

## Etsy Gets Creative

Written by Dr. Karen Stollznow  
Friday, 14 December 2012 09:00

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D.J. Grothe [recently reported](#) that Ebay planned to prohibit sales of many paranormal services, including spells, curses, prayers, and healing. Of course, this was easier said than done. In a quick search of Ebay plenty of woo can still be found, including a Time Machine, a Deluxe Quantum Radio Amulet for ghost hunters, and an EBook that teaches you how to have sex with a succubus or incubus.

Some sellers use workarounds to avoid deletion, such as misspellings, or hedges that a painting is “possibly” possessed. For example, one seller offers a clown doll for \$450, with the header: “Is this clown haunted?” followed by the disclaimer:

*Ebay I am not saying that this particular clown is haunted, just saying it is similar to one that was.*

Craigslist users are in on the act too. Boulder’s “Eco Psychic” charges \$74 to channel the musician of your choice to compose a song for you. The seller claims he can communicate with a number of artists, including Paul McCartney, Billy Joel, Stevie Wonder or Dolly Parton (even though they’re not dead...)

Another ecommerce site that needs to clean up its act is Etsy.com, which is a kind of fixed price Ebay for arts and crafts. They specialize in selling handmade and vintage items, but which of these categories do love spells and penis enlargement fall under?

Etsy sells a large range of paranormal and pseudoscientific goods and services, including Wiccan, Voodoo and Santeria spells, amulets and talisman, ghost hunting tools and alternative medicine products. The ads make grandiose claims, without supplying any evidence that they will work in the way promised.

Etsy sells hundreds of unproven weight loss remedies. Who needs exercise and diet when you can simply wear a ring? Red Dragon Apothecary casts the spell of your choice onto rings, pendants and charms. For example, they sell a ring containing a spell that supposedly “assists in weight loss and overall health. It will help boost metabolism and flush out toxins.” Moonstone Dancer offers “Weight Watchers Oil” that you simply “Rub the oil over areas where you wish to rid fat”. The secret isn’t in the oil, let’s not be silly about this. The key is visualizing yourself as thin. “Visualization is MOST important, so make sure that you perform all of these while visualizing yourself healthy and fit.”

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Arcane Spells will “connect to your soul” during meditation, and “using your soul as a bridge, will “connect to your subconscious mind” and send energy that “will increase the metabolism of the body a lot. As a result, not only your body will burn fat at a very fast rate, but you will also have much more energy. The spell will continue it’s [sic] effect until most of the fat in the body is gone.” Not only will you lose weight, but “you will never gain weight again”. Even witches have BOGO sales. If you buy two spells, the seller promises to “send three times more energy”. Ironically, Arcane Spells reminds us to let the buyer beware, as “Most spellcasters on the internet are crooks”.

Papa Hoodoo sells hundreds of Hoodoo, Voodoo and Wiccan spells, but not as curios. The shop offers a necklace that when worn will “Increase your breast size, get firmer larger breasts, rid of stretch marks around breasts, get the nipples you desire.” Other spells will increase the size of your penis; give you “6 pack abs”, make you to gain hair in wanted places or rid your body of unwanted hair. A powerful ring contains:

*A WHITE MAGICK BUTT & THIGH ENHANCEMENT SPELL FOR MEN OR WOMEN~  
IMPROVES THE BOOTY GIVING A NICE ROUND BUBBLE BUTT , TIGHTENS LOOSE SKIN,  
REDUCES FAT OR CELLULITE, ENHANCES THE BOOTY IN AREAS YOU MAY NEED IT  
MOST!*

For \$124.95 the buyer can also be assisted with “gender sex change”.

*FEEL LIKE YOU WERE BORN THE WRONG SEX? ATTRACTED TO MEN NOT WOMEN?  
OR WOMEN NOT MEN? MAYBE JUST TIRED OF DEALING WITH THE OPPOSITE SEX?  
THIS SPELL CAN HELP TO TRANSFORM YOUR BODY & MIND FROM MALE TO FEMALE  
OR FEMALE TO MALE!*

Etsy is riddled with thousands of ads selling spells to attract love, fertility and money, and to banish or curse. There are “healing” herbs, oils and incense, and snake oil “cures” for PMS, prostate problems, baldness and much more. There are hundreds of homeopathic treatments, “healing” magnetic bracelets, “healing” crystals, and thousands of pendulums. There are “haunted” dolls, voodoo dolls and even a “Chiropractic adjustment doll”.

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Some of these dangerous products contain disclaimers that state these products are for “entertainment” purposes only, or that they are “not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent disease.” These are mere afterthoughts following their numerous claims and anecdotal evidence attesting to the efficacy of the product.

Etsy also has a questionable feedback system. Negative or neutral feedback for sellers is frequently deleted or hidden from view, while the sellers are still shown as having 100% positive feedback. Etsy doesn't appear to offer any consumer protection against dodgy sellers and their shonky products.

I encourage skeptics to flag these sellers and their individual products. At the bottom of each page there is a button to “Report this item to Etsy”. However, we can't rely on these companies to purge their sites of dishonest listings when they're profiting from the sales. However, we can submit complaints about these companies to the [Better Business Bureau](#) and the FDA's [Med watch](#)

. Join me in reporting these sellers, and making these ecommerce sites accountable for the useless and often dangerous products they sell.

***Dr. Karen Stollznow is a linguist, author, skeptical paranormal investigator and a research fellow for the James Randi Foundation. You can follow Karen on Twitter [here](#) .***