

Selling On the Moon

the eCRATER eXPERIENCE



by

Cuppa Te 
China and Collectibles

<http://cuppatea.ecrater.com>

This document contains notes about what I have found in my own experiments at setting up an eCRATER store. It is not sponsored by or affiliated with eCRATER. Information is not guaranteed to be accurate or current, it is updated at a whim, use at your own risk!

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1 Introduction

(Note: June 2009:

ecrater is a terrific place, although I don't have a store up there at the moment. I'm a hobby seller, and may try different things from time to time.

Over the years, ecrater has made lots of changes and enhancements, I ended up deleting a lot of this guide because it was outdated. However, I hope you still find the information here helpful!)

I'm Heather Ellen of <http://cuppatea.ecrater.com>, pleased to meet you!

Welcome to Selling on the Moon, the eCRATER eXPERIENCE, a booklet about what I've learned about selling on eCRATER. This is not a step-by-step tutorial on how to set up a store, although that would be nice. Instead, it explores some philosophies and experiments on how eCRATER works. I could spend weeks documenting all of the ins and outs, this just scratches the surface. Something new turns up in the eCRATER forums every day, I highly recommend reading through the posts. eCRATER sellers are very knowledgeable, I am always learning from them.

IT'S HARD TO KEEP UP, FOR NEW FEATURES PLEASE CHECK ECRATER:

<http://www.ecrater.com/community/viewforum.php?f=10>

<http://www.ecrater.com/news.php>

Some of you are trying to make your store into a full-time business, so perhaps my thoughts and suggestions will not be as helpful, since that isn't my direction. However, you may at least find it interesting.



2 Top Nine Things To Know

- 1 Love What You Sell, Sell What You Love**
A little personal perspective. If you're going to fill your house with stuff and convince others to buy it, be enthusiastic about it! You're going to live with it for a long time.
- 2 eCRATER is free.**
Such a deal! You are getting a working site for free. It is not everything for everyone. If you contact eCRATER, be patient. They are managing tons of sellers. It must be like herding cats.
- 3 eCRATER is not an auction site.**
It is a service that provides a way for you to set up an on-line store. You sell, people buy. eCRATER has a very cool feed to Google Shopping, and should someone come to eCRATER they can browse through the tens of thousands of items. Other than that, it is just like having your own web site. Building a store does not guarantee traffic or sales.
- 4 An item in a store has two faces, depending on how people get there. One is the eCRATER Marketplace, one is the individual store.**
Note that while in eCRATER, all of the links at top and bottom are to eCRATER, not a store. Visitors will not see the store Terms or FAQ. Fill all item descriptions with anything important.
- 5 No HTML, no links, no custom pages.**
All stores have the same layout and opportunities. You add your individual flavor through your text, pictures, and organization. Be creative!
- 6 Make the most of what you have.**
On your home page, add a logo at the top and the picture below it. Add the Featured Categories to the bottom of the page, make some items display as a Featured Item. Fill in the About, FAQ, Terms, and Contact pages. Use long, descriptive item titles. Load everything with keywords.
- 7 Add the shipping fee to each item - don't leave \$0.00 unless shipping is free.**
If someone clicks on your item to buy it, the invoice will show \$0 for shipping, that is what they will send.
- 8 A store is suspended without notice if eCRATER terms are violated.**
eCRATER set up a clear and reasonable list of terms that sets the standards for the site. eCRATER is setting up moderators for all Marketplace categories to enforce them. Read the Terms! Know the Terms! Love the Terms! You will be tested.
<http://www.ecrater.com/terms.php>
- 9 The eCRATER Community Forum ROCKS!!!!**
If you have questions or just want to hang out, the Community Forum is the best place to be!!!
<http://www.ecrater.com/community/>



3 Promoting

Boy, is this a hot topic! Everyone wants to know how to promote their items. I always want to know more too! Two great posts on the eCRATER forum are worth a good read:

<http://www.ecrater.com/community/viewtopic.php?t=2132>

<http://www.ecrater.com/community/viewtopic.php?t=4220>

(this one is in the eCRATER Sellers section, you will need to sign in)

3.1 Research

My first important step is not really promotion. Promotion will not help if an item is not popular, if no one is looking for one/wants to buy one, or if I am selling it at too high a price. Much of my homework relates to research on what is selling, and how much do people pay. I do lots of research to see what is going in my markets. I have also found some places on-line like auctions and specialist web sites where they post what people paid. These are specific to my area of interest - antique china, collectibles, ornaments, and various treasures. Look around and see what you can find specific to your particular items.

3.2 Your Own Web Site

Your web site is where you can go nuts with all of the links, html, pictures, sound, video, and anything else that you want. The nice thing is that you can link directly to each item in your store to complete the selling process.

I have a theory that a really informative web site is a good way to bring people to your store, in a roundabout way. I set up a web site about Belleek and American Belleek china marks. It gets a fair amount of traffic. Over time, I'm building my collection, offering more for sale, and reorganizing and updating the web site. It's part of the fun of having a store.



4 Just the FAQs

Almost everything you ever wanted to know about setting up an eCRATER store is somewhere in the forums. Here are some pointers:

List of FAQs.

The posts either contain the information or point to the post that has the information.

<http://www.ecrater.com/community/viewforum.php?f=13>

Quick tips for new sellers are at

<http://www.ecrater.com/community/viewtopic.php?t=7227>

and

<http://www.ecrater.com/community/viewforum.php?f=6>

Very common question about changing the picture under the store logo

<http://www.ecrater.com/community/viewtopic.php?t=1>

Terrific FAQ on What To Do After the Sale

<http://www.ecrater.com/community/viewtopic.php?t=3759>

A few Other FAQs:

- ♥ Sellers register to set up a store. Use the same log in to go Store Admin and to the Forums. Feedback can only be left if Buyer uses Google or PayPal.
- ♥ Buyers do not register, they just come on down. Since they are not registered, no feedback for buyer option.
- ♥ Some Buyers do not complete the purchase process. They might abandon the process in the middle, or not send the money, or... Invoice them - if no response just keep the item listed and move on.
- ♥ Do NOT set up Test items UNLESS your store is on hold... therein lies the road to suspension. See eCRATER terms. If your store is on hold you can see how things are set up, but the BUY button is disabled and items are not submitted to search engines.
- ♥ You can have more than one store. Some sellers set up different stores for different types of items, or because one group of items works well with the shipping matrix and another group doesn't.

Anything else, just ask on the boards - a very helpful bunch!!



5 Google Analytics and Hits

You can't set up counters (no HTML) and you can't do logfile statistics analysis such as where visitors come from (no access to the logfile or web site statistics), but eCRATER set up Google Analytics so that you can see more information about visitors. Get the information at:

<http://www.ecrater.com/community/viewtopic.php?t=6512>

eCRATER also provides a Hits counter. Log in and go to your Products, look for the numbers in the left column.



Google Analytics and Hits are interesting in a general sort of way. I appreciate having them. They give me a general idea of which items are most popular. That means they are also an indicator of how well I am marketing an item or a type of item. If hits are low on an item or on all items in a category, I have to figure out whether those items just aren't selling well, or if I am not doing a good job of marketing them.



6 After the Sale

Buytime (eCRATER forum moderator) did a great post in what to do after the sale in the eCRATER forum:

<http://www.ecrater.com/community/viewtopic.php?t=3759>

A product does not go away once it is sold, unless you have Inventory Control set. See more about Inventory Control in the eCRATER forum:

<http://www.ecrater.com/community/viewtopic.php?t=4895>

I don't use Inventory Control, so can't share much more about it.

I don't mind that a product doesn't go away, I actually want to keep it up for a while. eCRATER terms say that you can't list a product if it is not for sale, but sellers do have general permission to keep a sold product up for two weeks, giving the buyer time to receive and compare the item. You can post a SOLD logo as the first picture, and add SOLD to the title. If you need a SOLD logo, I made a bunch of them:

<http://www.h2mweb.com/sold.htm>

Feedback is an "after the sale" topic. Lots of different thoughts on this one. I pretty much ignore that it is there, would prefer that it went away.

Buyers only have the opportunity to leave feedback if they use Google Checkout or PayPal. There is not a way to respond to the feedback. You can contact eCRATER if you feel that unfair feedback has been left.



**Wishing you Sales
Early and Often!**

