

Copious looks to be the eBay of the Facebook era

June 15 2011, By BARBARA ORTUTAY , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- A group of Silicon Valley veterans are building a shopping service around the idea that Facebook's real-identity system is good for building trust in online commerce.

Copious lets people see whom they are buying from and selling to.

Though it connects people through [Facebook](#), Copious isn't about buying and selling among friends.

Rather, it connects buyers and sellers based on their online identities. That way, someone shopping for bike parts or handbags can see if anyone they know has bought an item from a seller or if they are connected through a Facebook friend, friend of a friend or Twitter.

Copious also recommends items based on buyers' Facebook interests and other activities, rather than on previous items they have purchased, as they do on Amazon or eBay.

Copious isn't the first to do this. Oodle, started by former eBay and Excite execs, runs Facebook's Marketplace app, a social classifieds site that's trying to compete with Craigslist. Oodle has about 15 million monthly users.

While Oodle focuses on the [local market](#), Copious aims to be more of a social eBay or Amazon. That makes online shopping "more personal, relevant for buyers," said Jonathan Ehrlich, co-founder of the company

and former head of consumer marketing at Facebook.

Ehrlich, 42, was a co-founder of Mobshop, an early group-buying venture that died with the dot-com bust. He left Facebook at the end of 2010. Jim Rose, another co-founder, had served as Mobshop's CEO.

Copious plans to make money by taking a cut from the revenue that sellers make. For a short time, this will be 3.5 percent of the sales price of the items sold. Later it will be 10 percent. Copious won't charge a fee to list items.

Gartner analyst Van Baker said he likes the premise of Copious because one of the problems of buying from [eBay](#) or Amazon affiliates is that "you just don't know who you are dealing with or what kind of service you are going to get."

Sure, ratings help, Baker said, but most ratings are either highly positive or highly negative, with few in between. He believes Copious is a good idea, but its success will ride on whether people discover it and use it.

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