Subject: Why not...?
Posted by DOORAG on Tue, 27 Nov 2012 23:18:24 GMT
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Is there a way to find out how many people have purchased a certain item? If not, I think it would be a good thing to add to the website. Im interested to know what items are popular and how many people actually buy from shapeways... What do ya think?

Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by bartv on Wed, 28 Nov 2012 12:02:04 GMT
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The only place where you can see it now is on 'the Feed":

http://www.shapeways.com/feed

(Click on 'Discover in the top menu). To make an object show up there, just add it to your favorites (or order it

Cheers,

Bart

Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by Brick on Wed, 28 Nov 2012 19:31:29 GMT
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but it doesnt look like it actually shows # of times bought, which is what he is asking....does it?

Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by DOORAG on Wed, 28 Nov 2012 19:39:31 GMT
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yeah it just says when something is bought... I just think that it would be a good idea.

I'm sure I'm not the only one that would like to see this feature...

Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by stop4stuff on Thu, 29 Nov 2012 07:22:58 GMT
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I think you'd find that shop/model owners would need to consent to such data being released - I certainly expect to be asked before details of my model sales were made public.

Paul

stop4stuff Modeller for hireShapeways ShopTwitterYouTube

Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by bartv on Thu, 29 Nov 2012 15:13:58 GMT
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Ah right! So it turns out that only Shapeways employees can actually see the sales data on that screen

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Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by AmLachDesigns on Thu, 29 Nov 2012 16:03:22 GMT
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I can understand the privacy concerns being an issue and see no obvious way around them at the moment.

However, this thread touches upon some questions that I have been thinking on. The implication from the Shapeways site is that one can set up a shop and sell to the world, and this is clearly very attractive. Anyone who uploads a design that is printable can sell their product, in theory. But which designs are actually selling? In which material? In what kind of quantities?

So many of the featured designs, especially jewellery and home decoration items (think lampshades!!) while very attractive and unusual are eye-wateringly expensive and I suspect do not really sell. Presumably some items are selling though, and in decent quantities, and some hint of this information could help budding designers/shop-owners decide what products to aim for. If these products sell better then this would help spread the 3D word and hence the popularity/turnover of Shapeways. A truly virtuous circle.

Just my 2 cents...

Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by stonysmith on Thu, 29 Nov 2012 17:17:06 GMT
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Small counter-point for consideration: rather than people targeting cloned sales of "what's popular".. I contend that the sucess of Shapeways so far is that people can focus on designs they are passionate about.

Don't chase the money.. chase the passion. You'll live happier.

Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by mkroeker on Thu, 29 Nov 2012 17:40:41 GMT
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Well, you can sort "by popularity" within the categories, though it is (perhaps deliberately) unclear whether this is measured in terms of sales, favorites or page views.
On the other hand, what good would it do if you learned that the top shapeways sales were in the $140-170 price range, and were a graph of some lesser-known mathematical function, a WW1 fighter plane in 1:144 , an accurate model of some dinosaur, an intricate puzzle and a 1930s
narrow-gauge locomotive ? (All these data completely made up for the sake of argument).
You would not want to change your style or subject area just to squeeze into that same niche. Better put up a few variations of your own designs and just see for yourself which of them sells best.
(About the expensive lampshades i am actually not sure - some people spend $400 on a plain table lamp - e.g. the Bauhaus-era designs by Wagenfeld, and the markup on a single such lampshade will probably equal that of a hundred simple ornaments or bracelets)

Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by stop4stuff on Thu, 29 Nov 2012 17:53:33 GMT
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stonysmith wrote on Thu, 29 November 2012 17:17Small counter-point for consideration: rather than people targeting cloned sales of "what's popular".. I contend that the sucess of Shapeways so far is that people can focus on designs they are passionate about.

Don't chase the money.. chase the passion. You'll live happier.

Too right!

Shapeways is not about 'what has been done', Shapeways is about 'what can be done'!

Paul
stop4stuff Modeller for hireShapeways ShopTwitterYouTube

Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by Brick on Thu, 29 Nov 2012 18:24:46 GMT
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for me, I am just curious as to the sales because I want to know whether it's worth the time and effort to try and build and sell stuff. i.e. Can you make decent money at it...

so if i had an idea of what the top products sold per week, that would let me know whether this could be a secondary income, or whether it's just something for fun, to build stuff for myself from time to time.

i know it can depend on how much work i put in on getting the word around on my products, but I was wondering more about how Shapeways own advertising alone would impact sales of the top products. i.e. if that could earn enough to make it a second income

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Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by DOORAG on Thu, 29 Nov 2012 18:37:08 GMT
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That was the reasoning behind my interest in it also.

Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by stop4stuff on Thu, 29 Nov 2012 19:07:18 GMT
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If your objective is to compete in a market, then yes, stats of what has gone before are very helpful in lining one's pocket.

However, if your objective is to make money through presenting unique designs created via 3D printing then those stats mean nothing.

There are established traditional markets that 3D printed models can compete with such as

various scale model trains, rolling stock and gerenal scale accessories to fit.

Jewellery also has its place, some designs would be far too expensive to recreate the master every time.

Now here's the kicker...

One design may take 5 hours to create, $50 to buy in the print (for photographing, videoing etc), but that one design can go viral and earn a year's money in one week.

However, it happens that Shapeways has a pretty good business model and the returns from that 5 hours of your life & $50 spent are pretty much endless.

Do some research into the kinds of models that go viral from Shapeways (hints, they're quirky, one off's, 'why didn't I think of that' s) and the research the designers of aforementioned results - and you found the niche.

Rather than 'What things sell?', shouldn't the question be 'What are people looking for?'

Shapeways is here for all to turn dreams into reality

Paul

stop4stuff Modeller for hireShapeways ShopTwitterYouTube

Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by DOORAG on Thu, 29 Nov 2012 19:19:59 GMT
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I like what you said stop4stuff and I agree with you. I just heard about shapeways recently and just was curious to know whether people are just posting things witout anyone really buying or if there really was a significant sales rate as well, regardless of if you want to make money or not.

Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by stonysmith on Thu, 29 Nov 2012 20:37:38 GMT
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On the other side of the coin, I don't mind sharing a few statistics from my shop.

Of the 235 items in my shop, 36 have never sold. Interestingly enough, most of those unsold items are enlargements or changes requested thru members of the Shapeways forum that never turned into sales, many due to price expectations.

For the core set of models (the other 200), I've sold over 3,500 in three years, and the total markup collected so far doesn't equal ONE of my monthly DayJob paychecks. (I think I'll keep my day job.)

From my shop, 5 models have sold more than 100 units, 40 models have sold more than 20 units each.

The two models yeilding the highest total markup to date have been:
Rebel Switcher ($112 in markup so far)
GM Fishbowl Bus ($110 in markup so far)

Some of the models I have took as many as 40 hours to draw. If it has netted me only $100 in sales, that means I'm making about $2.50 per hour. There's a bunch of models that have only netted me $5 total markup... that's about $0.12 per hour.

I Think I'll Keep My Day Job.

But... never misunderstand me.. working with Shapeways and offering these items has been EXTREMELY rewarding. I get an incredible sense of fulfillment when I see one of my items sitting on someone's train layout.

And, the markup I've collected so far has helped me amass quite a little pile of items here on my own train layout. For me, that's what it's all about.

Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by DOORAG on Thu, 29 Nov 2012 21:15:31 GMT
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Thank you for sharing that information. What program do you use to make those?

Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by stonysmith on Thu, 29 Nov 2012 23:24:59 GMT
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I used Truespace for the two models linked above.

A tutorial showing my methods is available on my website

Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by Brick on Fri, 30 Nov 2012 04:20:30 GMT
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thanks for sharing your stats. I also enjoyed your tutorial from your website. Cheers!

Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by AmLachDesigns on Fri, 30 Nov 2012 08:38:27 GMT
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Yes, thanks indeed for sharing, most informative.

To clarify my position I love the process and the capability that Shapeways allows. To be able to imagine an object, create it on my computer, upload it and get it printed and in my hands a few weeks later is truly exciting. (Ok, sooner would be better...) I have made things for a friend, jewellery for my wife and I have had a real thrill out of that.

But this discussion, I thought, was about the commercialisation of one's ideas and in that case this information is not just about 'can I copy someone else to get a product that sells' but is the whole process worth it in the first place. In order to sell something you cannot really just use a 3d render, especially if it is a costly item, and so you need a print to photograph. And perhaps your first attempt is not quite right and so you need to tweak it and need another print. And if your product has a range of versions or can be shown off in several materials you need more prints.

So this is where the info becomes useful. If my design costs 3 usd to print, sure I will get a version of each and every variation and not worry about design iterations. But if it costs 400 usd for a print I will only get it printed for myself, once, assuming that I want it in the first place and have not designed it as something that I think other people will like. Unless I firmly believe that such things do actually sell off Shapeways.

I suppose my essential question is, apart from the Klondike designs which go viral is the shop side of Shapeways a "look I've designed this cool and unusual thing - would you like to buy it?" sort of thing or a real way of selling stuff?

Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by stonysmith on Fri, 30 Nov 2012 18:54:32 GMT
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80% or more of my sales are generated because I actively particpate in an online community dedicated to Z scale model trains. (www.zcentralstation.com)
There, the guys are constantly twisting my arm for specific designs, and I get pretty steady sales from the members and the people they tell outside the site.

I'm not saying that you're going to be able to find a community that is interested in lampshades (or whatever), but you might look around a bit.
Marketing is not my thing. I just keep repeating: "I'm not in sales."

My passion is creating the models.

Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by stop4stuff on Fri, 30 Nov 2012 21:31:53 GMT
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AmLachDesigns wrote on Fri, 30 November 2012 08:38Yes, thanks indeed for sharing, most informative.

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of Shapeways a "look I've designed this cool and unusual thing - would you like to buy it?" sort of thing or a real way of selling stuff?

You've been a Shapeways member for over a year and still not worked it out?

DOORAG (the OP) asked about numbers from Shapeways, you thank people for info and yet question the viability of using Shapeways for selling... huh?

In your time as a member of Shapeways, there has been some major investment into Shapeways. Shapeways have established their New York office. Reached the milestone of 200,000 members, no doubt there's some duplicates (I have a 2nd account). And Shapeways, imo, are not that far away from becoming a household name (give it maybe 9-15 months).

Any business, whether bricks & motar or on t'interweb has the opportunity of making money in the first year, the majority don't.

If money is your thing, treat your Shapeways shop like any other business. Do your market research for the product you wish to create or create the market for the product you have made. Either way, you'd be looking at promoting something. Rewards come from effort and all that.

Unless you have the established artistic/design background and a following then Shapeways is not going to be a easy ride, however if you have the vision that every single model that you upload for yourself is going to add to the residual income pot then the expectaion is going to be somewhere within the realms of that vision - not really anything that can be planned for, but with the right market (exsisting or created) some kind of return can be made.

Incidentally, I achieved my wife's monetary objectives just by plodding along. Shapeways is working out ok for me the wife. So if I can so that, you can do whatever it is you need to do to meet your goals And I am reallistic enough to know that my visions come nowhere close to the likes of Bathsheba, Virtox, Nervous System...etc...etc...etc

Paul

Subject: Re: Why not...?
Posted by lensman on Tue, 11 Dec 2012 13:11:09 GMT
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To expand on what Paul (@shop4stuff) said earlier I liken the Shapeways model to that of micro stock photography sites. iStockPhoto.com really broke the mold back in the early 2000's when

they introduced a website where anyone with decent photographs could upload them and make them available for anyone to purchase for $1. You, the photographer, received I think it was 15 cents per sale. Doesn't seem like a lot, does it? But as some photographers (i.e. ordinary people not in the photo biz) uploaded hundreds and then thousands of photographs, each receiving 15 cents per sale, it really started to add up. Prior to this a genuine photographer (i.e. NOT an ordinary person) had to either bust his/her hump trying to flog photo's with a huge amount of marketing, or try and join one of the very exclusive and demanding stock photo companies of the day.

Does that mean that every Tom, Dick and Mary, suddenly went out and bought a camera just so they could get in on the action? No. But what it did mean is that for those with an artistic bent and good photo's iStockPhoto made it possible for the everyman to realise his or her dream of earning money to pay for the hobby, earn a second income, or, as some have done, make it their full-time income! The key is, though, that the PASSION was there and now a perfect outlet opened up...

This, of course, applies equally to Shapeways. For those with a passion for designing and making things this company has given us the opportunity to pay for their hobby, or for a limited few earn a second income. I doubt anyone YET is earning a full-time income, but it isn't beyond the realms of possibility.

What do I see for the future? As 3D printers become much cheaper with fantastic quality the demand for buying actual 3D printed items will drop somewhat - to be replaced by websites where homeowners with printers can buy 3D FILES to be printed as they wish (i.e. just like iStockPhoto). Again, another market for designers...

To repeat what stonysmith said - Don't chase the money - Chase the passion.

Glenn