



**A hands-on guide to using
and understanding PayPal
Subscriptions and
Recurring Payments**

The PayPal Subscriptions and Recurring Payments Manual

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Introduction to PayPal Subscriptions

How PayPal Subscriptions can help you offer subscriptions-based content

PayPal Subscriptions and Recurring Payments is a tool that will let you accept recurring payments for your service.

When you set up Subscriptions, you can offer your subscribers a trial period, special introductory rates, and a regular rate. Your subscribers will be billed automatically according to the terms you dictate, removing the hassle of keeping track of which payments you have and have not received.

Save time and money with PayPal's hassle-free Subscriptions:

- Easy to implement - flexible and automatic billing frees you from sending invoices.
- No up-front costs - you'll have the same low fee schedule used as when you receive other PayPal payments
- Sell with ease - PayPal maintains detailed transaction records on our website

PayPal Subscriptions can also help you improve your buyer experience with customizable buttons and secure payments, so happy customers become repeat customers.

And there are even more benefits if you're comfortable dealing with some back-end code: PayPal also provides Instant Payment Notifications (server-to-server communications that give you instant notification of all Subscriptions activities), the ability to pre-populate your customer's PayPal signup pages, and even some help with your Subscriptions Password Management.

Get the most out of your website today: start using PayPal Subscriptions!

How it Works

A visual tour of PayPal Subscriptions

Bob, who is new to PayPal, is going to purchase a subscription to Alice's Writers Weekly from Alice's website.

What Your Customer Sees

Step 1: Bob goes to Alice's website and presses the "Subscribe" button.

Alice's Used Books

[Home](#) | [Art](#) | [Language](#) | [History](#) | [Science](#)

Alice's Writers Weekly

The inside scoop on the world of publishing...delivered to your inbox once a week.

Price: \$20.00

Alice's Writers Weekly

This week:

Web Writing:
Revolution or Devolution?

Learn to write a successful query letter

Keep your editor happy

15 underserved markets

Step 2: Bob is taken to a PayPal Payment Details page which shows the details of the payment he is about to make, as well as the details of the subscription.

Payment Details

PayPal is the authorized payment processor for [alice@mystore.com](#).

Pay To: [alice@mystore.com](#)

Subscription To: Alice's Writers Digest

Subscription Terms: Free for first month
Then \$20.00 for each year thereafter for 5 installments

Currency: U.S. Dollars [?](#)

Amount Paid Today: \$0.00

Step 3: Bob is prompted to log in to his PayPal account, but he is not already a PayPal member, so he follows the instructions at the top of the screen.

PayPal Login

Email Address: [Problems logging in?](#)

PayPal Password: [Forget your password?](#)

If you have never paid through PayPal,

Step 4: So he may make future payments for this subscription, Bob is prompted to add his credit card, email address, and password, creating his new PayPal account.

Enter Your Credit Card Information
This payment will be processed by PayPal. Your information will be kept [secure and private](#).

First Name:

Last Name:

Credit Card Number:

Expiration Date: 01 2002

Card Verification Number:


(On the back of your card, locate the final 3 digit number)
[Help finding Card Verification Number](#) | [Using Amex?](#)

Billing Address (where you receive your credit card bills)

Street:

City:

State:

Zip: U.S.A. [Outside the U.S.?](#)

Telephone: (5 or 9 digits) [Kept Private](#)

Please check that you have entered your correct email address. You can use this email address and password to log in to PayPal the next time you would like to make a payment.

Email Address:

Your password should be 8 characters minimum and is case sensitive. [Write it down](#)

Create PayPal Password:

Confirm PayPal Password:

Step 5: Bob is taken to a Confirmation page containing the details of his subscription and information about how his automatic payments will be funded. He presses the "Pay" button to complete payment.

Confirm Your Payment
Check the following details and **click the "Pay" button below** to complete your payment.

Pay To: Alice's Used Books

User Status: [Verified Business Member \(0\)](#)

Subscription To: Alice's Writers Digest

Subscription Terms: Free for first month
Then \$20.00 for each year thereafter for 5 installments

Currency: U.S. Dollars 

Amount Paid Today: \$0.00

Subscription Details

Your subscription will automatically renew at the rates stated above unless you cancel prior to the end of the billing period.

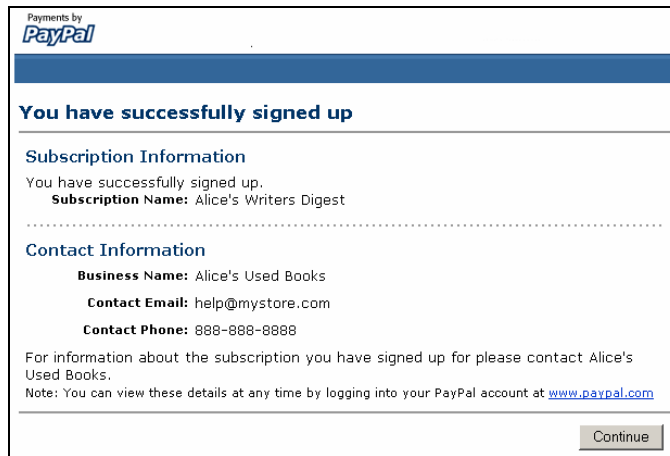
Source of Funds

Future payments will be drawn from your balance. If your balance does not cover the payments, you authorize PayPal to deduct the amount from MasterCard XXXX-XXXX-XXXX-0439.
[More Funding Options](#)

Pay

Cancel

Step 6: Bob is taken to a Confirmation page where he sees the details of his successful transaction. He is also given an ID for his subscription and Alice's customer service email address. He presses the "Continue" link and is returned to a page Alice specified when she created her Subscriptions button.



Payments by
PayPal

You have successfully signed up

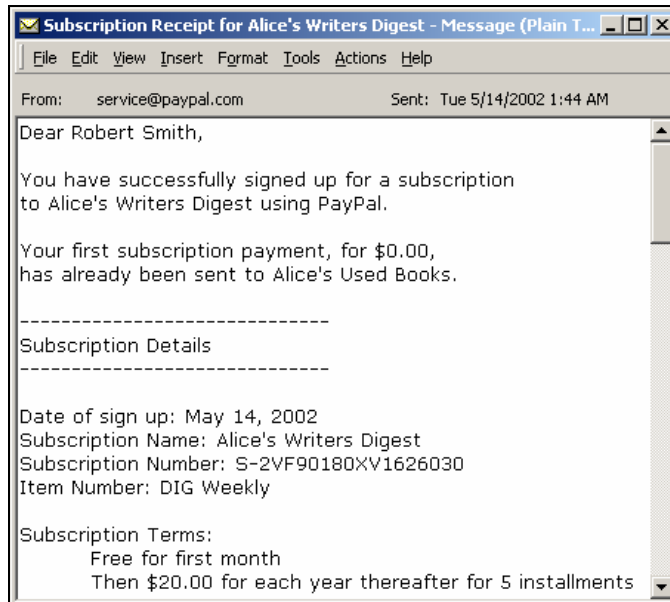
Subscription Information
You have successfully signed up.
Subscription Name: Alice's Writers Digest

Contact Information
Business Name: Alice's Used Books
Contact Email: help@mystore.com
Contact Phone: 888-888-8888

For information about the subscription you have signed up for please contact Alice's Used Books.
Note: You can view these details at any time by logging into your PayPal account at www.paypal.com

[Continue](#)

Step 7: Bob receives an email receipt for this transaction, confirming his subscription and including a copy of the subscription's terms and payment details.



Subscription Receipt for Alice's Writers Digest - Message (Plain T...

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Actions Help

From: service@paypal.com Sent: Tue 5/14/2002 1:44 AM

Dear Robert Smith,

You have successfully signed up for a subscription to Alice's Writers Digest using PayPal.

Your first subscription payment, for \$0.00, has already been sent to Alice's Used Books.

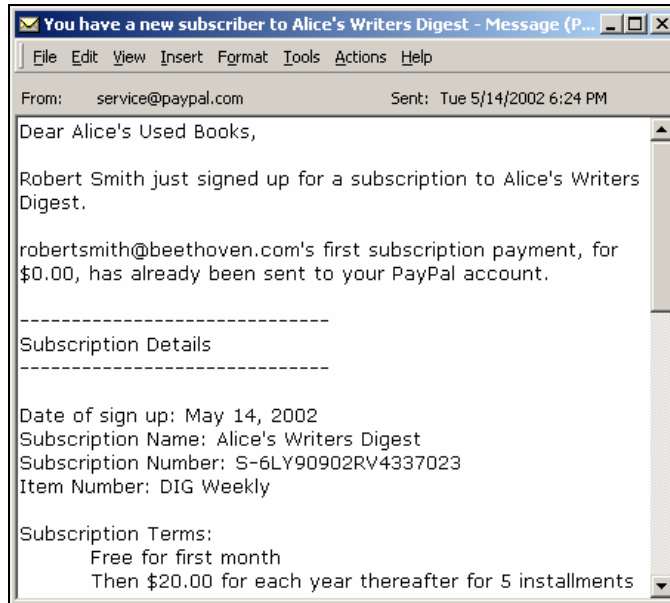
Subscription Details

Date of sign up: May 14, 2002
Subscription Name: Alice's Writers Digest
Subscription Number: S-2VF90180XY1626030
Item Number: DIG Weekly

Subscription Terms:
Free for first month
Then \$20.00 for each year thereafter for 5 installments

What You See

Step 8: Alice receives an email notification of Bob's subscription.

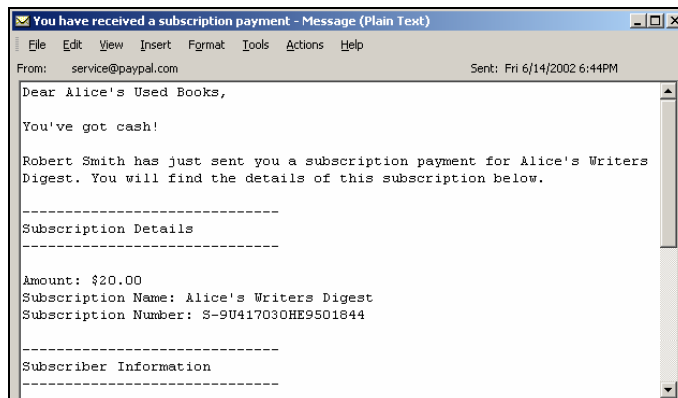


Did you know you can automate your Subscriptions notifications, even let PayPal help you manage your passwords? To learn more, see the "Password Management" section on page 31, and read the PayPal Instant Payment Notification Manual (available from the PayPal website).

Step 9: Alice logs into her PayPal account to check the subscription, and sends Bob information about accessing the subscription.

☐	Subscription Creation	From	Robert Smith	...	May 14, 2002	Active
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Step 10: After Bob's trial period is over, Alice receives an email notification of his automatic subscription payment.



Step 11: Alice logs into her PayPal account to check the payment Bob has sent.

☐	Payment	From	Robert Smith	20.00	Jun 14, 2002	Completed
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Step 12: Alice clicks on the "Completed" link to see the details of this payment. The link in the upper right-hand corner gives Alice the subscription number.

Transaction Details	
Subscription Payment Received (ID #67M81110G1958563V) In reference to: S-9U417030HE9501844	
Name: Robert Smith (The sender of this payment is Unverified) Email: robertsmith@beethoven.com Email Address That Payment Was Sent to: alice@mystore.com	
Total Amount: 20.00 Fee Amount: -0.88 Net Amount: 19.12	
Date: June 14, 2002 Time: 19:00:17 Status: Completed	
Shipping Address No Address Provided	
Payment Type: Instant	
Refund Information: If you need to refund this payment to the sender for any reason, click Refund Payment . The "Refund Payment" option is only available for 30 days after the payment was sent.	
Return to My Account	

Step 13: The funds from Bob's subscription payment are now reflected in Alice's PayPal account balance.

U.S. Business Account Overview	
Name: Alice's Used Books (Alice Jones) Email: alice@mystore.com (Add email) Status: Verified (0)	
Balance:	\$19.12
Currently earning 1.20%*	

PayPal Subscriptions Button Factory

A step-by-step guide to generating your PayPal Subscriptions Button

PayPal Subscriptions lets you accept recurring payments for your service. You can create customized Subscriptions buttons for your website or generate a Subscriptions link to email to your customers.

Getting Started:

- Log in to your PayPal account at www.paypal.com
- Click on the "Merchant Tools" tab
- Select the "Subscriptions and Recurring Payments" link under the "Website Payments" heading to get to the Subscriptions Button Factory

1. Enter the name of your subscription

Subscription Name

Enter the name of the subscription you wish to sell in the Subscription Name field. If you do not enter anything in this field, your customers can complete it. PayPal recommends entering a Subscription Name to make it easier for you to deliver the order.

Reference Item Number

If you have an ID or tracking number for your item, enter it in the Reference Item Number field. This field will not be displayed to your customers at the time of payment, but they will see it in their transaction details on the PayPal website.

Currency

Choose the currency in which you would like this payment to be denominated. This field will default to the currency of your primary balance.

Subscriptions Password Management

Optional field for advanced users

If you would like PayPal to generate usernames and passwords for your subscribers, check the Subscriptions Password Management box. Instant Payment Notification and server modifications are required.

To learn more about Password Management, go to page 32.

2. Enter the terms of your subscription

Trial Periods

For more information, see "Timing of Scheduled Subscription Payments" on page 17.

You may enter up to two trial periods and rates for your subscription. To create a free trial period, enter an amount of 0. Trial periods can be entered as a number of days, weeks, months, or years.

Example 1: Your subscription may be free for the first week, and \$5 for the next two months after that.

In Trial Period #1, you would enter:
Bill the subscriber now for \$0
This trial period should last 1 week
In Trial Period #2, you would enter:
Then bill the subscriber for \$5
This trial period should last 2 months

Regular Billing Cycle

Required Field

Enter your regular subscription rate. If you entered one or two trial periods, the regular rate will take effect once the trial periods are over. Billing cycles can be entered as a number of days, weeks, months, or years.

Example 1 (continued from above): Your subscription is \$50 per year.

In Subscription Price, you would enter:
Bill the subscriber for \$50

Recurring Basis

Select "Yes" if you would like your subscribers to be billed on a recurring basis. This means that after the Regular Billing Cycle entered above is complete, your subscribers' subscriptions will be automatically renewed unless a subscriber manually cancels his subscription. If you select "No," your subscriber's subscriptions and payments will end after the first cycle is completed.

Example 1 (continued from above): Your subscription is \$50 per year.

For "recurring basis" you would select:

"Yes"

For "length of each billing cycle," you would enter:

1 year

Example 2: Examples of Regular Rates:

"9.99 per week" would mean a payment is made every 7 days.

"9.99 per month" would mean a payment is made on the same day of the month every month.

"9.99 per 30 days" would mean a payment is made every 30 days.

Recurring Times (Installments)

Select "Yes" if you would like to end your subscribers' subscriptions after a certain number of payments at your regular rates. This means that once your subscriber has made the specified number of payments at your regular rate, his subscription will be completed. If you select "No," your subscriber's subscription will continue unless it is cancelled manually or by payment failure.

Example 3: Examples of Recurring Times (Installments):

"9.99 per month for 12 installments"
You would receive 12 payments of \$9.99

"3.99 for the first week"
"9.99 per month thereafter for 12 installments"
You would receive 1 payment of \$3.99 and 12 payments of \$9.99

Reattempt on Failure

For more information, see "Timing of Scheduled Subscription Payments" on page 17.

Select the "Yes" radio button if you would like PayPal to automatically reattempt failed payments. Payments will be reattempted 3 days after the failure date. After a second failure, we will try once more 5 days later. A third failure will lead to an automatic cancellation of the subscription. Note: Payments made with bank accounts are automatically reattempted once, 3 days after we notify the user that the payment failed. If you select "No," failed payments will result in the automatic cancellation of the subscription.

3. Choose a subscription button to put on your website

If you are going to be using PayPal Subscriptions on your website, choose the image for the button you would like your customers to press to make their purchase. To display your own image, enter the URL of the image's location in the URL field.

If you have no further details to add to your subscription, click **Create Button Now**. Otherwise, click **Add More Options**.

4. Add Option fields to your button

Let your customers specify information about their purchase by creating an option field. You can use Option fields to specify things like color, size, or gift-wrapping. Options **must not** change the price of an item, but let you collect additional information from your customer without extra email communication. Each Subscriptions button may have up to two option fields, and you may use a drop-down menu or text box to collect the information.

Unfortunately, Option fields cannot currently be used if you are creating an email hyperlink. If you would still like to send out Subscriptions links in emails, you may try either sending an HTML email, providing a link to the Buy Now Button (with Option fields) on your website, or asking your user to include the optional information in the "Note" field.

Option Field Type

Choose the type of option field: drop-down menu or text box. If you choose drop-down menu, you will enter the different choices. If you choose text box, your customer will enter his choice.

Option Name

Enter the name of your option. There is a 60-character limit on Option Names.

Drop Down Menu Choices

If you are using a drop-down menu, enter your menu choices. There is a 30-character limit per choice, with a maximum of 10 choices. Use a carriage return (press 'Enter') to separate each choice.

5. Create a Cancel Subscription Button

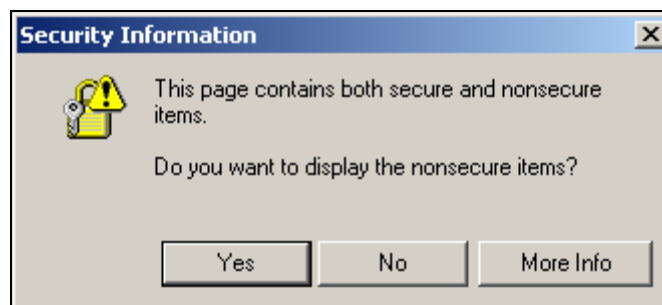
If you are going to be using PayPal Subscriptions on your website, you can let your subscribers cancel their subscriptions from your website. Choose an image for a Cancel Subscription button you would like your customers to press to cancel their subscriptions. To display your own image, enter the URL of the image's location in the URL field. A link that you can send to your subscribers who wish to cancel will also be created.

6. Customize Your Payment Pages

Add Your Logo

Customize the look of your PayPal payment pages by adding your logo. This image, which must be **150 by 50 pixels** in size, will appear in the upper left-hand corner of the page when your customer presses your PayPal Website Payments button.

If your image is hosted on a secure server (if the URL begins with "https:"), select the "https:" radio button. If your image is hosted on a non-secure server (if the URL begins with "http:"), select the "http:" radio button. We recommend hosting your image on a secure server, to avoid distracting your customers during the payment process with a security question such as the one shown below:



If you leave this field blank, your Company Name (if you have a Business account) or your email address (if you have a Premier account) will appear in large font in the upper right-hand corner of your payment pages, and PayPal's logo will appear in the upper left.

Choose the Background Color

Customize the look of your PayPal payment pages by changing the background color. The pages can have either a white (default) or a black background. Just select the radio button next to your background color of choice.

7. Customize Your Customers' Experience**Successful Payment URL**

Enter the URL where you would like to send your customers after they have completed payment. Once your customer has completed his payment, he will see a payment confirmation page. From this page, he will press the "Access Subscription" button and return to the Successful Payment URL you have specified. If you do not enter a Successful Payment URL, customers who click this link will be taken to a PayPal webpage.

Your customers will expect information about accessing their subscriptions on your Successful Payment Page.

Cancel Payment URL

Enter the URL where you would like to send your customers if they cancel their payments at any point in the PayPal Website Payments payment flow. If you do not enter a Cancel Payment URL, customers who click this link will be taken to a PayPal webpage.

8. Miscellaneous**Shipping Address**

If you would like your customers to be prompted to provide a shipping address, choose 'Yes'. If you choose 'No', your customers will not be asked to provide a shipping address.

9. Copy and Paste the Subscriptions Code

When you have finished filling out the Subscriptions Button Factory form, press the "Continue" button.

Your subscription terms will be listed under the heading "Here are the Terms of the Subscription you just created." Make sure the terms listed are correct.

If your customers will be using Subscriptions through your website:

Copy the code from the first text box (titled "For Web Pages") by highlighting all of the text and pressing Ctrl+C, or by highlighting all of the text, right-clicking on your mouse, and choosing Copy.

In your website files, open the code for the webpage from which you wish to collect payment.

Paste the code you just copied into your webpage file wherever you would like the image to appear (typically, next to the description of the subscription service) by either pressing Ctrl+V or by right-clicking on your mouse and selecting the Paste option.

HTML Tips:

Please ensure that the HTML code on your webpage exactly matches the code you copied from PayPal. Some HTML editors may add, delete, or change some characters in your code. If this is the case, please change the code on your webpage to exactly match the code you copied.

Please be sure that when you paste the HTML code for your button, you are pasting this information into a field that accepts HTML code. If you paste this code into a standard text field, the code will be posted on your webpage as standard text.

For more tips on placing your payment button on your webpage, please see the Help section of your webpage editor.

If you will be sending your customers the Subscriptions link via email:

Copy the code from the second text box (titled "For Emails") by highlighting all of the text and pressing Ctrl+C, or by highlighting all of the text, right-clicking on your mouse, and choosing Copy.

Open the email you wish to send.

Paste the code you just copied into your email by either pressing Ctrl+V or right-clicking on your mouse and selecting the Paste option.

When your customers receive the email, the code will appear as a link. Clicking the link will take them to your PayPal payments page.

9. Copy and Paste the Cancel Subscription Code or Link

Copy the code from the "Cancel Subscription" text box by highlighting all of the text and pressing Ctrl+C, or by highlighting all of the text, right-clicking on your mouse, and choosing Copy.

Follow the steps described above to paste the Cancel Subscription code or link into your website files or email.

10. Testing the Button and/or Link

Now that you have the HTML code in your website or in your email, you should test it out. Click on the link in the email or press the button on your webpage. A PayPal-hosted payment page should appear with the subscription terms you specified.

Because your PayPal user information is saved in a cookie¹ on your computer, you will see your own PayPal username. Your customers will not see your username. Instead:

- If your customer is already a PayPal member, he will see his PayPal username here.
- If your customer is not yet a PayPal member, he will see a sign-up page. To view this from your computer, click the link that says "If you are not Bob Smith, [Click Here](#)"

You should always test your subscription implementation with the live PayPal system. Here's an easy way to do it:

1. [Sign up](#) for a Personal PayPal account if you don't already have one, and add a credit card to the account. This will be your "buyer" account. (Note: According to the PayPal User Agreement, you may have both one Personal and one Premier/Business account. Please do not set up any additional PayPal accounts, as this may result in your account access being limited.)
2. Make sure that your Business/Premier account is [Verified](#). This your "seller" account.
3. Go to your web browser and click the button you've created. Use the login and password for your buyer account to purchase the subscription.
4. Check the results of your subscription test by looking at the emails received by both accounts and by viewing the History page for each account. They should be similar to those shown in the "How It Works" section above.

¹ Cookie: A cookie is information that a website puts on your hard disk so that it can remember something about you when you visit the website later. For more information, see "What Is a Cookie?" in the FAQ section at the end of this manual.

5. Log in to your seller account and refund the payment. (To refund a payment, go to the Transaction Details page and follow the Refund Payment link at the bottom.) The refund reverses the entire payment, including transaction fees! Remember that you only have 30 days to Refund the payment.

This testing method is free of charge and lets you complete the entire process yourself. You can also have friends or trusted clients buy test subscriptions, then refund them, if you would prefer not to open a second PayPal account.

11. How You Get Your Money:

After your customer has subscribed and made any necessary first payments:

1. You will receive an email notification of the subscription (and payment, if any).
2. Your customer will receive an email receipt of the subscription (and payment, if any).
3. Your PayPal account will reflect the new subscription and be credited for any initial payments (you can download this information from your History transaction log).

**Learn more about
Subscriptions-related
notifications on page 24.**

Timing of Scheduled Subscription Payments

Time periods, failures, and re-attempts

Payment Time Periods

Scheduled payments are made based on the terms set in the Subscriptions button and/or link.

Definition of Units:

Days
Week = 7 days
Month = 1 calendar month (same day of the month)
Year = calendar year (same day of the year)

Acceptable Unit Values:

Days = 1-90
Week = 1-52
Month = 1-24
Year = 1-5

Payments after a trial period ends are made one day after the end of the trial period; if trial period 1 is three days long, then the payment for trial period 2 (or the regular rate if there is not a second trial period) occurs on the day after period 1's completion, or day 4. The subscriber has a full 3 days access to the subscription before the next trial period or regular rate begins.

Regular rate payments are made on the day of the previous period's completion. This means payments will be made on the same calendar day if they occur on a monthly or yearly basis.

Example 4: Payments Scheduling

Subscription Terms:
Free for the first 7 days
\$5 for the next 3 weeks
\$10 per month thereafter

The Subscriber signs up on Aug. 1, and is billed as follows:
Aug. 1 = \$0.00
Aug. 9 = \$5.00
Aug. 31 = \$10.00

If you have a recurring payment scheduled for a day that does not occur in a given month (e.g. the 30th does not occur in February), the payment will be made on the 1st day of the following month. Thereafter, the payment will occur on the 1st of each month.

Example 4 continued: Payments Scheduling

The recurring terms are:
\$10 per month, billed on the 30th

The Subscriber is billed as follows:
Jan. 30 = \$10.00
Mar. 1 = \$10.00
May 1 = \$10.00

Payment Failures

If a scheduled payment fails, you have the option to have PayPal reattempt the payment before the subscription is cancelled.

Scheduled payments may fail due to several reasons, including insufficient funds. If you choose the Reattempt on Failure option when you create your subscription button, payments will be reattempted 3 days after the failure date. After a second failure, we will try once more 5 days later. A third failure will lead to an automatic cancellation of the subscription. Note: Payments made with bank accounts are automatically reattempted once, 3 days after we notify the user that the payment failed.

Reattempts will not occur if another subscription payment is scheduled within 14 days of the failed payment (so payments do not overlap).

Subscription Cancellations

Cancel one, some, or all of your subscribers

Cancelling Individual Subscriptions

You can cancel a subscription by going to the Subscription Details page. Go to the "History" subtab of the "My Account" tab, choose the "Subscriptions" field from the "Show" drop-down menu, and press the "Submit" button. Click on the link in the "Status" column to view the Subscription Details, and press the "Cancel" button on the Subscription Details page.

Step 14: Alice logs in to her PayPal account, and clicks on the "Active" link in the Status column for the subscription she wishes to cancel.

☐	Subscription Creation	From	Robert Smith	...	May 14, 2002	Active
--------------------------	-----------------------	------	--------------	-----	--------------	------------------------

Step 15: To cancel this subscription, Alice can press the "Cancel Subscription" button and follow the on-screen instructions.

Subscription Details
Subscription Received #S-0VX783278K919502L
[\(Questions about this subscription? Contact us.\)](#)

Name: Robert Smith (This subscriber is **Verified**)
Email: robertsmith@beethoven.com

.....
Subscription Date: May 14, 2002
Time: 18:37:01
Status: Active

.....
Next Payment Date: May 14, 2003
Amount: 20.00

.....
Subscription Terms: \$20.00 per year for 5 installments

.....
Item Name: Alice's Writers Digest
Item Number: DIG Weekly

Shipping Address: No Address Provided

.....

[Cancel Subscription](#) [Return to My Account](#)

[Cancel several subscribers](#)

You can also get to the Subscription Details page by clicking on the "In reference to" link in the Transaction Details for any subscription payments you receive.

Step 16: The Subscription is now listed as "Cancelled" in Alice's transaction history

☐	Subscription Cancellation	From	Robert Smith	...	May 14, 2002	Canceled
--------------------------	---------------------------	------	--------------	-----	--------------	--------------------------

Your subscribers can cancel their subscriptions by following the same steps. In addition, if you choose to add a "Cancel Subscription" button to your website, your subscribers may press it to cancel their subscriptions. A subscription may be cancelled up until the day of the next scheduled payment. If a subscriber attempts to cancel before payment is sent on the day of a scheduled payment, the payment will not be made.

Cancelling Multiple Subscriptions At Once

To cancel a group of subscribers, go to the "History" subtab of the "My Account" tab, choose the "Subscriptions" field from the "Show" drop-down menu, and press the "Submit" button. Click on the link in the "Status" column to view the Subscription Details of one of your active subscribers. Click the "Cancel Several Subscribers" link at the bottom of the Subscription Details page to go to the Mass Subscription Cancellation page.

If you cancel an email address which has several subscriptions, all of the subscriptions will be cancelled.

To cancel several subscribers, you will need to upload a simple text file containing your subscribers' email addresses (one email per line). Once your file has been read, confirm that we found the correct number of email addresses, and press the "Cancel Subscriptions" button.

To view the details of your Mass Subscription Cancellation, go to your "History" and click on the Status of the Mass Subscription Cancellation entry (it may take up to one hour to process your cancellation).

Your Mass Subscription Cancellation Log may contain the following terms:

Total Emails - Number of email addresses uploaded from your file

Emails Matched - Number of email addresses which matched an active subscription. These active subscriptions were then cancelled. Note: If any email address had more than one active subscription, all of the subscriptions were cancelled.

Emails Not Matched - Number of email addresses which did not match with an active subscription. If the subscription was already completed or cancelled, it will be counted as "Not Matched."

Successful Cancellations - Total number of subscriptions cancelled. Note: This number may be higher than the number of emails matched if any email address had more than one active subscription.

For more details about your Mass Subscription Cancellation, press the “View Details” button on the Transaction Details page. You will be prompted to download a file containing more information.

Your Downloaded Mass Subscription Cancellation Log may contain the following terms:

Email Address – Email of subscriber

Success - The subscription was successfully cancelled

Failed - The subscription was not cancelled.

Failure reasons include:

Already Cancelled

Already Completed - The subscription was completed prior to the cancellation

Failed - General failure code

No Match - The email address did not match any of your subscriptions

Subscription ID – Unique ID for the subscription

Date Processed – Cancellation date

Modifying Active Subscriptions

Allow buyers to modify the terms of an active subscription

You can let your subscribers change the name, number, regular terms, or currency of an existing subscription without canceling it and re-subscribing by creating a "Modify Subscription" button. This button can be built to allow buyers to a) modify existing subscriptions only, or b) either modify existing subscriptions or sign up for a new subscription if no active subscriptions exist.

Buyers will not be able to modify the terms of their trial periods or change any variables other than: Subscription Name, Reference Item Number, Regular Subscription Rate, Regular Billing Cycle, and Currency.

To create a "Modify Subscription" button or link:

1. Create a regular Subscriptions button using the instructions described in the "PayPal Subscriptions Button Factory" section starting on page 8 of this manual. Specify the terms of the new (modified) subscription in this button.
2. Click "Create Button Now" and copy the resulting HTML or link code.
3. If your users will be modifying their subscription by clicking on a button on your website, paste the provided HTML code into your webpage. Between the <form> and </form> tags, insert one of the following lines:

To make a "Modify Or Sign Up" button (meaning buyers can use this button to either modify existing subscriptions or sign up for new subscriptions), insert this line:

```
<input type="hidden" name="modify" value="1">
```

To make a "Modify Only" button (meaning buyers can only use this button to modify existing subscriptions rather than signing up for a new subscription), insert this line:

```
<input type="hidden" name="modify" value="2">
```

4. If your users will be modifying their subscription by clicking a link in an email, paste the link code into an email and add the following text to the end of the link.

To make a "Modify Or Sign Up" link (meaning buyers can use this link to either modify existing subscriptions sign up for new subscriptions), append this to the URL:

```
modify=1
```

To make a “Modify Only” link (meaning buyers can only use this link to modify existing subscriptions rather than signing up for a new subscription), append this to the URL:

`modify=2`

Notifications Merchants Receive

How you will be notified of new activity for your Subscriptions

You can get Notifications for your Subscriptions in these four ways: email, history transaction log, downloadable history transaction log, and (if you have activated it) IPN.

Emails:

You will receive an email notification in the following cases:

- Successful Sign-up
- Cancellation
- Successful Payments
- Scheduled Payment Failures

If you do not want to receive payment notifications via email, go to the "Profile" subtab of the "My Account" tab and select the "Notifications" link from the left-hand menu. Find the 'Payment Notifications' heading and uncheck the 'I received a PayPal Website Payments or Auction Logo payment' box, then click 'Save.'

History:

Your history transaction log ("History") contains information about your Subscriptions.

You may see the following terms in the "Type" column of your History:

"Subscription Creation"
"Subscription Cancellation"
"Payment"
"Subscription Completion"

Payment failures are not recorded by a separate line in your History. However, the Subscription Details page will note that a payment failed, and, if another attempt is scheduled, the date of the next attempt.

The “Status” column of a Subscription Creation entry may contain the following terms:

Active - There are future scheduled payments for this subscription

Cancelled - The subscription has been cancelled. No future payments will be made.

Completed - All payments for this subscription have been made.

Note: When you download your subscriber log, the Completed and Cancelled statuses will be pre-pended with ‘active’ or ‘inactive’ (e.g. ‘active-completed’ or ‘inactive-cancelled’). This indicates whether the end of term for the cancelled or completed subscription has been reached.

Downloadable Logs:

To download all of the Subscription-related entries in your History, you will need to download two files. First, login to your PayPal account, go to the “History” subtab of the “My Account” tab, and choose the “Download Log” link in the “Quick Links” menu.

Download Payment History

Choose the “All Transactions” radio button or enter the dates of the entries you want to download, choose the type of file you would like to download (Comma delimited, Tab delimited, Quicken, or QuickBooks), and press the “Download History” button. This file will contain all of your Subscriptions-related payments.

Download Subscriber List

Choose the “All Transactions” radio button or enter the dates of the entries you want to download, choose the “Subscriptions” radio button (which will only appear after someone has subscribed to your service), and press the “Download History” button. This file will contain all of your non-payment Subscriptions-related entries (Sign-Ups, Cancellations, and Completions).

For a list of all past and current subscribers, filter out Subscription Cancellation and Subscription Completion Transactions.

For a list of active subscribers (i.e. a list of all subscribers whose end of term has not yet been reached), sort for transactions with a status of ‘active,’ ‘active-completed,’ or ‘active-cancelled.’

IPN

If you have Instant Payment Notifications activated, you will receive an IPN on:

- Successful Sign-up
- Cancellation
- Successful Payments
- Scheduled Payment Failures
- End of Term

To learn more about IPN, see the PayPal Instant Payment Notification Manual, available on the PayPal website.

End of Term

An End of Term IPN is sent when a subscription ends, so you can cancel the subscriber's access to your subscription content.

End of Term is one way to help you manage password access to your Subscriptions content. For more help with password management, see the "Password Management" section on page 32.

If your subscription is not recurring, the End of Term will be sent when the Subscription is completed. If your subscription is recurring and it is manually cancelled, the End of Term will be sent at the end of the current term. If your subscription is recurring and it automatically cancelled due to payment failure, the End of Term will be sent immediately.

Example 5: End of Term

Term:
\$10 for 6 months.

End of Term sent:
6 months after sign-up

Term:
\$9.99 per month. Paid on the 1st.

Cancellation:
Manual, on Sept. 15th

End of Term sent:
On Oct. 1st

Term:
\$10 for 6 months.

Cancellation:
Payment failure, on Sept. 8th

End of Term sent:
On Sept. 8th

PayPal Subscriptions HTML Code

Manipulating your Subscriptions code

The tables below show the different parameters within the Subscriptions HTML code and the Subscriptions hyperlink.

The Terms for the sample Subscription below are:

Free for the first week
 \$5.00 for the next 2 months
 \$50.00 per year thereafter
 Recurs at regular rate for 5 payments

Sample HTML Code for a Subscriptions Button

The code for a Subscriptions button would look similar to this:
 (Several optional fields are shown)

```
<form action="https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr" method="post">
<input type="hidden" name="cmd" value="_xclick-subscriptions">
<input type="hidden" name="business" value=" nora@paypal.com ">
<input type="hidden" name="item_name" value="Baseball Hat Monthly">
<input type="hidden" name="item_number" value="123">
<input type="hidden" name="image_url"
value="https://www.yoursite.com/logo.gif ">
<input type="hidden" name="no_shipping" value="1">
<input type="hidden" name="return"
value="http://www.yoursite.com/thankyou.htm ">
<input type="hidden" name="cancel_return"
value="http://www.yoursite.com/cancel.htm">
<input type="hidden" name="a1" value="0">
<input type="hidden" name="p1" value="1">
<input type="hidden" name="t1" value="W">
<input type="hidden" name="a2" value="5.00">
<input type="hidden" name="p2" value="2">
<input type="hidden" name="t2" value="M">
<input type="hidden" name="a3" value="50.00">
<input type="hidden" name="p3" value="1">
<input type="hidden" name="t3" value="Y">
<input type="hidden" name="src" value="1">
<input type="hidden" name="sra" value="1">
<input type="hidden" name="srt" value="5">
<input type="hidden" name="no_note" value="1">
<input type="hidden" name="custom" value="customcode">
<input type="hidden" name="invoice" value="invoicenumber">
<input type="hidden" name="usr_manage" value="1">
<input type="image" src="http://images.paypal.com/images/x-click-
but01.gif" border="0" name="submit" alt="Make payments with PayPal -
it's fast, free and secure!">
</form>
```

Sample Hyperlink for a Subscriptions Link

The same inputs would generate the hyperlink below:
(Several optional fields are shown)

```
https://www.paypal.com/subscriptions/business=nora%40paypal.com&item_
name=Baseball+Hat+Monthly&item_number=123&image_url=https%3A//www.you
rsite.com/logo.gif&no_shipping=1&return=http%3A//www.yoursite.com/tha
nkyou.htm&cancel_return=http%3A//www.yoursite.com/cancel.htm&no_note=
1&a1=0.00&p1=1&t1=W&a2=5.00&p2=2&t2=M&a3=50.00&p3=1&t3=Y&src=1&sra=1&
srt=5&no_note=1&custom=customcode&invoice=invoicenumber&usr_manage=1
```

Subscriptions HTML and Hyperlink Variables

Variable	Required/ Optional	Description
"post" action	Required	Must be set to "https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr"
cmd	Required	Must be set to "_xclick-subscriptions"
business	Required	This is your PayPal ID, or email address. This email address must be confirmed and linked to your Verified Business or Premier account
item_name	Optional	Description of item being sold (maximum 127 characters). If you are collecting aggregate payments, this can include a summary of all items purchased, tracking numbers, or generic terms such as "subscription." If omitted, customer will see a field in which they have the option of entering an Item Name
item_number	Optional	Pass-through variable for you to keep track of purchases made of this item. It will not be displayed to your customer, but will get passed back to you at the completion of payment (maximum 127 characters). If omitted, no variable will be passed back to you
image_url	Optional	The internet URL of the 150 by 50 pixel image you would like to use as your logo. If omitted, your customer will see your Business Name (if you have a Business account) or email address (if you have a Premier account)
no_shipping	Optional	Shipping address. If set to "1," your customer will not be prompted for a shipping address. If omitted or set to "0," your customer will be prompted to include a shipping address
return	Optional	An internet URL where the user will be returned after completing the payment. For example, a URL on your site that hosts a "Information on your new subscription" page. If omitted, users will be taken to the PayPal site

Variable	Required/ Optional	Description
rm	Optional	Return URL behavior. If set to "1" and if a "return" value is submitted, upon completion of the payment the buyer will be sent back to the return URL using a GET method, and no transaction variables will be submitted. If set to "2" and if a "return" value is submitted, the buyer will be sent back to the return URL using a POST method, to which all available transaction variables will also be posted. If omitted or set to "0", GET methods will be used for all Subscriptions transactions and Buy Now, Donations, or PayPal Shopping Cart transactions in which IPN is not enabled. POST methods with variables will be used for the rest
cancel_return	Optional	An internet URL where the user will be returned if payment is cancelled. For example, a URL on your site which hosts a "Payment Cancelled" page. If omitted, users will be taken to the PayPal site
a1	Optional	Trial amount 1. This is the price of the first trial period. For a free trial, use a value of 0
p1	Optional	Trial period 1. This is the length of the first trial period. The number is modified by the trial period 1 units (t1, below)
t1	Optional	Trial period 1 units. This is the units of trial period 1 (p1, above). Acceptable values are: D (days), W (weeks), M (months), Y (years)
a2	Optional	Trial amount 2. This is the price of the second trial period
p2	Optional	Trial period 2. This is the length of the second trial period. The number is modified by the trial period 1 units (t2, below)
t2	Optional	Trial period 2 units. This is the units of trial period 2 (p2, above). Acceptable values are: D (days), W (weeks), M (months), Y (years)
a3	Required	Regular rate. This is the price of the subscription
p3	Required	Regular billing cycle. This is the length of the billing cycle. The number is modified by the regular billing cycle units (t3, below)
t3	Required	[required] Regular billing cycle units. This is the units of the regular billing cycle (p3, above) Acceptable values are: D (days), W (weeks), M (months), Y (years)
src	Optional	Recurring payments. If set to "1," the payment will recur unless your customer cancels the subscription before the end of the billing cycle. If omitted, the subscription payment will not recur at the end of the billing cycle
sra	Optional	Reattempt on failure. If set to "1," and the payment fails, the payment will be reattempted two more times. After the third failure, the subscription will be cancelled. If omitted and the payment fails, payment will not be reattempted and the subscription will be immediately cancelled

Variable	Required/ Optional	Description
srt	Optional	Recurring Times. This is the number of payments which will occur at the regular rate. If omitted, payment will continue to recur at the regular rate until the subscription is cancelled
no_note	Required	This field makes sure your subscriber is not prompted to include a note with the subscription, a function which PayPal Subscriptions does not support. This field must be included, and the value must be set to 1
custom	Optional	User-defined field (maximum 255 characters) which will be passed through the system and returned to user in payment notification emails. This field will not be shown to your subscribers
invoice	Optional	User- defined field (maximum 127 characters) which must be unique with each subscription. The invoice number will be shown to subscribers with the other details of their transactions
usr_manage	Optional	Username and password generation field. If set to "1" PayPal will generate usernames and passwords for your subscribers. For use with Subscriptions Password Management (see page 31). If omitted, no passwords will be generated
cn	Optional	Label that will appear above the note field (maximum 30 characters). This value is not saved and will not appear in any of your notifications. If omitted, no variable will be passed back to you. "Special instructions (optional):" will be displayed.
cs	Optional	Sets the background color of your payment pages. If set to "1," the background color will be black. If omitted or set to "0" the background color will be white
on0	Optional	First option field name (maximum 30 characters). If omitted, no variable will be passed back to you
os0	Optional	First set of option value(s). If this option is selected through a text box (or radio button), each value should be no more than 30 characters. If this value is entered by the customer through a text box, there is a 200-character limit. If omitted, no variable will be passed back to you. "on0" must be defined in order for "os1" to be recognized
on1	Optional	Second option field name (maximum 30 characters). If omitted, no variable will be passed back to you
os1	Optional	Second set of option value(s). If this option is selected through a text box (or radio button), each value should be no more than 30 characters. If this value is entered by the customer through a text box, there is a 200-character limit. If omitted, no variable will be passed back to you. "on1" must be defined in order for "os1" to be recognized

Variable	Required/ Optional	Description
tax	Optional	Transaction-based tax override variable. Set to a flat tax amount you would like to apply to the transaction regardless of the buyer's location. If present, this value overrides any tax settings that may be set in the seller's Profile. If omitted, Profile tax settings (if any) will apply
currency_code	Optional	The currency of the payment. Defines the currency in which the monetary variables (amount, shipping, shipping2, handling, tax) are denoted. Possible values are "USD" (U.S. Dollar), "EUR" (Euro), "GBP" (Pound Sterling), "CAD" (Canadian Dollar), "JPY" (Yen). If omitted, all monetary fields will be interpreted as U.S. Dollars
modify	Optional	Modification behavior. If set to zero or omitted, the button will only allow buyers to create new subscriptions. If set to "1", the button will only allow buyers to modify existing subscriptions according to the other parameters specified by the button. If set to "2", the button will allow buyers to modify current subscriptions if they have any, and to sign up for new subscriptions if they do not
lc	Optional	Sets the default country and associated language for the login or signup page that your customers see when they click your button. If this variable is absent, the default will be set from the user's cookie, or will be set to the U.S. if there is no cookie. Can be set to any of the countries currently available on PayPal.

Notes:

If you would like to remove the values for a variable (i.e., leave the amount blank for your customer to define), you should remove the entire variable, not just the value. For example, you should remove this entire line from the code:

```
<input type="hidden" name="amount" value="5.95">
```

rather than just the value of "5.95".

Integrating PayPal Subscriptions with your Website

Techniques for automating PayPal Subscriptions

You can set up PayPal Subscriptions to be fully automated and integrated with your website using the features below.

Pass-Through Variables

PayPal makes several “pass-through” variables available which can be used to match payments with a customer ID, transaction ID, or any other pertinent information which you supply for tracking and identification purposes. The three primary pass-through variables are “item_number” (best used for customer or product ID), “invoice” (best used for a unique transaction ID; PayPal will enforce uniqueness on this variable in your account), and “custom” (best used for miscellaneous information that is not disclosed to the buyer). All three of these variables will display in the merchant’s email notifications, transaction details, downloadable log, and Instant Payment Notification (see below). “Invoice” and “item_number” are similarly disclosed to the buyer, but “custom” is not.

For more information, see page 34.

Instant Payment Notification

Instant Payment Notifications allow you to immediately act on new sign-ups, payments, and cancellations by sending immediate notifications to your server.

For example, when a subscriber returns to your “Successful Payment URL” after signing up for a subscription, you can dynamically display a page giving him immediate access to the subscription.

For more information, see the PayPal Instant Payment Notification Manual, available on the PayPal website.

Password Management

With Subscriptions Password Management, PayPal can generate unique usernames and passwords for your subscribers, enabling them to access “member only” content on your site.

After a customer signs up for a subscription, he will be given a unique username and password on the PayPal Successful Completion page. You will

then activate the username/password pair on your website's server through code you write.

Merchants using "Basic Authentication" with an Apache web server on Linux may use a sample Perl script developed by PayPal that provides complete Subscriptions management. The Perl script is easy to install and interacts with PayPal's Instant Payment Notification interface to automatically activate and deactivate subscription accounts.

To learn more about Subscriptions Password Generation, log in to your PayPal account and go to the "Sell" tab. Choose the link by the "Subscriptions Password Management" checkbox.

Pre-Populate Your Customer's PayPal Sign-Up

Increase sales by pre-populating your customer's PayPal payment pages.

If you have already collected your customer's information, you can pass this information to PayPal to pre-populate the first page of a new customer's sign-up. The fields and parameters are listed below. You can pass all or none of this data. While your customer's sign-up page will be pre-populated, it will still be editable.

To pass this information to the PayPal payment pages, post the variable name and the associated data to PayPal in the HTML in the form of "variable name = value". You will also need to change your `cmd` value to `'_ext-enter'` and add a new variable, `'redirect_cmd'`, whose value should be `'_xclick_subscriptions'`. Please see the sample code below for an example.

Variable	Value	Requirements
<code>first_name</code>	First name	Alpha characters only. Maximum length = 32
<code>last_name</code>	Last name	Alpha characters only. Maximum length = 64
<code>address1</code>	Street (1 of 2 fields)	Alpha-Numeric characters only. Maximum length = 100
<code>address2</code>	Street (2 of 2 fields)	Alpha-Numeric characters only. Maximum length = 100
<code>city</code>	City	Alpha characters only. Maximum length = 100
<code>state</code>	State	Must be 2 character official abbreviation
<code>zip</code>	Zip	Numeric characters only. Maximum length = 32 characters
<code>night_phone_a</code>	Home phone (1 of 3 fields)	Numeric characters only. Maximum length = 3 characters
<code>night_phone_b</code>	Home phone (2 of 3 fields)	Numeric characters only. Maximum length = 3 characters
<code>night_phone_c</code>	Home phone (3 of 3 fields)	Numeric characters only. Maximum length = 4 characters
<code>day_phone_a</code>	Work phone (1 of 3 fields)	Numeric characters only. Maximum length = 3 characters
<code>day_phone_b</code>	Work phone (2 of 3 fields)	Numeric characters only. Maximum length = 3 characters
<code>day_phone_c</code>	Work phone (3 of 3 fields)	Numeric characters only. Maximum length = 4 characters

Sample Code

The following sample HTML code shows how the optional pre-population fields would be included in your payment buttons. The field entries would need to be dynamically generated by your website and included in the URL to which your customers are sent when they try to make a PayPal payment.

```
<form action="https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr" method="POST">
<input type="hidden" name="cmd" value="_ext-enter">
<input type="hidden" name="redirect_cmd" value="_xclick-
subscriptions">
<input type="hidden" name="business" value="alice@mystore.com">
<input type="hidden" name="item_name" value="Alice's Writers Digest">
<input type="hidden" name="item_number" value="12">
<input type="hidden" name="no_note" value="1">
<input type="hidden" name="currency_code" value="USD">
<input type="hidden" name="a1" value="0.00">
<input type="hidden" name="p1" value="1">
<input type="hidden" name="t1" value="W">
<input type="hidden" name="a3" value="20.00">
<input type="hidden" name="p3" value="1">
<input type="hidden" name="t3" value="Y">
<input type="hidden" name="src" value="1">
<input type="hidden" name="sra" value="1"><input type="hidden"
name="first_name" value="John">
<input type="hidden" name="last_name" value="Doe">
<input type="hidden" name="address1" value="9 Elm Street">
<input type="hidden" name="address2" value="Apt 5">
<input type="hidden" name="city" value="Berwyn">
<input type="hidden" name="state" value="PA">
<input type="hidden" name="zip" value="19312">
<input type="hidden" name="night_phone_a" value="610">
<input type="hidden" name="night_phone_b" value="555">
<input type="hidden" name="night_phone_c" value="1234">
<input type="hidden" name="day_phone_a" value="610">
<input type="hidden" name="day_phone_b" value="555">
<input type="hidden" name="day_phone_c" value="1222">
<input type="image" SRC="http://images.paypal.com/images/x-click-
but01.gif" border="0" name="submit" alt="Make payments with PayPal -
it's fast, free and secure!">
```

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is a cookie?**
- **What are the "terms" of my subscription?**
- **What does "reattempt on failure" mean?**
- **How do I give my new customer access to his subscription?**
- **Can I require my subscribers to have a credit card?**
- **How can I track my subscribers?**

What is a cookie?

"Cookies" are small files of data that we send to your computer to allow us to recognize you as a PayPal customer if you return to the PayPal site using the same computer and browser. We send a "session cookie" to your computer if and when you log in to your PayPal account by entering your e-mail address and password. These cookies allow us to recognize you if you visit multiple pages in our site during the same session, so that you don't need to re-enter your password multiple times. Once you log out or close your browser, these session cookies expire and no longer have any effect.

We also use longer-lasting cookies to display your e-mail address on our sign-in form, so that you don't have to retype the e-mail address each time when you log in to your PayPal account. In addition, we use cookies to process our referral program.

Our cookie files are encoded so that your e-mail address and other information can only be interpreted by PayPal. We may, however, share cookie information regarding whether or not a certain user is already registered with PayPal with certain merchants with whom we have an official co-marketing relationship.

What are the "terms" of my subscription?

Your Subscription Terms are the payment instructions for the subscription. You can use the optional "Trial Periods" to give your subscribers introductory rates to your subscription, and the required "Regular Billing Cycle" for your regular rates. For more information, see page 9.

What does "reattempt on failure" mean?

The reattempting failed payments option allows you to reattempt failed payments before cancelling the subscription. Scheduled payments may fail due to several reasons, including insufficient funds. Payments will be

reattempted 3 days after the failure date. If it fails again, we will try once more 5 days later. Failure on this last attempt leads to cancellation of the subscription. Note: eChecks are automatically reattempted only once, 3 days after we notify the user that his payment failed.

Reattempts will not occur if another subscription payment based on the same subscription terms is scheduled within 14 days of the failed payment (so payments do not overlap).

How do I give my new customer access to his subscription?

When a subscriber finishes signing up for the subscription and making any necessary first payments, he is sent back to the page of your Successful Payment URL (if you specified one when creating your Subscriptions button).

You can give the subscriber further information about his subscription (such as his access password) on this Successful Payment page.

To validate that a user signed up and made a payment, you can check your history transaction log (an email will also be sent, although this is less secure than validation). For more secure and instant notification of the payments you receive, you may also sign up for Instant Payment Notification (see page 26). If your subscription requires passwords, you can use Instant Payment Notification to instantly validate the information and allow the user to go through your own password management process on the return URL.

Alternately, you may also choose to simply email the user his subscription information.

Can I require my subscribers to have a credit card?

Yes. If you would like to require your subscribers to have a credit card before they may subscribe to your service, log in to your account and go to the "Profile" subtab of the "My Account" tab. Choose the "Preferences" link from the left-hand menu, and click on "Payment Receiving Preferences." Set the "Subscribers must have Credit Card" preference to "yes," and save your changes. (The "Subscribers must have Credit Card" preference will only appear after you have received your first subscription.)

Even if you decide not to use this preference, remember that all of your subscribers are required to have either a credit card or a confirmed bank account before they may sign up for a subscription.

How can I track my subscribers?

PayPal will generate a unique PayPal ID number for every one of your subscribers. This PayPal ID Number will be shown in email notifications, Instant Payment Notifications, and your downloadable history transaction log. You can also use three fields in the Subscriptions button for tracking purposes: the item number, the invoice number, and the custom number.