

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Understanding Etsy's purpose and how Etsy makes money
- » Signing up for and navigating Etsy
- » Setting up your Etsy shop and understanding the selling process
- » Exploring the Etsy community
- » Introducing the Etsy apps

Chapter 1

Handmade for Each Other: Falling in Love with Etsy

Launched in 2005, Etsy is a website where artisans and craftspeople can sell their wares online. Basically, the site — which describes itself as “the global marketplace for unique and creative goods” — enables artistic types to parlay their passion into their life's work.

But Etsy is more than that. In addition to providing a platform for e-commerce, the Brooklyn-based company also hosts a thriving international community of creators — a community with a shared set of values, including having a commitment to their craft, minimizing waste, embracing differences, digging deeper, and leading with optimism. “In a time of increasing automation,” say the folks at Etsy, “it’s our mission to keep human connection at the heart of commerce.”



TIP

For even more details on Etsy, click the Read Our Wonderfully Weird Story link to open the site's About page. In addition to articulating Etsy's main mission, this page provides links for buyers and sellers to additional information and resources, a link to the site's Help Center, and links to the Etsy News blog and the Investor Relations page.

Having picked up this book, you're probably interested in joining this community of creators. To get you started, this chapter offers you a bird's-eye view of Etsy — its purpose and business model, how to sign up for the site and navigate it, and all sorts of good stuff about opening and running your own shop.

Creative Crusade: Understanding Etsy's Purpose and Business Model

Some people think of Etsy as a sort of eBay for handmade goods. And you can see why: People use both Etsy and eBay to buy stuff from other individuals. Also, both sites charge listing fees and make a small commission on every sale. Plus, members use feedback to rate their transactions.

But the sites differ in big ways, too:

- » Although Etsy is growing — as of this writing, the site boasts 7.4 million sellers and more than 90 million buyers, and in 2021 it yielded \$13.5 billion in gross sales — it's still the proverbial mouse to eBay's proverbial elephant.
- » Whereas eBay uses an auction format, Etsy doesn't. Instead, it connects buyers directly with sellers through its online marketplace.
- » Whereas (almost) anything goes on eBay, Etsy was created specifically to enable artists and craftspeople to sell their handmade wares online. Over time, however, the site has evolved to empower a broader array of small business owners and makers. You'll find out more about what you can and can't sell on Etsy in Chapter 5.

Etsy stays afloat by charging sellers a fee for each item listed on the site. At this time, the listing fee is \$0.20 per item, which Etsy assesses when the item is listed.

Etsy also collects a transaction fee from the seller for each item sold — currently 6.5 percent of the total price of the item, plus the amount you charge for gift-wrapping and shipping or any other charges (if applicable). Etsy also charges a fee to process payments; this fee is assessed based on the total amount of the sale, including tax and shipping. (The precise amount of this fee depends on the location of your bank account. For sellers whose bank is in the U.S., the fee is 3 percent of the total sale, plus \$0.25.)

Finally, Etsy offers various fee-based services to help you manage and grow your shop, like Etsy shipping labels (see Chapter 13), advertising (see Chapter 14), Etsy Plus (see Chapter 17), and Pattern (see Chapter 17).

You can pay these fees in one of several ways: by using a credit card that you put on file with Etsy; by using your PayPal account; or by having the amount deducted from any sales you've made. (If your sales balance is zero or negative, then you'll have an amount due.) We talk more about Etsy fees in Chapters 12 and 16.

Introducing the World of Etsy

Just what can you do on Etsy? And how do you use the site? This section scratches the surface. (You find the nitty-gritty, step-by-step info about these topics in later chapters.)

Registering with Etsy

You don't need to register with Etsy to scope out what goodies are for sale. But if you're in the market to buy any of said goodies — or to communicate with other Etsy members or participate in the site's community features — you need to create an account with the site.

Fortunately, creating an account is simple and free. You just enter your name and email address and choose a username and password. You don't even need to supply a credit card number!

If you plan to use Etsy to sell your own items, you need to take a few more steps as well as provide a major credit card (think MasterCard, Visa, Discover, or American Express) and other vitals, such as your bank routing and account number and your address.

For step-by-step coverage of completing the registration process and signing in to your Etsy account, turn to Chapter 2. Chapter 6 covers the steps you need to take to become an Etsy seller.

Navigating the Etsy home page

Whether you're buying or selling, exploring or researching, Etsy's home page is your home base. It's the page that appears when you go to www.etsy.com. You can also access Etsy's home page from anywhere on the Etsy site by clicking the Etsy

logo in the upper-left corner of each Etsy Marketplace page. (We explain why we say “Etsy Marketplace” here in a sec.)



The Etsy home page, shown in Figure 1-1, features several important sections. These include the following. (Note that this section assumes that you’re *not* signed in to your Etsy account. You’ll see additional options if you are logged in — and even more if you have set up your Etsy shop. We talk more about these options in the next few sections and in Chapters 2 and 7.)

- » A standard search box, for when you know what you’re looking for
- » A set of links along the top, which you can click to browse items in popular categories and sign into your Etsy account
- » A series of Editors’ Picks for top Etsy items
- » Links to recent Etsy Journal blog posts
- » A “What Is Etsy?” section, with links to additional resources
- » Access to Etsy’s Help Center

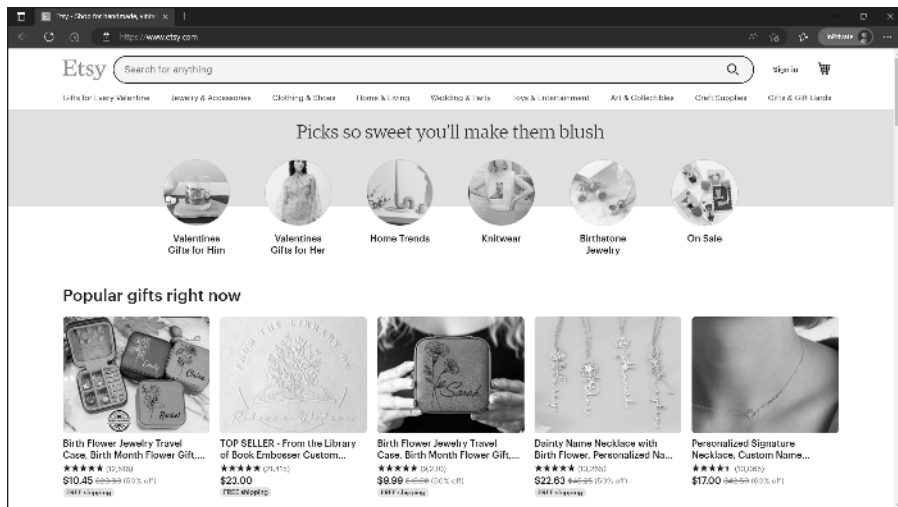


FIGURE 1-1:
Etsy’s home page.

Source: Etsy.com

Understanding Your Account and Shop Manager

After you create your Etsy account (see Chapter 2) and set up your shop (see Chapter 6), and assuming you’re logged into the site, you can access settings for

your account and your shop from the links along the top of any Etsy Marketplace page. (See Figure 1-2.)

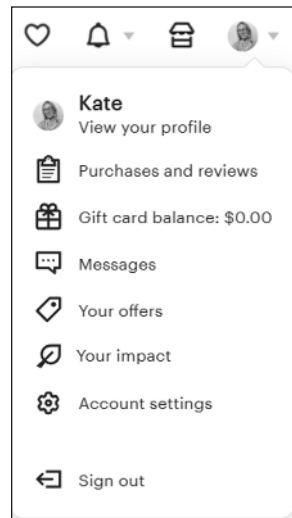
FIGURE 1-2:
The Shop Manager and Your Account links.



Source: Etsy.com

The Your Account menu (see Figure 1-3) contains a series of links that provide access to all sorts of useful info — your public profile, your gift card balance, messages to and from other Etsy users, special offers just for you, items you’ve bought and reviews you’ve left, and your account settings, as well as a Sign Out option. If you have not yet set up your Etsy shop, you’ll also see a Sell on Etsy link. For help navigating Your Account, turn to Chapter 2. Chapter 7 covers Shop Manager.

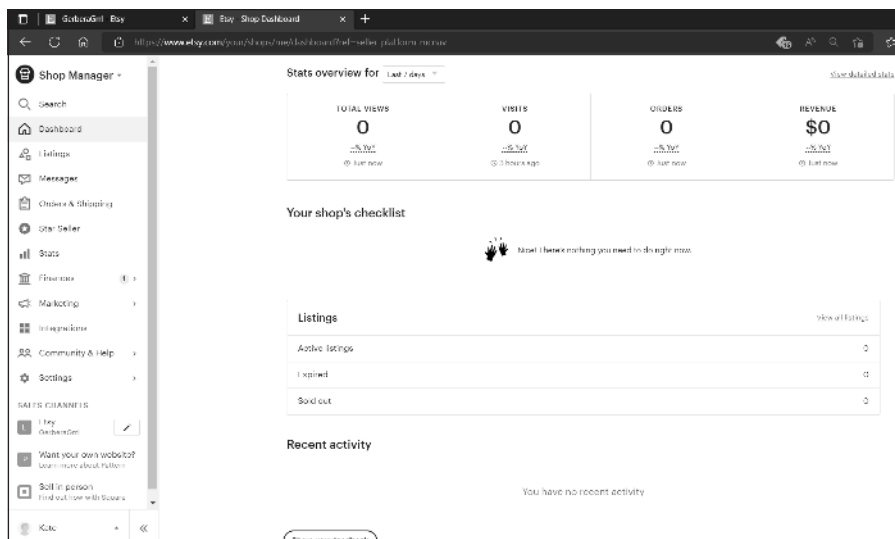
FIGURE 1-3:
Your Account.



Source: Etsy.com

Shop Manager is where you, well, manage your shop. It contains a dashboard that provides you with key shop stats at a glance (see Figure 1-4), as well as links to tools to create and manage listings, send and receive messages, keep track of orders and shipping, view stats, handle your finances, run marketing campaigns, and more. You can find out more about navigating the Shop Manager in Chapter 7.

FIGURE 1-4:
Shop Manager.



Source: Etsy.com

Notice in Figure 1-4 that Shop Manager has no header bar, which means you have no easy access to the various links that appear on the header bar on every Etsy Marketplace page. To access those links, you have to switch from Shop Manager to the Etsy Marketplace. To do so, click the Shop Manager link in the upper-left corner of the Shop Manager page. Then choose Etsy Marketplace from the list that appears.



REMEMBER

Etsy uses the term *Etsy Marketplace* to describe the area on the site where buyers can find items listed for sale. The part of the site geared toward sellers is called the Shop Manager.

Discovering what's for sale on Etsy

Etsy features unique items — goodies you simply can't find anywhere else — along with supplies for crafting your own pieces. In fact, Etsy offers an incredible breadth of items for sale, from accessories to ceramics, jewelry to quilts, and everything in between.



TIP

To help you find a specific item, Etsy offers a robust Search tool. You can also use the Search tool to locate a particular shop. If you're just browsing, you'll appreciate Etsy's many browsing-related features. (Exactly which features are available depends on whether you're logged in to the site.) You access these tools from Etsy's home page. For additional help, see Chapter 3.



Ensuring your safety on Etsy

No doubt about it, one of the highlights of Etsy is its thriving community of interesting, arty folk. But you might run into the occasional user who's not on the up-and-up. Take a few key steps to ensure your safety:

» **Choose a strong password.** A strong password makes it harder for someone to access your account without your authorization. Your password should meet all the following criteria:

- It's at least eight characters long.
- It doesn't contain your shop's name or your real name.
- It doesn't contain a complete word.
- It differs from passwords that you've used in the past.
- It contains a mixture of uppercase letters, lowercase letters, numbers, symbols, and spaces.

For an added layer of protection, change your password every so often — say, every 30 to 60 days.

» **Be on the lookout for scams.** Scams often occur in the form of suspicious messages with strange requests, odd formatting, or dangerous links. The best advice we can give you to avoid scams is to keep all Etsy-related messaging between buyer and seller within the Etsy messaging feature, not outside via email or social media. If despite your best efforts you *do* get taken on Etsy, contact your financial institution immediately. Then report the situation to Etsy. You may also opt to alert your local law enforcement.

» **Before you jump into a forum or team discussion, monitor it for a while.** See whether the folks engaged in the discussion are people you really want to interact with. If a discussion goes south, simply disengage.

» **Play it close to the vest.** Don't share your digits or other personal details, such as where you live or work, on Etsy's forums or other public spaces. Oh, and if you decide to meet up with someone you've met on Etsy in person, pick a neutral, public place, let a friend or family member know about your plans, and be sure to bring your phone with you in case you need to call for help.

Chapter 4 covers important safety issues in more detail.

Storefront and Center: Setting Up Your Shop

When you set up your Etsy shop, you can personalize it by

- » Choosing a meaningful shop name
- » Uploading a banner and shop logo
- » Including a shop title and shop announcement to describe your shop
- » Using sections to organize your goods
- » Populating your Etsy profile, fleshing out your shop's About section, and choosing a profile picture



REMEMBER

As you set up your shop, keep in mind that a major reason people shop on Etsy is to feel connected to the artists who make what they buy. If you want people to buy from *you*, make sure your Etsy shop reflects your personality! For example, do you have a serious disposition? Then your shop should, too. Ditto if you're whimsical, modern, traditional, edgy, or frilly. Let your personality shine through in your choice of banner, shop logo, and other visual features, as well as in your bio and other text-based elements. Not only will this increase your sales, it may also help you make some friends along the way. (For more on setting up your Etsy shop, check out Chapter 6.)

Oh, one more pointer: As you set up your Etsy shop, you'll want to clearly lay out your shop policies: whether you charge for shipping; how long it takes you to process orders; and so on. We cover shop policies in Chapter 8.

Sell's Angels: Surveying the Etsy Selling Process



REMEMBER

Maybe you want to do more than buy on Etsy. Maybe you want to sell. Putting up an item for sale on Etsy is a simple process:

- 1. Create (or, if you specialize in selling vintage pieces, curate) the item you're selling and determine how much you want to charge for it (with the help of the pointers we provide in Chapter 9).**
- 2. Photograph your piece.**

You can include as many as ten pictures of each piece in your Etsy shop. The photos you provide should convey the shape, size, color, and texture of your piece from various angles, and also be easy on the eye.

3. Add a video of your piece.
4. Compose a snappy title and description for your item listing.
5. List your item on the site and wait for someone to snatch it up.
6. When the item sells, ship it to the buyer (after you receive your payment, of course)!

Okay, that's a broad overview. The process has a little more to it. But trust us: It's nothing you can't handle. Check out the chapters in Part 3 to get up to speed.

Takin' Care of Business: Handling Business Matters

For some sellers, running an Etsy shop is merely a hobby — a way to make a little extra money on the side. For others, it's their day job, or “what they do.” Regardless of which camp you're in, you need to treat your Etsy shop as a proper small business — building a brand, marketing your shop, and providing excellent customer service.

If you're in the latter category — someone who seeks to earn a living by selling on Etsy — you might choose to do even more. For example, you could incorporate your business, obtain a business checking account, streamline your supply chain, use special tools to analyze your business, and so on. Part 4 covers all these topics and more.

Community Collage: Engaging in the Etsy Community

Sure, Etsy is a great place to buy and sell all sorts of neat stuff. But it's more than that: It's a community of creative, crafty people that just begs for participation. Etsy offers several tools that help you jump right in, including these:

- » Public message boards, called *forums*
- » Teams, for connecting with like-minded Etsy members
- » A podcast, for tips on selling

You can also follow your favorite shops and sellers to keep up with their goings-on by adding them to your Favorites.

Other great resources for the Etsy community include the Etsy Journal (www.etsy.com/blog), which acts as a neighborhood newspaper of sorts. The Etsy Journey regularly serves up fresh content, with material ranging from information to help you perfect various crafting techniques, to glimpses into the lives of other Etsy sellers, and more.

Etsy's email newsletters are another great source of information and inspiration. And if you're big into social media — like Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, and YouTube — you can connect with Etsy there as well.



TIP

Etsy is super easy to use, but you'll still need a little help sometimes. Fortunately, Etsy maintains copious resources to help members find answers to all their burning Etsy-related questions, including the Etsy Help Center (www.etsy.com/help) and the Seller Handbook (www.etsy.com/seller-handbook).

Ready to dive in? Flip to Part 5 for all the details on engaging in the Etsy community.

Appy Dance: Introducing the Etsy Apps

Initially, Etsy was just a website. These days, it's also an app — two, in fact. There's the Etsy app, which places the Etsy Marketplace (see Figure 1-5) and your account settings (see Figure 1-6) in the palm of your hand. You can use this app to browse and shop, and to manage your Etsy account. Then there's Etsy Seller, which you can employ as a mobile Shop Manager. (See Figure 1-7.) You'll quickly find that both these apps — available from the Apple App Store and Google Play — are remarkably easy to use!



TIP

You can easily switch from the Etsy app to the Etsy Seller app (assuming you have downloaded both apps to your phone and are logged into both). To do so, tap the You icon on the bottom of any Etsy app screen and choose Manage Your Shop.



REMEMBER

Although this book does mention these apps from time to time, it focuses mainly on the Etsy website. The good news is, once you learn your way around the Etsy website, you'll find the apps pretty intuitive to use.

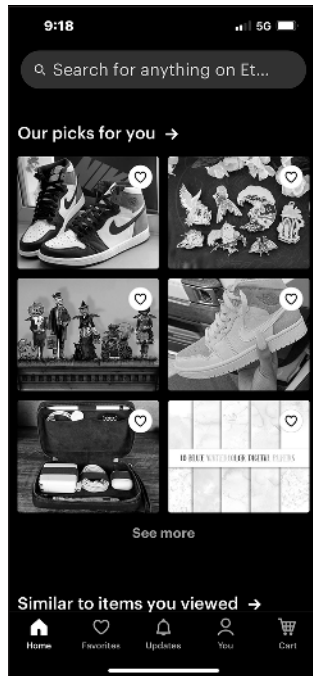


FIGURE 1-5:
The home page
of the Etsy app.

Source: Etsy.com

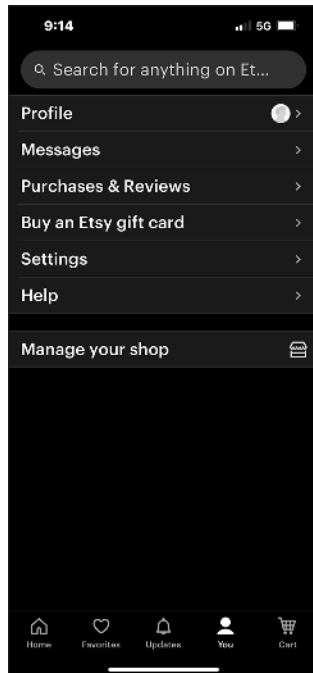


FIGURE 1-6:
The You screen
on the Etsy app.

Source: Etsy.com

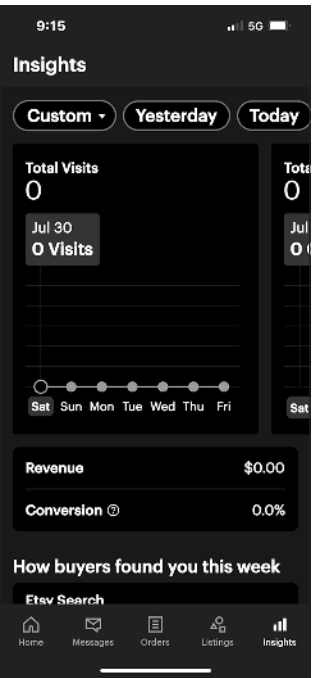


FIGURE 1-7:
The main
page on the
Etsy Seller app.

Source: *Etsy.com*