrived on time and ended up paying my asking price, so you have to be patient." You can see how many visits your ad has received, which can get your hopes up, but keep in mind that not all visitors are serious buyers.

**Tip # 10:** Some sellers enjoy the convenience of having buyers come to their doors, but this poses concerns for both privacy and safety. The sites suggest meeting in person at a public location, and bringing a friend and your cell phone. You should also deal only in cash.

## Buying Tips

You can also take advantage of Kijiji and craigslist to save money on purchases.

**Tip # 1:** If you can't find what you're looking for, place a "wanted" ad. Someone else browsing the listings may have just what you need.

**Tip # 2:** Great deals get snatched up quickly, so check the sites frequently and if you see an item you want, offer to pick it up right away. Again, be aware of your own safety and take a friend along with you.

**Tip # 3:** Kijiji and craigslist offer no buyer protection, so deal only in cash (scammers may suggest other methods of payment) and never give out any personal details, including banking information.

**Tip # 4:** Before you buy (or sell) make sure kids' items, such as cribs, play pens, car seats, etc., meet current standards. Go to [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/cons/garage-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/cons/garage-eng.php).

In addition to the sale of goods, online classifieds are also popular for job postings, services, housing, community events and personal ads, so take some time to browse and find out how you can make these sites work for you.

*Kate Winn is a teacher, freelance writer and mother of two. She is currently recovering from a serious kijiji addiction.*