

Home > Games > Magic > Magicthegathering.com > Columns



Buying on a Budget

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Building on a Budget
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hello everyone, and welcome back to Building on a Budget '07! What's new and improved from '06? Building on a Budget now comes with 117% more polls!

More Polls?

- Yes!
 - No!
 - Maybe So!
- Submit my Vote



Here at the Building on a Budget Institute for Higher Learning, we receive many e-mails. The most frequently asked question at our organization is if we know a cheap, online source for Viagra. Not taking into account spam mails, though, a question posed quite often is as follows:

"Dear Ben Bleiweiss,
I found your articles very informative and impressive. I also found out that event tickets do more than get one into tournaments/leagues, but that you can trade them for cards too. How do I go about doing this on *Magic Online*?"

In today's article will deal with two essential questions – how do I buy/sell cards for tickets using *Magic Online*, and how can I get the best prices possible? For all ye faithful, don't worry – this week's article is just a brief detour before I get back to, you know, Building Decks on a Budget. I just felt that it was important to show people how and where to get the best values on *Magic Online*, given that a lot of people have had problems finding cards for the same ticket prices as I've found when I'm playtesting my decks.

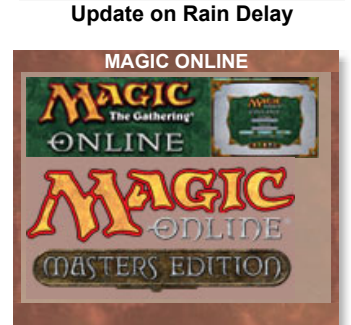
Seriously, next week – the most demanded precon evolution of all time! This week? Finding cards on a budget.

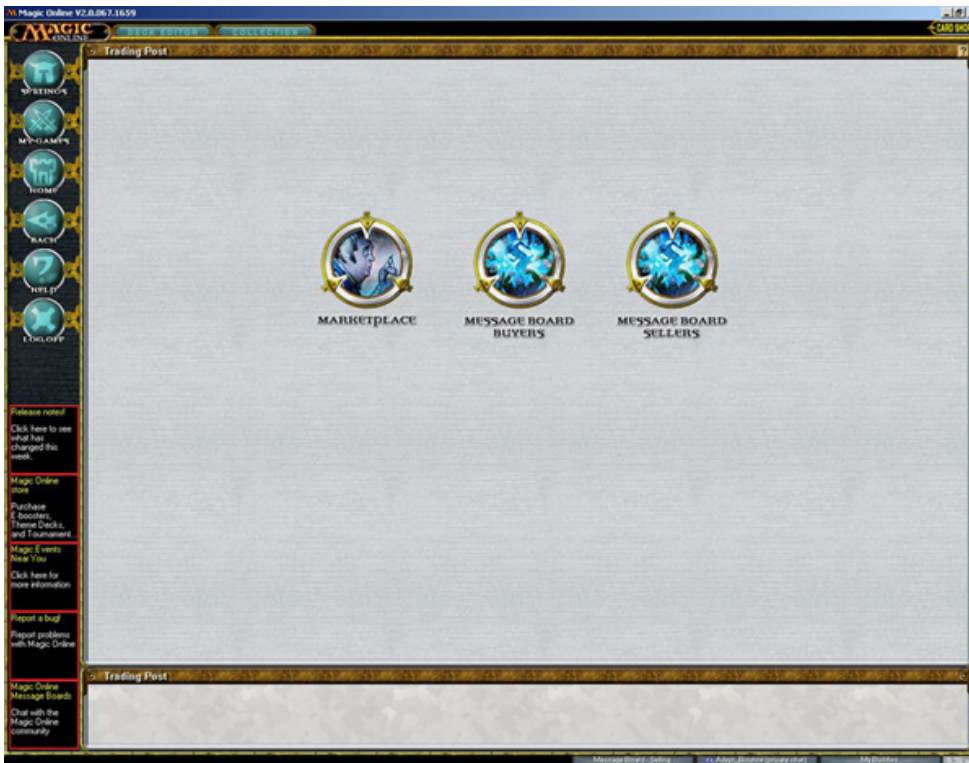
When you log onto *Magic Online*, you're greeted with one of two screens:



The first thing you want to do is make sure that you have the Expert Player View on your screen. It is the picture on the right. If you are in New Player View, simply go to the pull-down menu on the upper-right hand corner of your screen, and change the mode to Expert Player View.

On the left side of your screen, you'll see an option called Trading Post. Clicking on that will bring you to the Trading Post screen.





The Trading Post

This is the main hub of business and commerce for **Magic Online**. You'll notice three options here – Marketplace, Message Board Buyers, and Message Board Sellers. The two we are concerned with are Message Board Sellers and Message Board Buyers. Let's take a look inside!



Message Board Sellers

Here is the main place on **Magic Online** to buy cards for event tickets. You'll notice there are three components to the screen – the window that shows who is selling what, the Search line, and the Message line. The Message line is where you'd post what you want to sell, and we're not concerned with that function for this article, so let's skip straight to the window and the Search line.

The Window: This is where you can see the prices (in tickets) and availability of cards. In this particular screen shot, we can see several different people selling cards. Some list generic rares at 2 for 1 ticket. To see which cards they have for sale, you need to right-click on their name

and select the Trade option. Other **Magic Online** users list specific prices on cards.

Now, you don't just want to jump in and buy the first card you see! This is where the Search feature comes in. Let's say you are looking to buy a playset of **Flagstones of Trokair**. Type in "Flagstones" in the search field. This will highlight the first instance of someone selling "Flagstones" in their message. Each time you hit return in the Search field, you'll go to the next instance of someone having "Flagstones" in their message. Using the right progress bar on the side of the message window (the one that shows how far you've scrolled up/down in that window), you can go all the way to the end of the message boards, and then back to the start again, using this method. When I searched, I found prices as low as three and as high as five tickets on Flagstones, with all denominations in between (four tickets each, two for seven, two for nine, and the such).

If you're in a rush to get the cards you want, just search for the person selling the cards for the cheapest ticket price, and go ahead and buy them. This is not, however, the cheapest way to get the cards you need! Let's go ahead and take a look at the other message board in the Trading Post: Message Board Buying.



Message Board Buying

Looks pretty identical to the Message Board – Selling screen, no? On the buyers boards, people post the prices they are willing to pay for cards, and then they wait for other **Magic Online** users to sell them the cards for tickets. One method you can use to acquire cards is to get a bunch of tickets, make them tradable (remember to do this!), and then post that you are buying cards for the same price as others in the Buyer room.

A quick glance shows that the same **Flagstones of Trokair** that sold for three tickets in the Selling room has a buy price of two tickets in the buying room. All those people selling Flagstones had to have picked them up somewhere, and chances are they bought them in the buying room for two tickets each. What's to stop you from doing the same? Nothing!

To advertise that you are buying a particular card for tickets, use the "Message" line on the Buying screen. The common format is "Buying: Card X (for) Y (tickets)." For instance:

Buying: Flagstones of Trokair 2

To make the nice bubble letters you see on the screen, hold down the Control and Q keys on your keyboard at the same time, let them go, and then type the number you want. This will make a nice looking number that stands out a little more than a regular number.

By setting yourself up as a buyer rather than going to sellers, you can save yourself a lot of tickets in cards over the long haul. I'd rather wait a couple of hours to pick up a playset of **Flagstones of Trokair** for eight tickets than get them right away for twelve tickets. If you pick up a ton of singles through this method, you'll quickly notice the savings.

There are a couple of other places to buy cards for tickets on **Magic Online** – the Trading Post Marketplace is where some sellers bark out their wares, in an ever cascading list of "Selling This" or "Buying That!". Sometimes the scroll in that room goes too fast to keep up with, but every now and then you can find a good deal (or

advertise your buy price if you're looking for a certain card). There's also the auction room (type "/join auction" (no quotes) from any room that has a chat screen), but I haven't had many experiences with that room – perhaps my ever-vigilant forum peoples could chime in about their experiences with that self-policed feature?

As a special feature over the next few weeks, I'm going to be going set by set and pointing out the cards that make great additions to any budget deckbuilder's portfolio. I'll be separating the cards into two categories: Essentials and Specialized. This basically means as follows – the Essentials are cards that, if you're playing that color, you'll probably use over and over again. Examples of Essential cards are [Naturalize](#), [Volcanic Hammer](#), and [Izzet Boilerworks](#).

Specialized cards are cards that aren't at universally played as Essential cards, but have their uses. Examples include [Warp World](#), [Mark of Eviction](#), and [Chastise](#).

This week's set? *Ninth Edition!* I'll list the cards by color and note whether they are Essential or Specialized. I'll also include the average price of the card using the Buyer board on [Magic Online](#). If a card is listed as bulk, it means you can usually find it using a person who sells rares at 2 or 3 per ticket, or Commons for 16 for a ticket or Uncommons 8 for a ticket. Remember, since this is Building on a Budget, I will only list cards that cost two tickets or less on this list.



Please also note that this list is by all means *not* all inclusive, and is solely my opinion and not that of Wizards of the Coast. These are prices I found just by searching the Buying/Selling room using [Magic Online](#), and these prices might or might not change at any given moment if a card becomes hot/cold. On the other hand, these are cards that I would personally hunt down if I were looking to start a [Magic Online](#) collection from scratch and/or enhance my current [Magic Online](#) collection. [Worship](#) for 1 ticket each – who wouldn't want four for four tickets?

White

- S** Chastise (Bulk)
- S** Circle of Protection: Black (Bulk)
- E** Circle of Protection: Red (Bulk)
- S** Gift of Estates (Bulk)
- S** Glorious Anthem (1 Ticket)
- S** Ivory Mask (1 Ticket)
- E** Pacifism (Bulk)
- S** Sacred Ground (1 Ticket)
- S** Soul Warden (4 for 1 Ticket)
- S** Story Circle (1 Ticket)
- S** Suntail Hawk (Bulk)
- S** Weathered Wayfarer (1 Ticket)
- S** Worship (1 Ticket)






















Blue

- S** Annex (4 for 1 ticket)
- E** Boomerang (Bulk)
- S** Clone (Bulk)
- E** Confiscate (4 for 1 ticket)
- E** Mana Leak (4 for 1 ticket)
- S** Remove Soul (Bulk)
- E** Rewind (4 for 1 ticket)
- E** Sleight of Hand (4 for 1 ticket)
- S** Temporal Adept (Bulk)
- S** Thieving Magpie (4 for 1 ticket)
- E** Tidings (2 for 1 ticket)
- S** Zur's Weiriding (Bulk)

Black

-  Blackmail (4 for 1 ticket)
-  Coercion (Bulk)
-  Cruel Edict (2 for 1 ticket)
-  Dark Banishing (Bulk)
-  Execute (Bulk)
-  Festering Goblin (Bulk)
-  Grave Pact (1 ticket)
-  Gravedigger (Bulk)
-  Hell's Caretaker (2 for 1 ticket)
-  Lord of the Undead (2 for 1 ticket)
-  Megrim (4 for 1 ticket)
-  Mindslicer (2 for 1 ticket)
-  Nantuko Husk (4 for 1 ticket)
-  Nekrataal (4 for 1 ticket)
-  Persecute (2 tickets)
-  Ravenous Rats (Bulk)
-  Royal Assassin (1 ticket)
-  Slay (Bulk)
-  Underworld Dreams (1 ticket)
-  Unholy Strength (Bulk)
-  Will-o'-the-Wisp (2 for 1 ticket)
-  Zombify (2 for 1 ticket)

Red

-  Anarchist (Bulk)
-  Blaze (Bulk)
-  Blood Moon (1 ticket)
-  Boiling Seas (Bulk)
-  Demolish (4 for 1 ticket)
-  Flashfires (Bulk)
-  Form of the Dragon (2 for 1 ticket)
-  Furnace of Rath (2 for 1 ticket)
-  Goblin King (2 for 1 ticket)
-  Guerrilla Tactics (Bulk)
-  Kird Ape (2 for 1 ticket)
-  Magnivore (1 ticket)
-  Orcish Artillery (Bulk)
-  Pyroclasm (2 for 1 ticket)
-  Raging Goblin (Bulk)
-  Rukh Egg (2 for 1 ticket)
-  Seething Song (4 for 1 ticket)
-  Shard Phoenix (2 for 1 ticket)
-  Shivan Dragon (2 for 1 ticket)
-  Shock (8 for 1 ticket)
-  Stone Rain (8 for 1 ticket)

- S** Sudden Impact (Bulk)
- S** Threaten (Bulk)
- S** Viashino Sandstalker (bulk)
- E** Volcanic Hammer (8 for 1 ticket)
- E** Wildfire (2 tickets)

Green

- S** Blanchwood Armor (4 for 1 ticket)
- E** Creeping Mold (Bulk)
- S** Early Harvest (1 ticket)
- S** Elvish Champion (1 ticket)
- S** Elvish Piper (2 tickets)
- S** Emperor Crocodile (2 for 1 ticket)
- S** Force of Nature (2 for 1 ticket)
- E** Giant Growth (Bulk)
- S** Greater Good (1 ticket)
- S** Hunted Wumpus (Bulk)
- E** Llanowar Elves (4 for 1 ticket)
- E** Might of Oaks (2 for 1 ticket)
- S** Natural Affinity (2 for 1 ticket)
- S** Overgrowth (Bulk)
- E** Rampant Growth (Bulk)
- S** Reclaim (Bulk)
- S** Seedborn Muse (2 for 1 ticket)
- S** Silkclash Spider (2 for 1 ticket)
- E** Utopia Tree (1 ticket)
- S** Verdant Force (1 ticket)
- S** Verduran Enchantress (2 for 1 ticket)
- E** Viridian Shaman (4 for 1 ticket)
- E** Wood Elves (8 for 1 ticket)

Artifact

- E** Bottle Gnomes (Bulk)
- S** Defense Grid (2 for 1 ticket)
- E** Fellwar Stone (Bulk)
- S** Howling Mine (2 tickets)
- E** Icy Manipulator (4 for 1 ticket)
- E** Loxodon Warhammer (2 for 1 ticket)
- S** Millstone (2 for 1 ticket)
- S** Ornithopter (4 for 1 ticket)

Land

- E** Quicksand (4 for 1 ticket)
- S** Urza's Mine (3 for 1 ticket)
- S** Urza's Power Plant (3 for 1 ticket)
- S** Urza's Tower (3 for 1 ticket)

See you all next week, and remember to pick up your events tickets using the **Magic Online** store for maximum security and satisfaction!

*Ben Bleiweiss has written about his obsession with **Magic: The Gathering** for over a decade. He's travelled the world because of **Magic**, both as a player and a writer. When not spending time playing **Magic**, writing about **Magic**, or thinking about **Magic**, Ben is employed by StarCityGames.com, where he works with **Magic** cards all day long. He lives with his wife in Virginia, and they sleep comfortably at night under their Orgg down comforter.*



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