In working on GetSomething, we wanted to capture the feeling of a random purchase. Like the surprise of receiving a present, purchasing randomly is something that people can’t inherently do for themselves. Of the many internet distributors, we think eBay is the perfect outlet for this because its merchandise is populated by individual people, providing a much greater variety of possible purchases.

We’re using a webpage as our frontend right now, but our backend could be easily adapted to work in a wide variety of contexts. With a project like this, a lot of our feasibility depends on how we’re selecting items, and that’s something we’re very confident in. We cover basics like picking items with free shipping to avoid exceeding what the customer is willing to spend, and making sure that products are available via U.S. currency and ship inside the U.S. Beyond that, we offer more nuanced options like an enforced distribution of categories to prevent repetition and an automatically calculated min price based off of the given max price.

We considered more specific forms of filtering in things like sorting by location or limiting purchases based on more specific user details, but ultimately felt that we should seek to preserve as much of the randomness as possible.

The application is fully capable of purchasing an item after finding it, although our purchases currently only go through on test servers as we haven’t gone through the certification process yet. That said, I’ve spent some time running searches to see what kind of results we’d produce on live servers and have been thoroughly entertained. It’s a strange idea to spend money without knowing exactly where it’s going, but I think in some ways it’s very liberating, and the test results have convinced me this is a product I’d use.