

An Accessible Application to Help Users Sell *Thrifted-Clothing* by Removing Several
Barriers of Entry (specifically the **Fast Fashion** Problem)

PROJECT 1: (***Fashion***)

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Research (1/2)

Observations within fashion?

When asked to research fashion, I immediately thought of the ways in which fashion has played a role in my life when I make purchasing decisions. This is when thrift-shopping or second-hand clothing purchases either retail or online immediately entered my **focus**. I begin to recall the reasons I primarily purchase clothing second-hand and begin to delve into a research rabbit hole to find out why others choose so as well.

While embarking on this journey, I discovered that thrift shopping for clothing has been a growing trend in the (US and other nations)⁴ for the last decade, but specifically rising in digital spaces⁸ (i.e. Facebook Marketplace³, eBay², Poshmark⁶, Depop, Etsy⁵ and Grailed) which is suggested to be caused by the rise in ‘fast-fashion’⁹ and financial decision making influenced by the 2008 recession⁴.

Immediate Barrier: Lack of Information for Emerging ‘Sellers’

However, when observing thrifting in these digital spaces I noticed several problems for those who participate as ‘**sellers**.’ Such problems include, lack of information regarding how to participate in this market either in terms of knowing the value of something, financial information for the differing platforms (as in the cut a particular platform takes from a sold item)³ or even how one item may perform in selling on one platform over another.

Moreover, in regards to the trend of ‘fast-fashion’ these problems become heightend. The needed efficiency in order to keep up with fast fashion trends, can cause a seller’s investments to become incredibly unstable^{3,5} if they’re withheld from the proper information when making an initial purchasing decision.

Question: Fast Fashion Accelerating Existing Problems?

In my research I have found that these listed problems which plague ‘sellers’ are mostly left unresolved or given little support but have been repeatably reported on in so called ‘seller guides’ which warn of the dangers of selling and how to avoid them^{10, 13}.

Thus, with these observations in mind, I came to this question: is there any way to remove these unresolved documented barriers which could be preventing further participation in the ever growing digital space of second-hand clothing (especially in the cultural era of ‘fast-fashion’)?

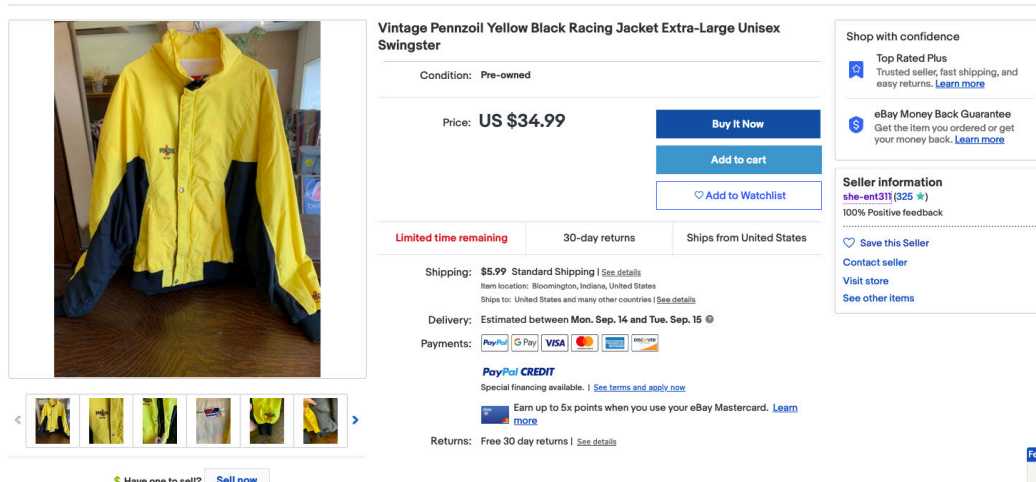


Figure 2: Example of Noah Sheldon's eBay-store²



Figure 1: Two Men's Shirts in Storage¹

Research (2/2)

Why Bother to Invest in an Industry with such Clear Problems?

With the rise of fast fashion⁹, general spending habits of the U.S. population^{4, 11}, and the growing access of those on these digital platforms, I found it necessary to examine and try to solve the barriers which prevents participation. **Why exactly?** Because participation in this growing digital market, leads to pro-social behaviors⁷ (where these digital markets rely on the connections individuals make with those who sell used goods in their communities), promotes essentially environmental responsibility by entering a 'sustainable' practice¹², a way for individuals to gain financial rewarded while personally growing through learning about the culture as a whole (as in learning why someone would want to purchase an item)⁵, and finally this space has been show in several studies to offer mental health (self-care) benefits¹².

Problems which Demand a Solution

With all of this in mind, the following solution, in order to be effective in making existing and emerging 'sellers' in these digital spaces participation more accessible, must acknowledge the following barrier: A seller's item's being stuck in limbo due to confusion about current fast fashion trends and which digital platform is suitable for that specific article of clothing.

Rooted within this barrier is the core which infects all clothing digital sellers: the uncertainty of one's financial investments in the age of fast-fashion.

Although this barrier seems difficult to approach, I feel as though its possible to implement some form of a technology in order to advance the industry through increased participation.



Figure 4: *Pile of Shirts Thrifted by Noah¹⁵*



Figure 3:
*Leather Jacket
being prepped
for an eBay
listing¹⁴*

Concept (1/2)

With all of this in mind!

The thought of entering the online second clothing market is made difficult by fast-fashion trends which make the predictability of one's investments terribly volatile^{3, 5, 9, 13}.

User's who resell clothes online need to know how long something will be waiting to sell in order to avoid a inventory left in limbo as they are unable to keep purchasing new products from third stores until their product is purchased. If a new user is inexperienced and unprepared they can easily lose big on their investments in a fast fashion era (or simply feel daunted by where and how to sell an item)^{3,5}.

Thus it's evident that the time spent researching weather or not an item will sell requires deidication and time which will inhibit those who may want to accessible enter this digital space in a more casual use case.

The screenshot shows the WatchCount website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like 'Join', 'Widgets/WP (Retired)', 'Retired', 'About', and 'eBay.com [USA]'. Below this, a section titled 'Most Watched eBay Items (US)' provides instructions on how to use the site's search functionality. It includes a search bar with the keywords 'ralph lauren white polo' and a dropdown menu for 'Category'. Below the search bar, there's a 'Show Me!' button and a list of countries/regions. A section titled 'Most Watched/Popular on eBay Right Now' shows a list of items, including 'POLO Ralph Lauren KNIT BOXERS Mens Underwear' with a watch count of 634. The bottom of the page features a 'Watch Count: 634 watchers' and a 'Bid/Price (USD): \$ 28.90'.

Source 16:
Ebay search past
items sold

The screenshot shows an eBay search results page for 'apple white polo'. The search bar at the top contains the text 'apple white polo'. Below the search bar, there's a filter menu with options like 'Price', 'Condition', and 'Delivery Options'. The main content area displays three search results. The first result is a white polo shirt, the second is a 'Carplay car smart box', and the third is a 'KUNG FU DO T-SHIRT mma ufc layout'. Each result includes a thumbnail image, a title, and a price.

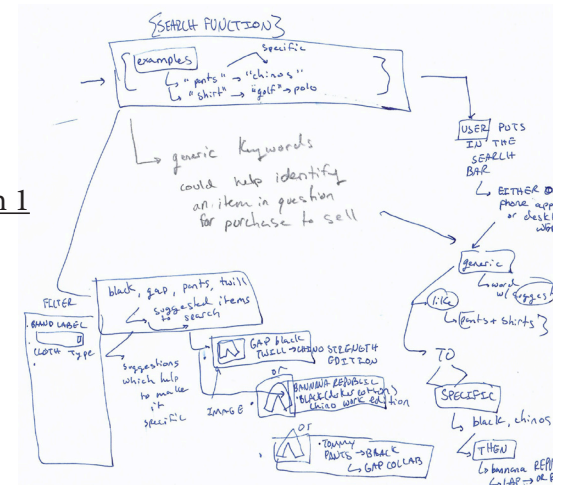
Current Services?

Current solutions an emerging user may seek to solve this lack of information concerning clothing items value and time it takes to sell in a fast fashion world are sparse. But one resource is the self-described 'eBay compliant application', *watchcount.com* which serves to use eBay collected data and user submitted votes to organize past and current 'popular' eBay listings. Essentially, if one is knowledgeable about how clothes sell secondhand on eBay then this site is a tool for helping you keep track of current submissions. It's usefulness, then not for the emerging user but the one with experience who may find benefit in looking at upcoming sold items on eBay as voted on by and aggregated by users.

The second solution in the current space, is eBay's own sporadic and faulty past listings feature, where one is able to after selecting the option on the left side filter menu is able to look at recently sold items of the description entered in the search bar.

Source 17: watchcount example search

Sketch 1



Web-App Based Solution

One could easily believe that in this current climate, a new user debating weather not to purchase an item of clothing they are looking at thrift store in order to resell is can easily be at a lost with lack of assistance.

Thus, I wish to implement a web based application, where it can be accessed as a phone application or through the web browser. The user will then open up the site or app then be prompted with a search bar immediately. This is detailed in figure (sketch 1) which visualizes this process. Once, opened the user inputs either specific details on an item in question to be sold or gives very generic details of the item. The search bar then will give you suggestions as you type which will include small icons next to a listing variant. The process is mean to be quick for the user to the n identify their item in question.

Concept (2/2)

Listing Variants

Once a search is inputted in the search bar or a suggested is selected. A list of variants of the item which match the descriptive details inputted will be organized by relevancy or closeness to what the user inputted.

The user is then given the list of items which relate to their search, and off to the side to each item's listing icon, will several key points be highlighted as shown in figure (sketch 2).

These attributes to a listing include the following:

- Number of that specific item sold in the last 6 months
- Average listing price
- Average time item took to sell in the last 6 months
- platform item sold most on

All of which answer many of the possible questions a new and even experienced user may ask themselves when debating to purchase an item. It allows for concise and researched investments to not be beholden to those who invest much time analyzing these digital seller platforms to even the most casual user.

Sketch 2



Sketch 3



Once an item is selected its from the list variant selection, that specific item's seller specifications are visualized in a way to make the investing decision of an item fairly intuitive as seen in figure (sketch 3). This is complimented by the way the application gives recommendations for how the item should be sold. This is done by pulling data from all the established clothing resell platforms (like eBay, Depop, Grailed and Poshmark). As the app then picks the best price for the item to be sold at and which platform will be best for price and time it takes to sell. Furthered by the app's suggestion that the item may be losing its viability or 'trendiness' if not sold soon.

Works Cited

Primary Sources:

Source 1: Two Men's Shirts in Storage from Noah Sheldon (Jeremy Schneider @ June 30th, 2020)

Source 3: Interview with Noah Sheldon (Jeremy Schneider @ September 5th, 2020)

Source 18: Sketch 1, 2, 3 of Web Application Concept (Jeremy Schneider @ September 19th, 2020)

Secondary Sources:

Source 2: Example Posting of Noah Sheldon's eBay Store (<https://www.ebay.com/itm/193505906115> @ September 6th, 2020)

Source 4: "Thrift Shopping as a post-recession leisure and tourism pursuit" ([Tourism Today](#), page 21, Sept 6th, 2020)

Source 5: "Vintage Buying and the Online Marketplace" (source: https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://scholar.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1014&context=textiles_seminar @ September 6th, 2020)

Source 6: CNBC article on Re-Selling Clothes Online (source: <https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/16/35-year-old-has-made-over-100000-reselling-clothes.html> @ September 7th, 2020)

Source 7: Thrifting is a 'Utilitarian' Tool with 'Hedonic' Pleasure (source: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/cb.12> @ September 8th, 2020)

Source 8: Rise of Digital Second Hand Selling (source: <https://lutpub.lut.fi/handle/10024/129910> @ September 5th, 2020)

Source 9: Description of 'Fast Fashion' in Relation to Thrift Culture (source: https://library.ndsu.edu/ir/bitstream/handle/10365/23189/Meyers_Designing%20and%20Selling%20Recycled%20Fashion.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y @ September 5th, 2020)

Source 10: A generic online guide of how to be an 'Online Reseller' (source: <https://blog.bulq.com/reselling-basics/reselling-101-selling-items-online/> @ 6th, 2020)

Source 11: "From Rishes to Rags: The Sociology of Thrift Shopping Among College Students" (source: <https://arminda.whitman.edu/islandora/object/arminda%3A38620/datastream/PDF/view> @ September 8th, 2020)

Source 12: Mental Health Benefits of Thrift Shopping: (source: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/visuartsrese.40.1.0067> @ September 4th, 2020)

Source 13: Generic Guide on how to Avoid common problems as a 'seller' (source: <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/top-ten-risks-ebay-sellers-face-1140349> @ September 4th, 2020)

Source 14: Pile of Men's Shirts ready to be posted on eBay (source: Noah Sheldon @ September 7th, 2020)

Source 15: Leather Jacket which is being prepped to be posted on eBay (source: Noah Sheldon @ September 7th, 2020)

Source 16: Example of eBay search of a 'apple polo' (source: <https://ebay.com> @ September 19th, 2020)

Source 17: Example search on watchcount (watchcount.com @ September 19th, 2020)