

Hello yarn store owner!

Thanks for taking the time to read this. The person who's given it to you recently took part in a poll on my website (you might know me as the author of 10+ books, including the Knitgrrl series, *Spin to Knit*, *Felt Frenzy*, *Alt Fiber* and more). After many respondents asked for additional information to give their LYS about selling digital patterns, I decided to write this for them to pass along.

Last year, I founded Stitch Cooperative, a sales cooperative designed to distribute patterns by independent designers directly to yarn stores, with no middlemen. I don't need to tell you that it is difficult to earn a living wage as a designer, and we also know what it's like to run a retail business – I myself co-own a shop in Cleveland, Ohio.

Stitch Coop was meant to bridge the gap, since we have so much in common! I talk to a *lot* of shop owners, and I know that many of you think the internet is the enemy. It doesn't have to be. With the digital pattern affiliate sales option we now offer in addition to our print sales, you can add our 100+ patterns to your shop without spending a dime on new inventory (or buying a **LOT** of new binders!).

You can learn more at <http://www.stitchcooperative.com/affiliate-program> or you can set up a general wholesale account with us, and page through our catalog of available patterns at <http://www.stitchcoop.com>

Thank you so much for listening. I've summed up the basics below, but you are welcome to send me any questions you might have!



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What's an affiliate program?

You can earn money on pattern sales through your shop's website, blog or email newsletter. When Stitch Cooperative was featured in the spring 2008 issue of *Yarn Market News*, shop owners told us they need a way to compete with the online pattern market.

How does it work?

Sign up for an affiliate account with Stitch Cooperative at stitchcooperative.com/affiliate-program. You don't need fancy shopping cart software, either, it's as easy as cut and paste. You can even use an HTML-enabled email program!

As an *aside*, I'm willing to bet that if you think you aren't able to handle the technology involved, that the person who brought you this letter would be willing to help you out – or we can point you in the right direction! Don't be shy!

Why should I sell online?

In a poll of 1178 online knitters at knitgrrl.com, an overwhelming percentage (**82%**) said they are more likely to buy PDF patterns than printed ones. Speed is their motivating factor – fully 69% of pattern purchasers say it is their primary motivation.

What will it look like?



Reboux hat, \$5



There are many options. You can include an image, or not. See one example at left. You also will get a detailed instructional guide for inserting any necessary HTML code and other help direct from us. (And if you don't already have a shop site, why not try a free solution such as wordpress.com? It's a great way to keep in touch with customers given today's rising postal rates).

Inside the affiliate program screen, you will easily be able to see how many items have sold and what your next payout will be. We handle all pattern updates and errata, and automatically re-send updates to everyone who has purchased that pattern if needed. Let us do the work!

How can I promote this program to earn more money? Can it help me sell other shop inventory, too?

There are so many ways! Here are a few ideas:

- Host a knitalong for a specific pattern at your shop. Newsletter subscribers purchase the pattern through the online link, then come in to buy appropriate yarn. Hold a knitalong kickoff party with snacks!
- Interview one of our designers on your shop site and feature her patterns in the post
- New yarn line? Write about it in your newsletter and include links to Stitch Cooperative patterns that feature the same yarn.

What about competing stores nearby?

When someone clicks on your link, it sets a cookie with your shop ID number on their computer for 6 months. The system recognizes that your store made the sale and updates the amount you will be paid in your account when the transaction completes. Be the first store in your area to use our program and you'll be ahead of the game. If you continue to link to our patterns and generate clicks from your customers, you'll be the one getting paid, not the competition! And even better, purchasers don't have to be local to buy patterns through you. Broaden your customer base with this innovative program.

The internet is evil, it's ruining my business

It's all about giving your customers a new way to buy from you. The internet will never replace a full-service yarn store...it cannot replace YOU. Your customer service skills, your knowledge, everything that makes your customers keep coming back. However, you can't be open 24 hours a day and the internet can. So, for those late-night pattern cravings, let us help you generate new sales! Your best and most loyal customers can also help you sell. Encourage them to link to your website from their own site or blog, from Ravelry...be creative! Check out some of the comments at <http://www.knitgrrl.com/?p=799>. Your customers WANT to buy from you, but they also want the speed, easy storage and ability to print working copies that PDF patterns provide.

You have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Thank you for supporting independent designers.