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Special Report

Never Pay Too Much for a Comic Book

“How to Find the Accurate Value of any Comic”

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Welcome

Thank you for subscribing to Comic Book Secrets eNews and congratulations on downloading the special web bonus.

If you have not subscribed to Comic Book Secrets eNews and Subscriber Homepage, I highly recommend you do so to fully realize the potential of this book. The subscription is free and you can learn more by clicking below:

[Comic Book Secrets Subscriber Section](#)

The information presented here is the **first corner** of the **Collector Pyramid – Accurate Value**. This is the cornerstone of the entire pyramid, and will be used in every aspect of the Comic Book Secret's System.

The goal of Comic Book Secrets is to help you get the **most possible enjoyment** from the comic book hobby. As with any hobby, one of the main concerns for the collector is where to get the money to spend on their pursuits, and how to make the most informed buying and selling decisions.

At Comic Book Secrets I have developed the **Collector's Pyramid** – the three main areas at the core of any hobby. They are:

- **Accurate Value** – what is the **true, accurate** and **timely** value of the item in the marketplace without false hype.
- **Buying** – how to purchase collectibles at the best possible price, without getting robbed or taken advantage of.
- **Selling** – How to receive the **highest possible price** when you decide to sell.

The cornerstone of this entire program is this report which explains how to find the accurate value of a comic book.

This information is so important, I want every collector, speculator, investor, and even the person who has happened upon a comic book collection to have it –

ABSOLUTELY FREE!

The information you will get from this e-book will help you make **the most informed buying and selling decisions** at conventions, comic stores and online.

The information presented here is supplemented with more **value commentary** plus **buying and selling news and tips** in each monthly issue of Comic Book Secrets eNews and on the subscriber homepage. If you haven't subscribed, [click here](#).

Now, on to the information!

The Most Important Piece of Information

Whether you are buying or selling comic books, the first item you need, the foundation of everything, is knowledge. Specifically, knowing the accurate value of the comic book you are planning to buy or sell.

This e-book will teach you how to obtain this knowledge.

Knowledge is the cornerstone of your collecting/investing/speculating pursuits!

You need several pieces of information to make a decision on any comic book purchase or sale.

You need:

1. Knowledge of the important issues to collector/investors.
2. Knowledge of new comic books/movies that may increase demand.
3. Knowledge of back issues that may be affected by #2.
4. Knowledge of the scarcity of the issues you are interested in purchasing.
5. Knowledge of the grades that are selling for the highest price and quickest turnover.
6. Knowledge of the strategies that will maximize your return.

The previous six items are critical for online buying and selling success, but they all rest on **one foundation** – the cornerstone you must know – **the timely and accurate value** of the comic book you are interested in.

The key here is accuracy. Some of your comic books are actually worth pennies – worthless in the marketplace. But many of your comic may be valuable.

Without actual **up-to-date pricing information** you are **operating blind** and stand to **lose a lot of money** or walk away from an offer that is actually fair.

Up-to-date sales data will allow you to **set a limit for all of your purchases** because you'll have a good idea of the price you can realize when you sell the book.

Unsavory dealers and quick buck artists don't want you to know this information. They want to mask the true value of their comic books in slick marketing jargon, overcharge you, and move on to the next mark. Don't let it be you!

Up-to-date sales data will insure you don't sell for too low a price and let someone else make off with windfall profits at your expense!

These same derelicts of the comic book industry will then turn around and tell you how your comic books are worthless, are in terrible condition, and then walk away after purchasing your books for a song. Again, don't let this be you!

How do you protect yourself?

You need to arm yourself with knowledge about accurate value.

Where do you get this information?

The next section will tell you where to find this information, and then teach you the second most important item – how to use it.

How Comic Books are Described

If you're an advanced or novice collector, you can skip right over the next two sections and proceed to **Where to Find Accurate Pricing Information**. The next two sections are for beginners only.

If you are selling your comic books you need to give the following basic description so buyers will recognize the “standard” and not take you for an amateur.

Comic Books are usually described by title, volume (if applicable), number and grade.

For instance:

Amazing Spider-man #1 VG

Or

Amazing Spider-man #1 CGC 8.0

Or

The Punisher Vol. 2 #1 VF

Step One – Title and Issue Number

The first step in determining value is to know what specific book we are looking at.

In the case of Amazing Spider-man #1 VG, you would be describing the first issue of the comic book titled “Amazing Spider-man” (self explanatory).

In the example of “The Punisher Vol. 2 #1 VF”, you would be describing the second published series (Vol. 2) of the Punisher title. This is important because there can be a very significant difference in price between volumes.

You must know what series or volume you're talking about before you determine value.

Once you have the title and issue number, you determine the grade or condition of the book.

Step Two – The Condition or “Grade”

The second item is the grade or condition of the book.

This book is not a grading guide, so the information presented here is just a rough explanation for the novice of what a comic book “grade” is and what it means to this process.

Before we go on, let’s discuss two terms you are going to see.

Ungraded, “Un-slabbed” or “Raw” Comics

If you see one of the above terms, we are talking about the comic book as most of us remember. The comic is ready to be handled with no protective covering, or at most a plastic sleeve that you can easily remove.

The seller will assign a grade or condition based on their best judgment and experience. You could see a vast difference between what one person calls a “Near Mint” versus another.

If you see one of the terms above think of a standard comic book on the newsstand or in a removable plastic sleeve.

CGC, PGX, Professionally Graded or “Slabbed”

These terms describe a book that has been graded by a professional service, encapsulated in a protective plastic holder, and sealed with heat and a hologram stamp.

There are two main companies that provide this service, CGC and PGX.

CGC stands for Comics Guaranty, LLC and has been around the longest.

PGX, Professional Grading eXperts hasn’t been around as long, but still grades a lot of books.

The product is similar, and the differences aren’t important for our current discussion. Just be familiar with the terms.

Condition and it’s affect on value

How we use a comic book grade varies depending on if we are buying or selling (a topic for another book), but for our purpose we only need to know the basic definitions so we can arrive at an accurate value for the comic book we are interested in.

Outside of the importance of a specific comic book issue (for instance a Spider-man #1 versus a run-of-the-mill issue) the condition or grade is the most important criteria in determining price.

Small changes in condition from a NM 9.4 to a NM 9.8 can literally mean a sales difference of thousands of dollars.

The full details of how to determine a comic book's grade is more information than we can discuss in this book. If you want an in-depth lesson about how to accurately grade a comic book I recommend the ultimate resource, the Overstreet Grading Guide.

There are two grading scales being used today depending on if the book has been professionally graded or not.

A professionally graded comic book (labeled as CGC or PGX as described above) will be graded as follows:

Professional Grading Scale

10	Gem Mint	
9.9	Mint	(M)
9.8	Near Mint/Mint	(NM/M)
9.6	Near Mint +	(NM+)
9.4	Near Mint	(NM)
9.2	Near Mint -	(NM-)
9.0	Very Fine/Near Mint	(VF/NM)
8.5	Very Fine +	(VF+)
8.0	Very Fine	(VF)
7.5	Very Fine -	(VF-)
7.0	Fine/Very Fine	(F/VF)
6.5	Fine +	(F+)
6.0	Fine	(F)
5.5	Fine -	(F- or FN-)
5.0	Very Good/Fine	(VG/F or VG/FN)
4.5	Very Good +	(VG+)
4.0	Very Good	(VG)
3.5	Very Good -	(VG-)
3.0	Good/Very Good	(G/VG)
2.0	Good	(G)
1.5	Fair	(FR)
1.0	Poor	(Pr)

Books that are listed without professional grades are usually described in the following terms:

Gem Mint or Mint – Perfect in every way. No printing defects allowed.

Near Mint – A couple of very small, almost imperceptible flaws, a printing defect may be allowed (off-center, etc.)

Very Fine – Very nice copy, may have a few spine stress marks, slightly blunted corners, etc.

Fine – Blunted (rounded) corners, spine stress (but not heavy), flat without any **major** problem. Well read.

Very Good – Your average well-read comic book with spine creases, maybe some corner creases, minor spine roll.

Good – Creases, can have tape repair, spine roll, a large accumulation of defects.

Fair – Badly worn, can have pieces missing, but the book is still complete.

Poor – Major defects and can be missing parts of the story.

Comic books that haven't been professionally graded **may** be listed using the 10 point grading scale. What they won't have is the term "CGC" or "PGX" next to them, and the book will not be sealed in a protective holder.

Once you have the comic book title, issue and grade you can find the **retail** value.

Where to find Accurate Pricing Information

There are four places you can get your pricing information:

1. A print comic book price guide
2. A free online comic book price guide
3. A pay online pricing service
4. E-bay

Review of the Various Pricing Sources

Before you make any buying or selling decision, you **must** know the value of the comic book. To get this value, you need to have a system. This system must:

- Be easy to use
- Be up-to-date and accurate
- Include the specific books you are buying or selling, in the correct grades
- Be accessible

Let's look at how the four pricing sources measure up to these criteria.

“Print” Comic Book Price Guides

I use a print price guide, especially the “bible” of the industry – The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide.

But **I rarely use it for pricing data**. Instead I use it for research about the actual comic book issues and characters.

Why don't I use it for pricing?

As complete as the guide is, and it is a wonderful resource, the prices are arrived at by the input of comic book dealers. As you can imagine, there can be a conflict of interest in this area.

The second reason I don't use this as my primary pricing resource is timeliness. The guide prices can be months to over a year old by the time the book goes to print and a lot could have happened to affect values in the meantime.

Use the guide for research, but I suggest another source for timely pricing data.

Online Price Guide (Free)

There are a few good online price guides, but as they say, you get what you pay for. These guides can be okay for a quick price check. If you conduct an Internet search for “comic book values” you will find some of these free guides.

The other problem is accessibility. How are you going to access the value if you are at a comic book store or convention?

For our purpose, I don't use them - they are too unreliable and not easily accessible.

Online Price Guide (Pay)

The pay price guides are excellent resources and give **up-to-date, accurate information**. At least one is a must have if you are buying a lot of comic books, or if you are making a very expensive purchase.

You can buy short-term subscriptions if you only need the information for a limited time.

The two main pay services are:

[GP Analysis](#) – This site is very comprehensive with a great search engine. Highly recommended for the serious buyer/seller. It includes data from E-bay and several online auction services.

[The Comic Sheet](#) – this information is excellent, but released as an Excel spreadsheet so you need to know how to work with Microsoft Excel or another program to search. Comic Sheet is a little less expensive than GP Analysis. It only includes E-bay sales.

One downside to these guides (other than price) is they only show CGC (professionally graded) comic book sales. Un-graded comic books bring vastly different prices.

The other downside is accessibility. The Comic Sheet is more accessible because it uses a spreadsheet so you can create a printout of specific books. GP Analysis requires computer and Internet access.

Comic Book Secrets Recommendation - The Ultimate FREE Price Guide

What if I told you that you could have both CGC and raw comic book prices free?

Well you can, and the source is E-bay.

There are three reasons to retrieve prices from E-Bay.

1. It's FREE!
2. You can see CGC graded comics as well as ungraded prices (very important)
3. It's easy to set up a tracking system and records – this is the main system I use and I'll teach you how.
4. It meets our criteria – it's easy to use, it's up-to-date, will include the specific books we are interested in, and you can print out the data you need for easy accessibility.

Important Tools

First, if you aren't a registered user of E-Bay, make sure to sign up. It's free and you'll need to register to use one of the functions I will teach you.

You don't have to bid or pay, you just need to be registered.

[Click Here for your FREE E-Bay Registration](#)

Within E-Bay you will have the ability to track or watch auctions. This capability is free to any registered user.

While the E-bay tracking function is okay, it has limitations. I recommend a more robust solution. You have two options here, either store your data in a spreadsheet or list that you personally develop, or use a commercially available system. The choice is up to you.

The system I use is a program called Auction Tamer. If you don't use Auction Tamer, you will still follow the tracking steps I detail later.

Auction Tamer is a program that allows you to track auctions. It will update your auctions when you run the program and will keep a record of closed auctions.

It will also allow you to export your closed auction data to Excel.

There are both buyer and seller keys for the program, the seller key is more expensive. The buyer key is **very** reasonably priced.

As an added bonus Auction Tamer allows you to download the program and try it free for 14 days!

There are too many functions of Auction Tamer to go into here, but if you are interested in the program click on the link below.

I will explain how I use E-Bay in connection with Auction Tamer in the next chapter.

[Click Here to visit the Auction Tamer Website](#)

Basic Price Tracking

The basic steps for tracking the value of a comic book are the same whether you make your own spreadsheet or use the Auction Tamer program.

The steps are:

1. Open Auction Tamer or another tracking program.
2. Visit the Comic Book Secrets Subscriber Watch list or the E-bay main comic book page.
3. Click on the specific link at Comic Book Secrets or search on E-bay for the specific comic title and issue you want.
4. Click on the specific comic auction you wish to check for real time auction prices.
5. Click “Add” on the upper toolbar in Auction Tamer or input the sales information in your own spreadsheet or list.

It’s that simple! Now, armed with this information you have the beginnings of a list of **accurate comic book values**.

E-bay Price Tracking System for Auction Tamer or Program Users

Let me start out by saying you can use this system for any type of auction. I use it primarily for comic books, but I also use it for my own non-business pursuits in coins and hockey cards.

Current price tracking should be the cornerstone of any collectible buying and selling activity.

Since I use Auction Tamer, that’s the tracking system I’ll discuss. There are other programs; you’ll just have to decide what you prefer.

First, I open Auction Tamer and go to the Comic Book Secrets website. This website has all of the comics I’m watching and these come right out of Comic Secrets eNews. I track key issues that have a connection to an upcoming movie, new comic title, or important storyline.

On the watch list webpage I have a link to the search results on E-Bay for each important issue. I just click on the link to the book I’m interested in and watch the results show up in the Auction Tamer browser window.

Once the list is posted in the browser, I click on the auction I’m interested in. I read the descriptions, price, condition, etc. If I want to track the auction I click the “Add” button

at the top of Auction Browser. The auction is now added to the watch list and will be updated every time I open the program.

Once I have added an auction, I have a permanent record for reference in the future. I use this for both buying and selling.

[Click Here if you would like to try Auction Tamer](#)

Of course you can always open the special subscriber area or E-bay search page in your own browser and follow the links to see current auction prices. Then you can add them to your preferred tracking method.

Searching Past Auctions

When you check prices on E-bay, don't just look at the current auctions. If you want to see activity for the previous month, you can click on the "completed auctions" box on the left side of the E-bay page.

Click on one of the completed auctions and "add" it to your Auction Tamer or other list. If you are using Auction Tamer it will be moved immediately to the "closed" area for future reference.

You must be a registered E-Bay user to browse completed auctions. If you are not, follow the link below to register. Registration is free.

[Click Here for your FREE E-Bay Registration](#)

I have the Information, Now What?

Once you add the auction to your list, you have created a "price guide" for future reference.

I export the data to Excel for easy searching. Microsoft Excel has many powerful search functions and I use this for the newsletter and my own buying and selling.

Whatever method you use, make sure you check the current price of comics you are interested in buying or selling.

Current, accurate price data is the cornerstone of your comic strategy.

Armed with this data, you can use it to make sure you don't pay too much for a comic book you're buying, or accept too low a price if you're selling.

Remember, whether you are buying or selling, you need to have an accurate value to make the correct decisions!

Advanced Strategy

There will come a point when you need to make a buying or selling decision based on a book that isn't in your personal value list. In this case I use a pay service, such as GPAnalysis or Comic Sheet to help find the value.

This combination approach is very powerful, because you have a full range of values available to you, for both "raw" and "professionally graded" books.

If the book you're interested in isn't in your list, you can usually find it in one of the pay services. Although you'll only see CGC books, this information is still very useful.

This is the system I personally use because it covers the entire range of comic books. I'm never left in the dark for accurate and timely prices.

The Power of Accurate Value

Accurate value is the first piece of the pyramid, the cornerstone for all of your collecting activities. With this knowledge comes power – the power to make correct decisions.

Now you must use your accurate value information to:

- Avoid falling into the “hype” trap set by dealers and professional marketers. They’ll attempt to lure you into buying the next “hot” book that ends up being worthless.
- Avoid comics pitched as being good “investments” when they are really worth pennies.
- Know the maximum price you should pay for a comic book.
- Know the minimum price to accept when selling your comic books.
- Spot a great deal on a book that you can flip for maximum profit.
- Develop other strategies for saving or making money with your collection.

Many collectors go from item to item without any real knowledge of the value of a book in the marketplace. They buy into the “hype.” You now have the information to avoid critical mistakes and save money when buying and make money when selling.

How to Save Money Buying Comics

Now that you have an accurate value, use this information in all of your buying. This value will be used for purchasing back issues and new comics.

Buying Back Issues

You will use your value guide for all of your buying both online and offline. If you are buying online, I recommend E-bay.

E-bay will present you with some of your greatest discounts, and you can take advantage of a seller’s careless auction techniques.

If you aren’t an E-bay user, click below to sign up. Remember it’s free, and use the lessons learned here to find the accurate value before you click “bid” on any auction.

[Click Here for your FREE E-Bay Registration](#)

Buying New Comics

Did you ever hear the term “retail is for suckers”?

Well, that’s the case with new comics!

If you have a local comic book shop you like to frequent, ask if they have a discount for a monthly “pull list.” Any comic book shop worth their salt will have a discount.

If you prefer to have your comic books delivered to your door each month in excellent condition, there is only one place I recommend – Mail Order Comics.

Mail Order Comics offers steep discounts and excellent service. Nothing like getting a stack of mint books delivered to your door without every yahoo in the neighborhood thumbing through them.

[Visit Mail Order Comics and get up to 75% off Your New Comics](#)

Wrapping Up

You now have an important tool for buying and selling comic books. Whether you’re a collector, investor, or speculator you now have timely and accurate pricing data to aid your buying and selling.

In summary:

1. Sign up for E-Bay ([click here](#) to register if you haven’t)
2. Purchase (or try) the [Auction Tamer](#) program or make your own list.
3. Visit [Comic Book Secrets](#) to subscribe to the eNews and access the watch list.
4. Follow the instructions presented here for tracking auctions and creating a value guide.
5. Start buying using the money saving tips presented.
6. Start selling with the knowledge of what your books are **really** worth.

Don’t let this information go to waste. Start using it now to find the accurate value of your comic books.

Good Luck!