

**Stamp Collecting on the Web.** The Internet has become a major source of information and materials over the past ten years.

Being stationed overseas at various times between 1968 and 2003 illustrates the change in my collecting habits and interest.

Initially, I would collect just the stamps from the locations the Navy sent me - but the last tour to Japan (1998 - 2003) the Internet really opened up the field - primarily by introduction of eBay, secure electronic fund transfer and various National Post Offices (Canada, UK, US, Israel, Germany and the UN to list a few) using the computer to sell their products.

Mystic Stamps, ads in Linn's and trips to the military and Japanese post offices could not compete with the variety and time required to "shop" for and collect stamps.

The Internet allowed one to actually look at an image of the stamp and use e-mail to ask additional questions. It was actually during this last assignment that my collecting habits grew beyond that of U.S. and Japanese stamps - I was able to look at offerings from hundreds of dealers in a short period of time. (As an aside, it takes a dealer five-six minutes per item to scan and match the appropriate catalog information in order to produce a listing and then he must upload these listings to the auction/store web server - just think how many man-hours of work it takes a dealer to move just a small inventory to the web).

The downside of this evolution is the ability to rely get to talk to the dealer and get to know him. The Internet can be very impersonal.

From its humble and often bumbling beginnings in the mid 1990's, the Internet will most likely become the major source of stamps, material and information for collectors as travel cost force dealers to reconsider which shows they will attend. This will affect us, as collectors, by forcing us to become computer literate if we wish to continue to expand our knowledge and collections.



Jun 16, 11:01:12 EDT  
23112 registered users  
139 users online now  
772367 live listings  
Total Items Sold:  
12613 (Jun) 35838 (May)  
508171 since Mar 1, 2005  
Select Your Main Site:  
-> StampWants.com <-  
-> CoinWants.com <-

**United States**  
Graded Stamps (7741)  
19th Century Unused (9548)  
19th Century Used (9967)  
1901-1940 Unused (26098)  
1901-1940 Used (10592)  
1941-Present Unused (48051)  
1941-Present Used (20658)  
Back of Book (20572)  
Coils & Coil Singles (10667)  
Confederate States (101)  
Covers (44748)  
Errors & EPOs (1408)  
Plate Blocks & Multiples (30767)  
Possessions (4342)  
Revenues (18934)  
Sheets (4320)  
Collections (U.S.) (1199)  
Other (U.S.) (2737)  
**Non United States**  
Africa (14002)  
Asia (28845)  
Australia & Oceania (20901)  
British Commonwealth (34823)  
Canada (47439)  
Europe (196428)  
Great Britain (UK) (20841)  
Latin & South America (34549)  
Middle East (12827)  
Worldwide (45549)  
**Other Categories**  
Publications & Supplies (1631)  
Topicals (267815)

A collector does not need to own an Internet accessible computer. Most public libraries have set aside Internet accessible machines for public use and offer computer familiarization courses. The user of a public computer needs to have additional knowledge of security before embarking on a web shopping trip. Again, the public library has information available on how to safely buy things on the computer.

Beside ebay (ebay.com), there are several websites that deal in philatelic materials. The biggest new one (and now offering many more items than eBay) is a site called stampwants.com. As a comparison, ebay had (2008 June 16) 41,000 US, 7,000 Canadian, 35,000 European and 87,000 other items (including 665 Egyptian). StampWants, the upstart, has 750,000+ listings - the US with 255,000, Canada 47,600, Europe 196,000 with Egypt coming in with 1,816 items.

An interesting outgrowth about StampWants is that it cost effective for the average collectors who are more into "trading" stamps - unlike eBay. Additionally, the number of "stamp shops" has increased dramatically over the last six months on the site (from 12 to over 100) as hobbyist take advantage of this new style of 'trading'.

One problem, with growth of sites, I (and others) have found, is some of the shops offer the same stamp on eBay and StampWants and lose track of inventory and proceed to sell the same stamp twice. This problem has gotten better as dealers migrate from one site to the another depending on fees charged by the auction sites.

**Information.** For just basic information on stamps, the following three sites are worth looking at:

<http://www.1847USA.com> - primarily an identification site for U.S. Postage Stamps from 1847 - 1970 but has a broad range of information on general stamp collecting.

<http://album.dweb.org/> or Jim's Stamp Album - a graphical presentation of a US stamp collection with a nice stamp search based on Scott™ numbers. He is complete up through 2007.

<http://www.virtualstampclub.com/> - The Virtual Stamp Club. This site is good for looking at new issues and general articles on stamps.

**APS Newsletter.** The APS has started e-mailing their monthly newsletter using a third party distribution source. If you wish to receive your own copy you can go to the URL:

[http://aps.informz.net/aps/archives/archive\\_100079.html](http://aps.informz.net/aps/archives/archive_100079.html),

and just below the date click on "share with another collector" and enter your information.