

Craigslist (www.craigslist.org): Self-Arranged Housing & Other Uses

One valuable resource to use when looking for housing in a specific city in the United States is Craigslist. This website offers listing of everything from apartments and houses to jobs, lessons, things for sale and even discussion forums. The image below is from Chicago's site; however you can find a Craigslist site for most cities in America – even many smaller cities. The different cities are listed on the right side of the page under “other cities” and “us cities.” If you cannot find your city listed, you can try doing a Google search and include Craigslist + the city and state.

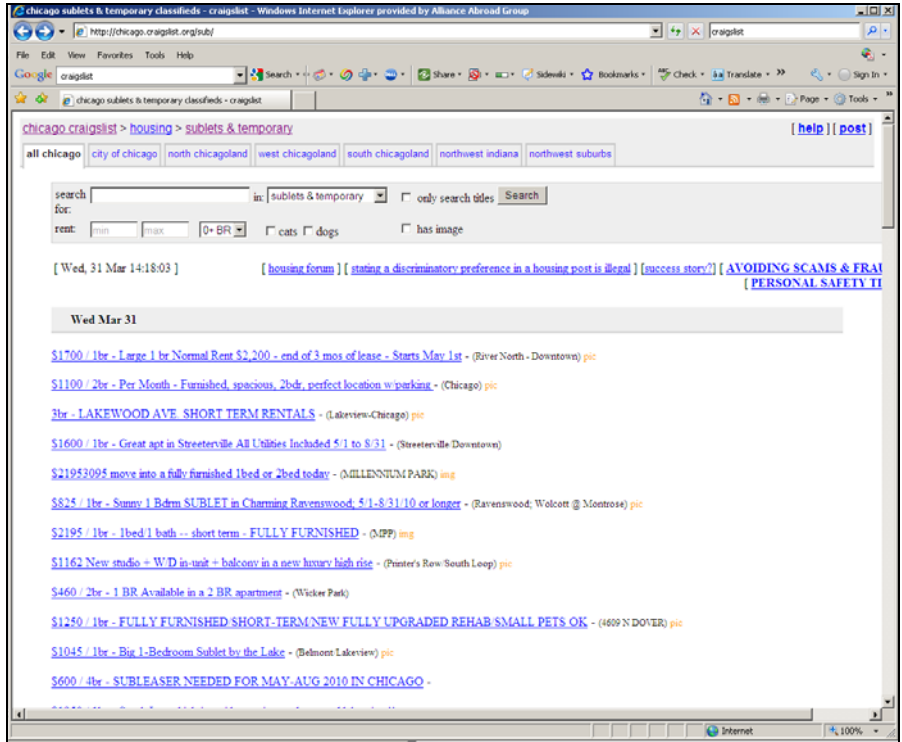
The **housing** (section on top middle) listings can be very useful when looking for housing because these listings are often posted by individuals who need people to rent a house or apartment that they own or who need somebody to take over their lease or sublease their apartment/house. The best options to click under **housing** are **apts / housing**, **rooms / shared** or **sublets / temporary**.

The screenshot shows the Craigslist Chicago website in a Windows Internet Explorer browser. The page is titled "craigslist: chicago classifieds for jobs, apartments, personals, for sale, services, community, - Windows Internet Explorer pro". The browser address bar shows "http://chicago.craigslist.org/". The page content is organized into several sections:

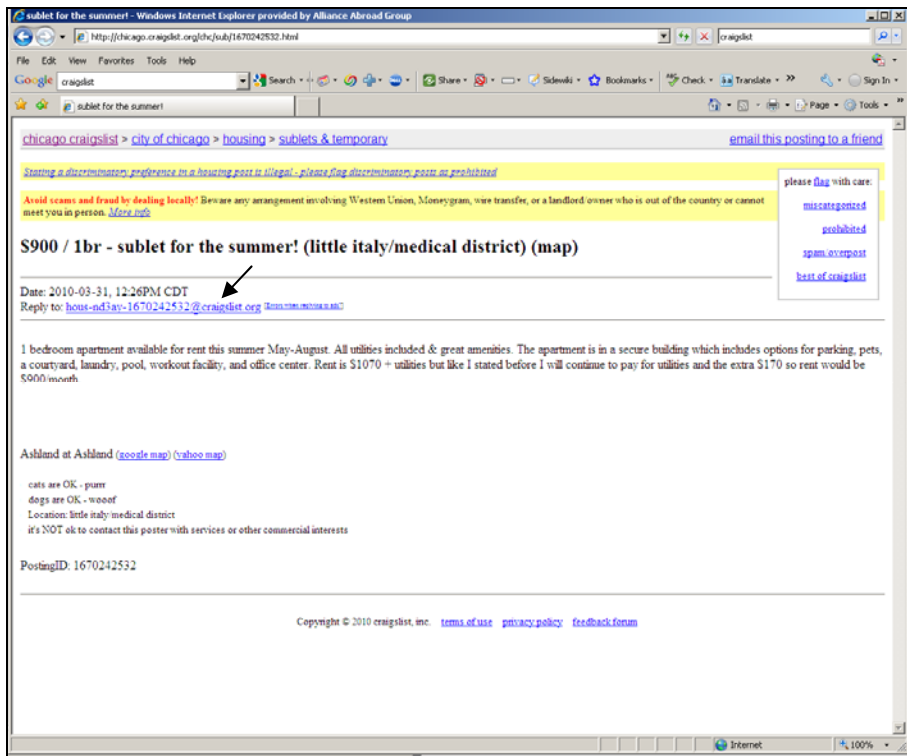
- Navigation:** "chicago" with sub-links for "chc", "nch", "wcl", "sox", "nwi", "nwc".
- Categories:** "community", "housing", "jobs", "personals", "for sale", "discussion forums", "services", "gigs".
- Other Cities:** A list of cities including battle creek, bloomington, chambana, chicago, grand rapids, holland, janesville, kalamazoo, kenosha-racine, kokomo, la salle co, madison, milwaukee, muskegon, peoria, rockford, sheboygan, south bend, southwest mi, tippecanoe.
- US States:** A list of states including alabama, alaska, arizona, arkansas, california, colorado, connecticut, dc, delaware, florida, georgia, guam, hawaii, idaho, illinois, indiana, iowa, kansas, kentucky, louisiana, maine, maryland, mass, michigan, minnesota, mississippi, missouri, montana, n carolina, n hampshire, nebraska, nevada, new jersey, new mexico, new york, north dakota, ohio, oklahoma, oregon, pennsylvania, puerto rico, rhode island, s carolina, south dakota, tennessee, texas.
- Countries:** A list of countries including argentina, australia, austria, bangladesh, brazil, canada, caribbean, chile, china, colombia, costa rica, croatia, czech repub, denmark, ecuador, egypt, finland, france, germany, great britain, greece, hong kong, hungary, india, indonesia, ireland, israel, italy, japan, korea, lebanon, luxembourg, malaysia, mexico, micronesia, netherlands, new zealand, norway, pakistan, panama, peru, philippines, poland, portugal, russia.

Arrows point to the "housing" category and the "other cities" and "us cities" lists.

Once you click on one of the options, you will see all of the available listings:



You should review the list of listings. When you see one that might fit your needs, click on it.



Then you will see the details of the listing. Make sure the location, rent and amenities offered (furniture or no furniture, utilities, cable, internet, washer/dryer for laundry, etc.) are what you are looking for. If you are interested in the ad, you can email the person by emailing them at the **Reply to** address (see arrow).

HELPFUL HINTS on using Craigslist to find housing:

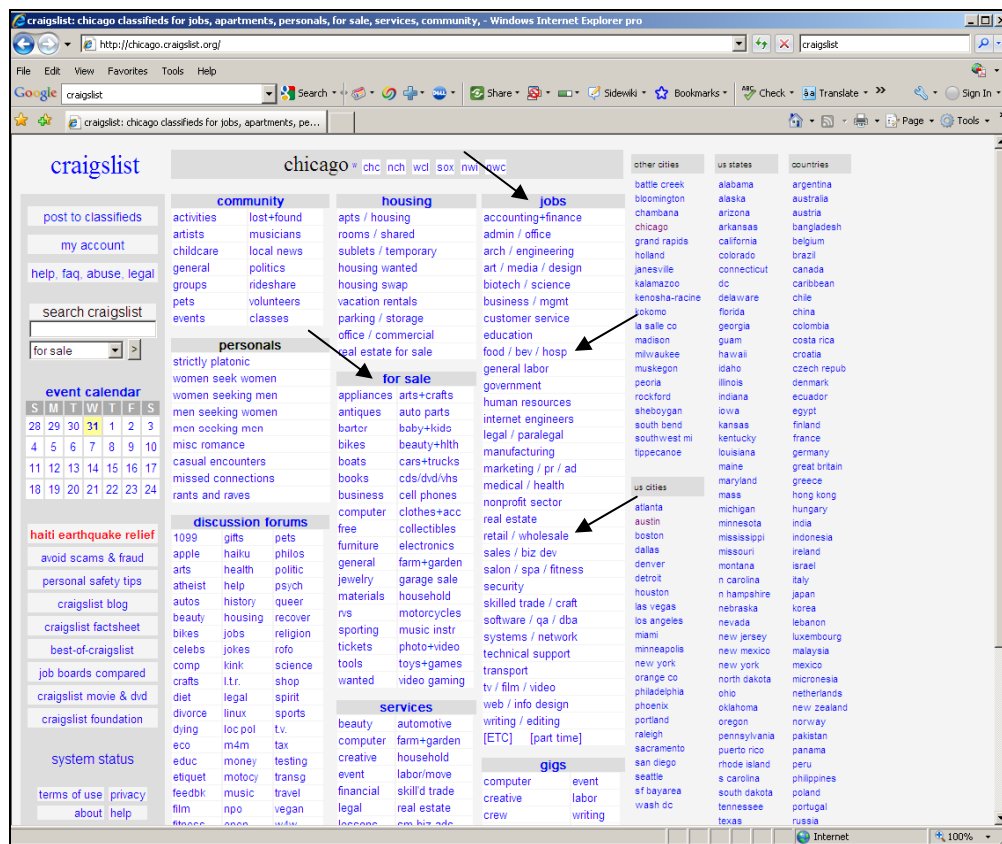
- **Deals that sound “too good to be true” probably are.** This means that when a four-bedroom luxury apartment is listed for \$400/month, it probably is a “scam” and the person that posted the ad is lying and trying to take advantage of you. Scams are common on Craigslist, so make sure that the listing seems reasonably priced; if it does not, it probably is a fake listing.
- **Feel free to call or email.** You should always feel comfortable emailing or calling the person who posted the listing. They are interested in your questions and want to help you!
- **Make sure the location is ideal.** Take into account your ability to use public transportation when getting from there to your jobsite. You will probably have to pay more for the perfect location, but make sure your jobsite is easily accessible.
- **Ask about rules or legal requirements.** Make sure they can rent to people who are not U.S. citizens. Ask what documentation they would need from you in order to rent (such as a Social Security number).
- **Is it furnished?** Find out what comes with the apartment. Then, evaluate if it is a good deal that will fit your needs. You should expect to pay more money for furnished apartments or for those that include more amenities like cable internet, wifi or utilities.
- **Never sign a lease if you do not understand the terms.** Find an English speaker to assist you if you aren't sure about what you are doing. Leases are legally binding agreements. Be aware that signing leases is a serious agreement!
- **Have reasonable expectations.** Don't expect to find something perfect for you for a low price. Temporary, inexpensive housing is very hard to find in the United States. Most apartment leases in the U.S. last for one year, so finding a lease for less than one year is difficult and is always more expensive.

If you can't find something on Craigslist, here are some other tips:

- Since all J-1 W/T students are university students, searching for **student housing** in the area is also a good idea. Student housing typically is less expensive and is often furnished. Student housing complexes also sometimes house international students, so they may be easier to work with than a normal apartment complex that has never had international renters.
- If you will be living in a larger city, try researching “**extended stay**” hotels in the area. Sometimes these hotels offer monthly rates which at first may seem expensive but typically include all bills, furniture, cable TV and often wireless internet. If three or four people share a room, the rent is often reasonable.

CRAIGSLIST: OTHER USES

As you can see from looking at Craigslist, it offers a lot more than housing listings. There are also job listings in the case that you want to or need to find a second job. There are a lot of categories of jobs listed, but the two categories that might be most useful for W/T students in the **jobs** section are **food / bev / hosp** (food, beverage and hospitality) **retail / wholesale**. Here you will find job listings for restaurants, hotels, and retail stores.



There is also a **for sale** section. Here you can find listings for things people and businesses are selling. There's a **furniture** section that can be useful to participants. Please note that since you most likely will be unable to transport the furniture yourself, if you did purchase furniture, you would need to hire somebody to transport it or pay the person who you are buying it from to deliver. There is also a **bikes** section under **for sale** if you are interested in purchasing a bicycle during your stay in the U.S..

IMPORTANT WARNINGS

- Beware that not everything listed on Craigslist is legitimate! Scams are very common!!!
- Never give out personal information to people on Craigslist! Do NOT email people your credit card or debit card numbers, and do NOT tell people where you or are staying or are working. If you buy things on Craigslist, always meet people you are purchasing things from in-person in public locations like shopping malls or coffee shops or other restaurants during the day where there are a lot of people.
- Always be careful and be safe!!!