

# MyCrap

## MyCrap Manual Version 1.1

Produced By: Online Connections For the JustLocal service

[www.JustLocal.com.au](http://www.JustLocal.com.au)

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Version 1.1 Release  
Released September 24, 2009

### Online Connections

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## 1. Preface

At Online Connections a few years ago we created a training to course to show businesses how to put their information on the Internet. One exercise was an online garage sale.

We always like the idea of an online garage sale. In fact we used the approach to sell our own excess items and we made more money using the approach than any other form of advertising we have used to sell our items, and that includes the thousands we have spent on advertising.

In our case we also gave away again as much as we sold. We would rather that our preloved items found good homes, than to have them be used as ground fill at the local tip.

We are now happy to make the same approach available for free to everyone.

## 2. Introduction

All of us have excess items at home which we could sell, swap, or give away.

Anyone who has tried to sell an item knows that advertising costs money, and often the item does not sell. It is said that 30-40% of items auctioned on the leading online auction site never receive a single bid. Every time an item doesn't sell the fees are still charged.

If the item is just a few dollars, then we feel we might as well forget it.

If the item is expensive, the advertising fees can become horrendous and there is still no guarantee of the item selling.

I would like to share a story with you.

A few years ago I used a similar approach to selling my excess items. One thing I did was to put a two line advertisement in the garage sale section of the local paper with a link to a web site.

The paper had a distribution of over 40,000 and a readership of over 80,000. With such large numbers it would not be uncommon for people to feel there should be a good response.

Each week for two weeks, twelve people visited my page. No one bought anything.

On the other hand we also sent out emails to our family, friends and contacts. The result from the email was better than any media advertising.

- With **MyCrap** we show you how to use what you already have and perhaps don't know.
- We give you a new and exciting way to sell your excess items.
- We show you how to advertise at no cost.
- We provide a program free of charge to help you get your items together
- We provide a program which produces output in a format suitable for the Internet.
- With **MyCrap** you can list up to 99 items (including pictures) per list.
- With **MyCrap** you can create as many lists as you like.
- With **MyCrap** you list your items for as long as you like using free space on the Internet.
- With **MyCrap** you can change, remove, or add new items whenever you like.

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**MyCrap** worked for us and it will work for you.

You have nothing to lose except your excess items, and plenty of to gain including money and some extra space.

### 3. System requirements

To run the **MyCrap** program you will need a computer running Windows XP or Vista and Internet Explorer.

We have tested modern computers and computers with older Pentium 100MHz processors, and the program worked fine, so it should work on the computer you have.

The **MyCrap** program enables you to view your information whilst it is still in your computer. You see the advertising just like the rest of the world will see it.

### 4. Downloading and installing the MyCrap program

The **MyCrap** program is available to download from our web site for free.

You don't have to pay any money for it. (It should be remembered the **MyCrap** program is copyright and is only to be used for private use and not given to others. If you want others to have a copy of the program let them know about the JustLocal web site [www.JustLocal.com.au](http://www.JustLocal.com.au).)

#### *Download and Install Visual Basic 6 runtime*

The **MyCrap** program requires the Visual Basic 6 runtime to be installed on your computer to run. Most Windows computers already have Visual Basic 6 runtime installed. If **MyCrap** doesn't run for you, you will need to download and install a copy of the Visual Basic 6 runtime.

Visual Basic 6 runtime is available from the Microsoft website.

#### *Installing the MyCrap program*

The **MyCrap** program does not need to be installed. All you need to do is to run the program.

You should save the **MyCrap.exe** program into a new folder. It is suggested you create a folder called **MyCrap** on your C: drive and copy **MyCrap.exe** to the folder C:\MyCrap. (The **MyCrap** program creates a couple of extra files when it is run and having the program in a separate folder keeps all the files together.)

### 5. Running the MyCrap program

To run the **MyCrap** program double click on the program.

The **MyCrap** program will now open at the main form.



Before you can use the program you need to set up a few things. This is done using the settings option.

Click on the button **1. Enter Settings**

Location to store pictures	
Folder	C:\MyCrap\Data

Contact information	
Name	Kelvin Eldridge
Email	info@JustLocal.com.au
Telephone	
Suburb	Templestowe
State	Victoria
Country	Australia
Postcode	3106

Additional information	
Category	General
Note	Please note items are only available to be picked up personally. We are not able to post items out.

Save Exit

### ***Location to store pictures***

The **MyCrap** application allows you to advertise your items complete with pictures and requires a location (folder) for you to place the pictures. I suggest using the folder C:\MyCrap\Data. This will keep your pictures and data in a separate folder.

In addition to the pictures there are two files which will be placed in this folder. The files are: mycrap.txt which stores all your information you have entered for the items, and index.html which enables you to view how your items will look on the Internet.

The suggested folder is C:\MyCrap\Data and will be created for you when you click on the Save button after you have entered all the settings. Clicking on Save also closes the form. Clicking on Exit closes the form but does not save anything.

### ***Contact information***

The contact details entered here become part of your web page so that others can contact you.

You can enter a contact name, email address and telephone number.

NOTE: The information entered here becomes public.

The Category will be used to enable people to put products into groups to make it easier for others to find. This has been designed into MyCrap as a future feature. For the moment there is currently only one category which is “General”.

### **Area information**

The area information lets others know roughly where you are. You should enter this information to help others to know whether you are close to them or not.

### **Note**

The note allows you to add extra instructions to your page. For example we only want people to personally pick up items. However it is your choice if you are also happy to post items out.

Click **Save** once you have completed all the required settings.

Click **OK**

If you don't want to save any changes click **Exit** to close the screen.

## **6. Enter items for sale**

Now that you have set up the application you are ready to enter your items.

There is however one thing you may wish to do first. You may wish to set up all your pictures so that you can assign the picture to the item as you create each item.

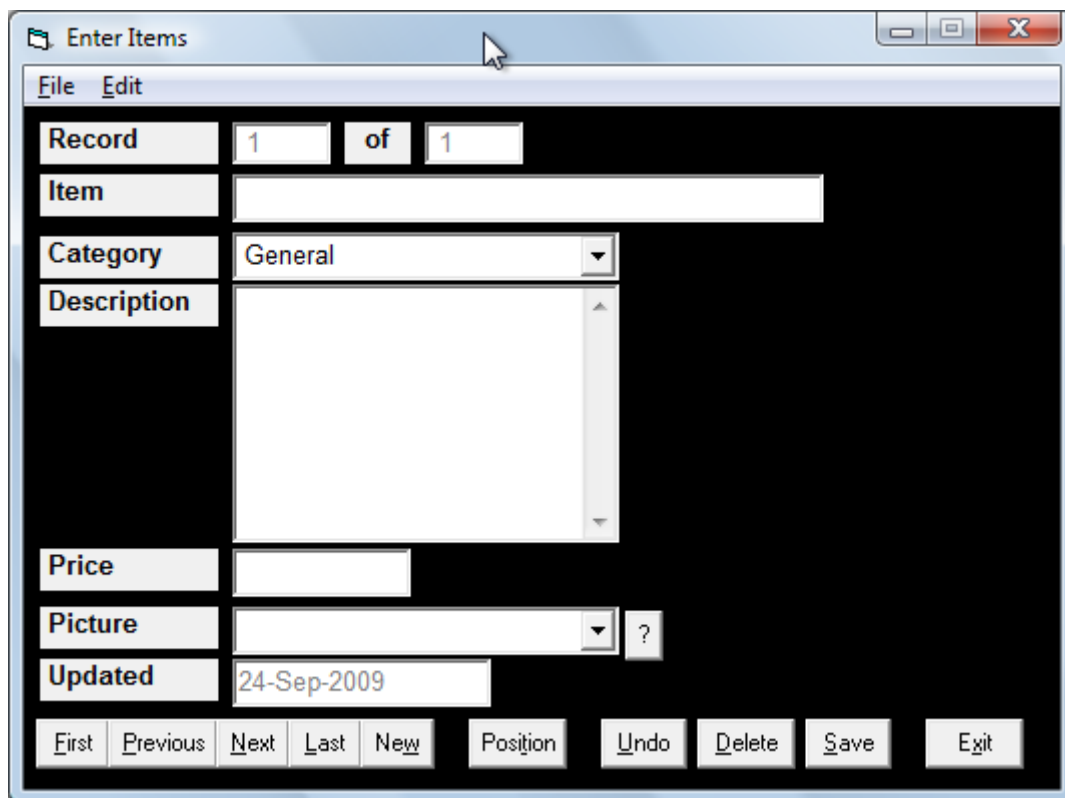
Which approach you take is up to you. I prefer to have my pictures ready first and have them already located in the picture folder. You can also enter your items and then come back and assign the picture.

You don't need to have pictures with your items. Some items don't need pictures. It does however help buyers get a better idea if a picture is available.

For more information on how to have your pictures in the correct format read the section “Working with pictures”.

Now you are really ready to enter the items.

Click on the button **2. Enter Items For Sale** on the main form.



The screenshot shows a window titled "Enter Items" with a menu bar containing "File" and "Edit". The form contains the following fields and controls:

- Record**: 1 of 1
- Item**: [Empty text box]
- Category**: General (dropdown menu)
- Description**: [Empty text area]
- Price**: [Empty text box]
- Picture**: [Empty text box] with a question mark icon to its right
- Updated**: 24-Sep-2009

At the bottom of the window, there is a row of buttons: First, Previous, Next, Last, New, Position, Undo, Delete, Save, and Exit.

You will notice that when we first open this form the computer has already completed some of the fields to save you some time.

The Updated field shows today's date. Each time you change an item, the Updated value is changed to today's date.

Because this information has started to be entered for you, if you want to exit this form without entering anything the first time, you need to press the Delete button at the bottom to delete the values. Then you can exit the form.

The following is an example of a completed item.

The screenshot shows a window titled "Enter Items" with a menu bar containing "File" and "Edit". The form fields are as follows:

Record	1	of	1
Item	Krosno decanter		
Category	General		
Description	A good quality Krosno decanter, never been used.		
Price	\$35		
Picture	decanter.jpg		
Updated	24-Sep-2009		

At the bottom of the form are the following buttons: First, Previous, Next, Last, New, Position, Undo, Delete, Save, and Exit. A photograph of a glass decanter is displayed on the right side of the form.

### **Using the MyCrap Enter Item form**

First we will show how to enter your information for an item. Then we will discuss the buttons which appear at the bottom of the form.

To save time before you enter items you may wish to create and save the picture files for the items into the C:\MyCrap\Data folder you have specified in the Settings. (It should be remembered you don't need pictures for items if you don't want. For example there is no need for pictures for a list of books.)

If you copy a picture file to the C:\MyCrap\Data folder after you have opened Enter Items form, you will need to close and reopen the Enter Items form to have the picture listed in the picture drop down box. (If a picture is more than 10K in size it will not be available in the list.)

For the first item you simply enter the information. For each new item you need to click on the New button. We will assume here that you are entering a new additional item after the first item.

Click on **New** to enter a new item.

The record numbers at the top tells you which record you are on and how many entries you have. You cannot change these numbers. They are displayed by the program.

You must enter **Item** which is a short description for the item you want to sell.

You need to select a **Category**. (Initially the only category you have is General.) Select the Category by clicking on the down arrow for the drop down box and select General.

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Enter the full description in the **Description** field. You can press Enter to insert a new line and assist in laying out your description. You have a limit of around 250 characters for the description.

Enter the **Price**. This can be any text and not just a dollar value. Eg. \$100, \$100 o.n.o., \$100 for pair etc.

Select the **Picture** file by clicking on the arrow on the drop down box.

The **Updated** date is changed automatically.

Now press the **Save** button and the picture will be displayed (if there is a picture), and the record saved. (Changes are also saved automatically when you move off the record, or by pressing the **Save**, **New** or **Exit** buttons.)

Also note that any blank records entered accidentally are deleted automatically when you exit the program.

You can also press **Undo** if you have made changes but have not yet saved the record. The undo will bring back the old record. The **Delete** button enables you to delete those items you have sold.

To change any records move to the record using the **First**, **Next**, **Previous** and **Last** buttons. Once on the record, make the changes you want and then press **Save**.

Remember, to create a new record press the **New** button.

Warning: Do not close the Enter Items form using the close button at the top right of the form without first pressing **Save**. The preferred method to close the form is to press **Exit**. Using the close button without first saving will lose the information you have entered.

Now repeat the above for each item you wish to sell.

It is a good idea to review each item and make sure everything you have entered is what you think you have entered. It is very easy to mistype something.

Once you have entered your items you can view what the web page will look like by pressing the option **3. View web page**. This will display your items as they will appear on the Internet.

NOTE: Your items are not currently on the Internet. The information is only in your computer. Whilst it looks like you are looking at a web page on the Internet, you are not. It is a web page stored on your local hard disk. You still need to copy your information to the Internet.

There are a couple of things to look for when reviewing how your list of items will look on the Internet.

- First proof read what you have entered. Make sure everything is correct.
- There are three columns. It is very easy to cause the columns to be too wide and thus make the layout look a bit ugly. This is caused by having long text without spaces. If you find the columns are too wide and ugly, go back and break up long strings of text by placing a space in the text.

For example you may have a part number like the following “Part number: 1234567890/abcdefghijklmop in the item. Put a space before and after the “/” to allow the text to break over a line.

If you make any changes click on the **Save** button and go back and view web page again.

Once you are happy, you are ready to copy your information to the Internet.

## 7. Copying your information to free space on the Internet

Up to this point everything you have done is local to your computer.

For others to see your list of items you need to make the information publicly available on the Internet.

The majority of Internet Service Providers (the company who provides you with access to the Internet using dial-up or broadband) provide free space for you to use. If you review their help information you will most likely find the instructions you need to copy your files to your free space on the Internet.

Because every Internet Service Provider has slight differences in how they do things, we can't document all the service providers. Your service provider will often have information on their site on how to load files to your free area.

If you make changes to your list of items don't forget to upload the changed files. If in doubt, upload everything again. If you delete items, you will need to delete the pictures from the Internet using the File Manager feature of Yahoo.

## 8. Working with pictures

One of the strengths of the **MyCrap** approach is the ease with which you can include pictures in your advertising. It does not cost any more to include pictures as it does with other advertising because MyCrap is free.

We all know the old saying, “a picture is worth a thousand words”. In fact we have noted from people's reactions that once they have seen a **MyCrap** site with pictures, they really don't want to list their items without pictures. However we recommend that even if you don't have pictures, you should still list your items. It is better to have a list without pictures than no list at all.

In this section we discuss how to use the built in facilities of Windows XP (the same applies to Vista) to edit your pictures so they are the correct size for use with the **MyCrap** program.

We want pictures to be small for two reasons. The main one is that people viewing your items do not want to wait for large pictures to download. If they want a larger picture they can always ask you for one.

People uploading pictures also get impatient when there is a long delay.

The size for pictures we selected is a good size to let people know what your are selling.

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The rest of this section gives some examples of how to size pictures for **MyCrap** correctly.

Firstly **MyCrap** only uses the jpg format which is the most commonly used format for pictures on the internet. This means that all picture files must be jpg files.

Most devices such as digital cameras however produce pictures which are far larger than needed to show others what an item looks like. In the **MyCrap** program we limit picture files to 10K in size and recommend a maximum width of 160 pixels.

This may sound like jargon and it is. However after a while you will become familiar with these terms.

Before we go on there is one thing we must emphasise. Always create a copy of any original pictures you may have in your computer and work on the copy. The reasons are: you may wish to keep the original copy untouched; if you make a mistake you can always take another copy and start editing the picture again.

Many digital cameras and mobile phones enable you to take pictures from a couple of megapixels to over 10 megapixels. That is a a lot of information resulting in very large pictures files. You can take pictures at whatever the setting is for your camera.

Copy the picture from your camera to your **MyCrap** folder. Rename the file so that it relates to the item you are selling. We suggest using all lower case letters for the file name. When pictures are loaded to the internet, unlike under Windows, the case of the letter matters. A capital letter is not the same as a lower case letter. Stick to all lower case letters and you will have less problems.

If you have taken the picture with the camera turned on its side to get a long picture instead of the normal wide picture, you will need to rotate the picture. You can do this as follows.

Open the picture using Windows Explorer. If you have no other image editing software loaded the picture will be open using the Windows XP Windows Picture and Fax Viewer program.

Click on the button at the bottom (8th button from the left) to rotate the picture and then save the picture using the button that looks like a floppy disk.

Close the Window Picture and Fax Viewer software.

Now we are ready to resize the picture.

Open the picture using Paint. We suggest using Paint under Windows XP as every Windows XP computer has Paint installed.

Let's first check out the size of the picture.

Select Image -> Attributes

Notice the width and height of the image. (Make sure the Units option is selected as pixels.

We can now reduce the size of the image. For this we do the following.

Select Image -> Stretch/Skew

We are now going to change the Horizontal and Vertical percentages to smaller numbers. We enter the same number in both as we do not want to distort the picture.

How do we know what percentage to enter.

The formula is actually very easy.

We want the final image to be 160 pixels or less.

Now for a wide picture 160 by the width in pixels by 100. For example if your camera took a picture of 2048 pixels wide this would be  $160/2048 * 100$ . This gives us a figure of 7.8.

We thus enter 7 in both the horizontal and vertical settings which means our picture is reduced to 7% of its original size.

Now save the picture and close Paint.

We need to check the picture is less than 10K (10,000) bytes in size or otherwise the MyCrap program will not accept the picture.

You can use Windows Explorer to view the size information for the picture or open the picture again using Paint and select Image -> Attributes and check the size. The Size On Disk value needs to be under 10,000.

This gives us a picture slightly narrower than the 160 pixels, but that is okay. You can see what the picture looks like in Paint and this is generally good enough to give a person an idea of what the item is.

## 9. Hints and Tips

In this section we share hints and tips we find out by ourselves and others using the MyCrap system and service.

### ***Use a copy of your picture***

We highly recommend that you use a copy of your original pictures and place these into the MyCrap folder.

When you delete an item you can also delete your picture. If you want to keep your picture keep a copy in another location.

### ***Running two or more copies of MyCrap on the one computer.***

There will be times when you might want to run two lists.

Place a second copy of the MyCrap program into a second folder with a different name.

Now run the MyCrap program but in the settings screen, set a different folder as the location to store your files. I would suggest creating the folder Data under the folder where you have the second copy

of the MyCrap program.

You can do this for as many lists of items as you like.

On the internet you will need to store each group of files in a different folder.

Let's say you have a list of toys you wish to keep separate.

### ***Having problems getting the picture the right size.***

The built in features of Windows XP for handling images is quite handy. We found however the same picture on two different Windows XP machines produces pictures of different sizes when saved. Don't ask us why.

A product called Gimp is free from the Internet and can be used to get pictures to be the right size. Once you have reduced to size in pixels, the next technique to use is to reduce the quality of the picture until the size is under the 10K. Pictures between 5-10K provide ample information for others to see what you are selling.

## **10. To close**

**MyCrap** is a FREE approach to selling, swapping, or giving away your preloved items.

You use the most effective marketing currently known, which is to let your own network of contacts and friends know about your excess items using email.

We hope you enjoy using the MyCrap program.

If you have any comments or feedback, please feel free to contact us. We love hearing from people.