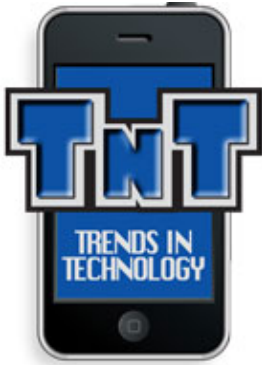


Go green: exchange shopping for swapping

Written by Darci Tomky



Ever wonder why garage sales are so popular?

There are a couple things that make people really excited on those early Saturday mornings. One, they get those “gently-used” items they’ve been wanting at a really cheap price. And two, getting rid of all that stuff they don’t want that’s taking up precious room in their houses feels really good.

So what if they could kill two birds with one stone? What if people could get something new and swap out something old?

Swap websites are essentially virtual bartering systems where goods—and sometimes services—are exchanged for other goods and services.

Since the internet is worldwide, the possibilities are endless! A woman in New York can trade her tattered romance novel for her favorite chick flick on DVD with another gal in California, while a man in Texas cleans out his tie collection in exchange for that one CD he needs to complete his Beatles collection from a guy in Montana. And all they’re out is the price of postage. Sounds great, doesn’t it?

Some websites link users directly to others for a two-way swap while others allow users to sell items for credits they can use later on the things they want. Swap sites can even connect people to other swappers in their local areas.

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Just about anything can be swapped—from something as small as a video game to something as large as a new house!

Don't know where to start? Here are some great swap sites in a variety of categories—from books and movies to clothes and vacations.



Thousands of people around the globe are saving money—and the environment—by using swap websites to trade their old DVDs, books, video games and CDs for new ones. Others have taken the concept to a whole new level, swapping and bartering for services, vacations and even real estate. —Enterprise photo

Entertainment

Swap.com is easy. Users simply list the books, movies, CDs or video games they have. A long list of items they can get for that trade pops up, and users choose whatever looks good to them,

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based on the item and condition. The website sets up the swap, and users pay shipping costs and print out the mailing label to mail their item.

PaperbackSwap.com is a virtual book club and is great for people who buy books often. Users list paperback books they want to get rid of. They are notified when another person wants one of their books. It's mailed off, and that user receives one credit they can use to get a book they want from the website.

SwapaCD.com and SwapaDVD.com are simple, easy-to-use sites all about CDs and DVDs. After users mail a CD or DVD someone has requested, in return they choose one for themselves from the huge selection on the website.

TextbookRevolt.com allows students to rent out the textbooks they don't need or rent the books they do need at a fair price. At the end of the semester, the books are simply returned from the renters.

GameTZ.com is a trading zone devoted to gamers who want to buy, sell or swap video games. Users keep track of the games they have and the games they want, and the site's matching system helps set up the trades.

Family

Zwaggle.com is geared toward families who want to swap gently-used kids' items. Earn "Zoints" for items traded that can be applied to new goods. The person receiving the item determines how many Zoints it is worth so there is accountability between the two people swapping.

SwapBabyGoods.com is a friendly place for parents to buy, sell or swap baby items. Many

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parents are stuck with nearly-new baby toys, clothes and furniture, so this is a great place for them to shed those extra items while new parents can get them for a reasonable price.

Clothing

[SwapStyle.com](https://www.swapstyle.com) is perfect for those who need an update to their wardrobe without putting a dent in their wallet. Like other sites, users simply list what they have and what they want on their wish list. Tokens are earned for trades. Since it's clothing, users must take photos of their unwanted clothes to post on their SwapStyle profile.

[RehashClothes.com](https://www.rehashclothes.com) focuses on swapping clothes, accessories and books as a way to save the environment. It's also a place where users can join groups, socialize and get fashion, book and green-living tips.

Environment

[SharedEarth.com](https://www.sharedearth.com) touts it is the largest community garden on the planet! The idea is that the website connects landowners who have land to share with gardeners. In return, the landowners get fresh fruit, vegetables and flowers from the gardeners who now have space to grow the produce and plants they love.

[FreeCycle.org](https://www.freecycle.org) is a worldwide grassroots and nonprofit movement of people who are giving (and getting) stuff for free by joining local groups in their areas. The goal is to get a cycle going of giving and reusing items in order to keep good things out of landfills.

Travel

Zimride.com is a new spin on carpooling. Drivers use the website to post their starting location, route and destination. Passengers then search for the ride they need and pay with a credit card for a reserved seat in the vehicle.

CouchSurfing.com is a safe community connecting people around the world. Members can bypass a hotel and experience another city or country first-hand by staying in the home of a local. In exchange, they can share their hospitality and open their home to other travelers in their area.

HomeExchange.com helps people swap their homes, RVs or other vacation accommodation with others at designated vacation times. If the social aspect of traveling is important, hospitality exchangers can host each other in their homes during two different times.

Real Estate

BestHouseSwap.com is a permanent real estate exchange. Users post their property on a bulletin board and a description of property they would consider trading for, browse other listings to find a match, then have a real estate agent help seal the deal.

Services

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BarterQuest.com is a platform for people to swap goods, services and real estate. After listing their “Haves” and “Wants,” users make and accept offers or even consider multi-party trades.

SwapAce.com allows people to list both the goods they want or need as well as the services they need or can provide. Users can use the electronic bartering system to swap goods and services or the electronic negotiation system to make monetary offers.

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