



# A better bartering system

New Canadian website a free online swap service that turns trash into treasures

## How it works

Bill is a house painter. He'd like to offer his services online.



He goes to SwapSity.com and registers.



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While the recession is officially over in Canada, consumer spending still hasn't returned to post-recession levels. Concern about credit card debt and the stability of the job market has many Canadians looking for alternative ways to meet their needs.

Enter SwapSity, a free online barter service launched in Canada on March 22. SwapSity provides an eco-friendly and budget-conscious way to turn trash into treasures, instead of sending it to

### One man's trash is another man's treasure

You can swap just about everything online, including gift certificates and tickets, computers, electronics, toys, housing/rentals, DVDs and clothes.



Bill normally charges \$30 an hour; figuring the job would take three hours, he estimates his time is worth \$90.

He then creates a wish list of what he wants in exchange for painting.

the garbage dump.

"Instead of sending perfectly good items to landfills, trade them and let someone else enjoy your castoffs," said SwapSity founder Marta Nowinska.

Bartering has been around since the beginning of civilization, but what makes SwapSity unique as an online service is that it is completely free and open to everyone.

"While business barter exchanges are widespread in Canada, bartering is not easily accessible to Canadian consumers," said Nowinska.

Everyone has something to barter. You can learn Japanese in return for Amazon gift certificates or arts-and-crafts supplies, trade an alto saxophone for patio furniture. Offer your services as a dog-walker, babysitter or administrative assistant and get something fabulous in return, or exchange the clutter in your basement or garage for something that you really need.

"Online swapping of unwanted possessions, free time or talents is a perfect solution for cost-conscious Canadian consumers seeking a more affordable way

to acquire goods and services during these trying times," said Nowinska.

For those who don't have anything to trade, SwapSity even provides the option of trading goods for cash.

In order to make exchanges easier, SwapSity locates matches within a defined distance. As of the March 22 launch, SwapSity had two major urban centres - Toronto and Vancouver - already participating in the program. Nowinska says other cities will be added as soon as requests are received through the website.

### What can I swap?

Items/skills	Cash
Items/skills	Items/skills
Items/skills	Items/skills + cash
<b>Examples:</b>	
Textbooks	Cash
Grass mowing	Cash
Computer Repair	Used Games
Cottage Vacation	Build a website
Foreign language lessons	CDs + Cash

Merchandise and skill/labour are swapped.

Transaction feedback and rating system establishes a member's track record and builds trust within the barter community.



Through SwapSity, Rob and Bill negotiate and agree on the trade, setting up a time and place to meet.

Rob is looking for someone to paint his deck and notices on SwapSity that one of the items Bill is looking for is a pair of Rollerblades, which he has.

## Benefits of bartering

**Saves Money:** Exchange goods and services in lieu of cash. Barter unwanted assets and extra time.

**Curbs Consumerism:** Instead of constantly shopping, try swapping.

**Builds Relationships:** Connect with other barter-savvy swappers and help each other out by exchanging skills and services.

**Recycles:** Embrace a greener lifestyle and leave a smaller environmental footprint by recycling old treasures, cutting down on waste and getting maximum utility out of unwanted possessions.

**Spring cleaning:** Get rid of that extra TV that sits unwatched, books you've already read, DVDs that are just gathering dust or boxes of old toys.

## Forbidden treasures

SwapSity prohibits users from posting any items that are:

- Stolen, counterfeit or fraudulent
- Offensive, obscene, abusive, indecent or defamatory
- Infringing on any copyright, patent, trademark, trade secret or any other proprietary right

- Not in control or legal possession of the swapper
- Illegal, unauthorized, questionable or may breach any applicable laws
- Dangerous or hazardous
- Coupons for any illegal or banned items

Examples of illegal items:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Animals
- Artifacts
- Used cosmetics
- Drugs/medical paraphernalia
- Used earrings
- Escort services

- Firearms/weapons/ knives/ammo
- Food
- Human parts/organs
- Lottery tickets
- Pesticides
- Pornography
- Real estate

