USER MANUAL

PHP Mall

Complete documentation for the multi-vendor marketplace script: installation, the storefront, the vendor panel and the admin panel. Choose a topic below.

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Online version: https://www.netartmedia.net/manuals/phpmall/

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GETTING STARTED

System Requirements

PHP Mall runs on ordinary shared, VPS or dedicated hosting. No special software is needed.

Required

- PHP 8.0 or newer (tested on PHP 8.2)
- MySQL 5.7+ / MariaDB 10.3+ (tested on MySQL 8.0)
- PHP extensions: `pdo_mysql`, `curl`, `gd`, `mbstring`, `json`, `fileinfo`
- Apache with `mod_rewrite` and `.htaccess` support (for friendly URLs; Nginx works with equivalent rewrite rules)
- HTTPS certificate (strongly recommended, required by Stripe and PayPal live mode)

Optional

- A Stripe account and/or PayPal business account to charge buyers and vendors
- An API key for an OpenAI-compatible provider (Groq, OpenAI or DeepSeek) to enable the AI features
- An SMTP mailbox for reliable transactional e-mail

Folder permissions

The web server must be able to write to the `uploads/` folder and the folders that hold product and store images, as well as to the `categories/` and `locations/` folders when you edit them from the admin panel.

GETTING STARTED

Installation Guide

Installing PHP Mall takes a few minutes and requires no command line.

Steps

1. Create an empty MySQL database and a database user.
2. Upload the contents of the `PHPMall` folder to your web root (or a sub-folder) using FTP or your hosting file manager.
3. Edit `config.php` and enter the database host, user, password, database name and the domain (see the configuration file).
4. Open `https://your-domain.com/setup.php` in the browser.
5. Choose the admin user name and password. Tick *install demo data* if you want sample vendors and products.
6. Click **Install**. The tables are created and the admin account is set up.
7. **Delete** `setup.php` from the server when finished.

> You can also install from the command line: `php setup.php admin yourpassword demo`.

After installation

Log in to the admin panel at `/ADMIN/` and follow the first steps checklist.

Troubleshooting

- Blank page: set `$DEBUG_MODE=true` in `config.php` temporarily to see errors.
- Cannot connect to database: verify host, user and password, and that the user has rights on the database.
- Images do not upload: check folder permissions and the PHP `upload_max_filesize` setting.

GETTING STARTED

The config.php Configuration File

The file `config.php` in the root folder holds the technical settings. Everything else is configured from the admin panel.

Setting	Meaning
`$DOMAIN_NAME`	Your domain and path, without `http://`, for example `www.mymall.com` or `www.example.com/shop`.
Database host / user / password / name	MySQL connection details.
Table prefix	Prefix of the tables (default `mall_`). Change it only before installation.
`$DEBUG_MODE`	Shows PHP and SQL errors. Keep it **false** on a live site.
`$ProductName`	The product name shown in the admin panel title.

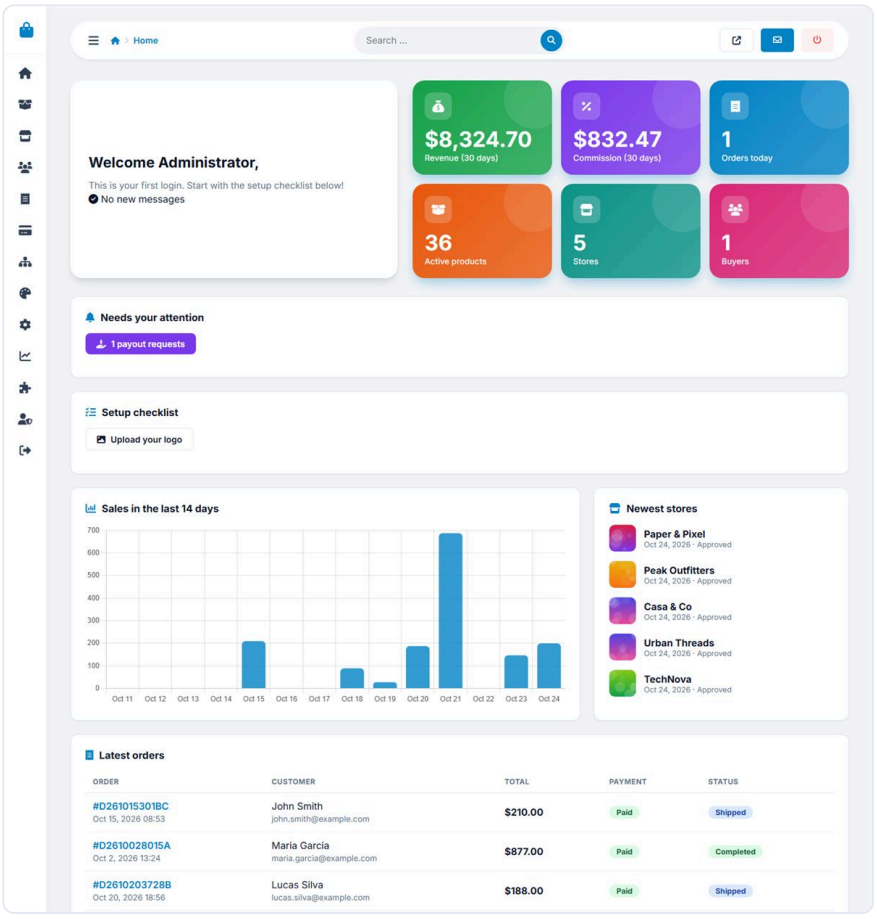
The file is plain PHP and can be edited with any text editor.

GETTING STARTED

First Steps Checklist

Follow this checklist to turn a fresh installation into a live marketplace.

1. Open Settings → Configuration and set the site name, contact e-mail, currency and commission.
2. Upload your logo and favicon (Website → Logo) and choose colors in Appearance.
3. Edit categories and locations to match your niche.
4. Add your Stripe and PayPal keys in Payment settings.
5. Add an AI key in Settings → AI.
6. Configure e-mail and send a test message.
7. Decide how vendors are charged: free, per listing fee or monthly plans.
8. Edit the legal and help pages in Website → Pages.
9. Remove demo data if you do not want it, then invite your first vendors.



The admin dashboard shows sales, vendors and pending tasks

GETTING STARTED

Friendly URLs, SEO and Sitemap

PHP Mall is built to be found in search engines.

Friendly URLs

With `.htaccess` enabled the shop uses readable addresses:

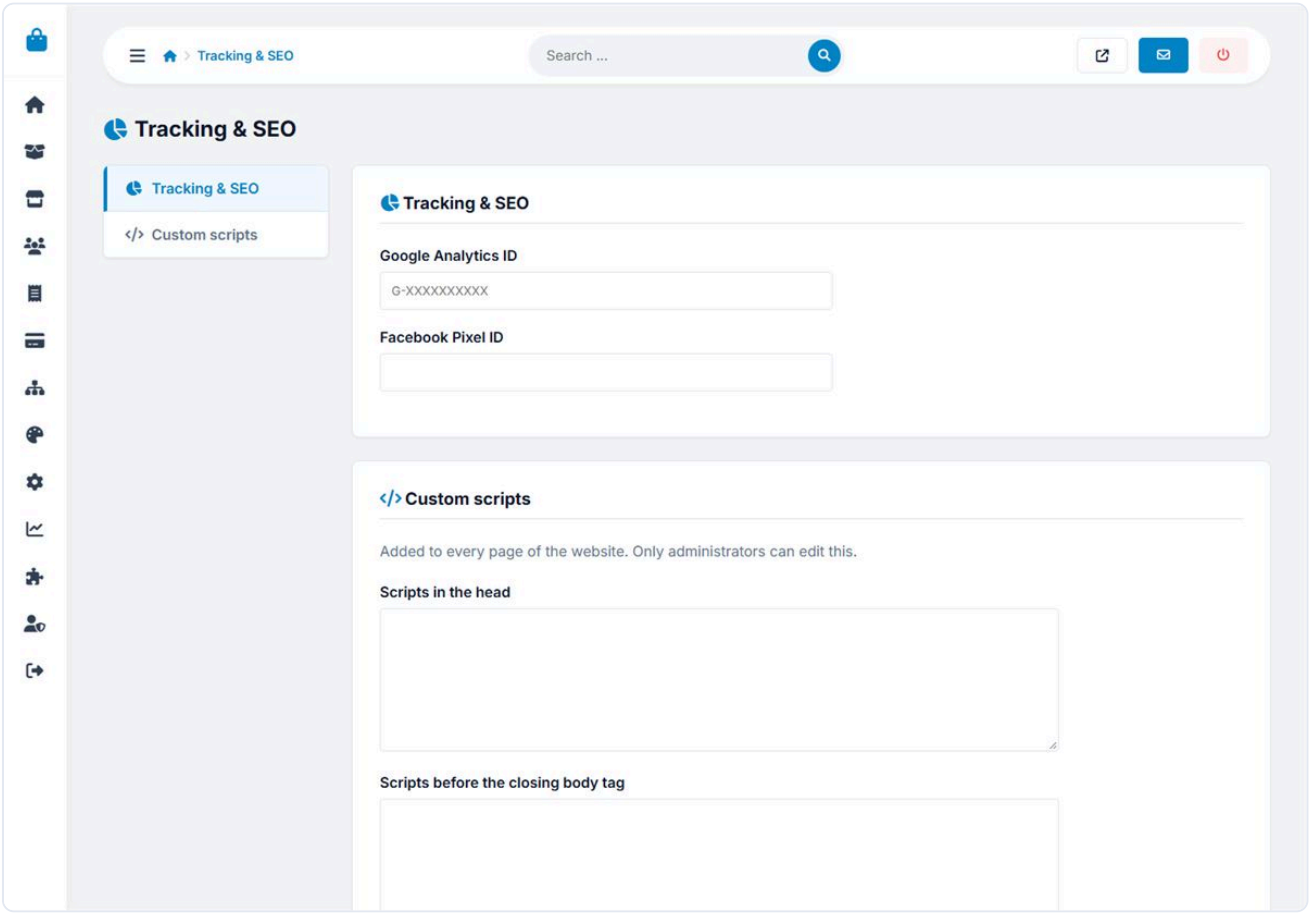
- Products: `/blue-leather-bag-123`
- Stores: `/my-store-name`
- Categories: `/category-name-code`
- Other languages are prefixed with the language code, for example `/es-...`

Sitemap

The file `sitemap.php` generates an XML sitemap with products, stores, categories and pages. Submit `https://your-domain.com/sitemap.php` to Google Search Console.

Meta tags

Each product, store and page has its own title and description. Default patterns are edited in Settings → Tracking / SEO.



SEO settings in the admin panel

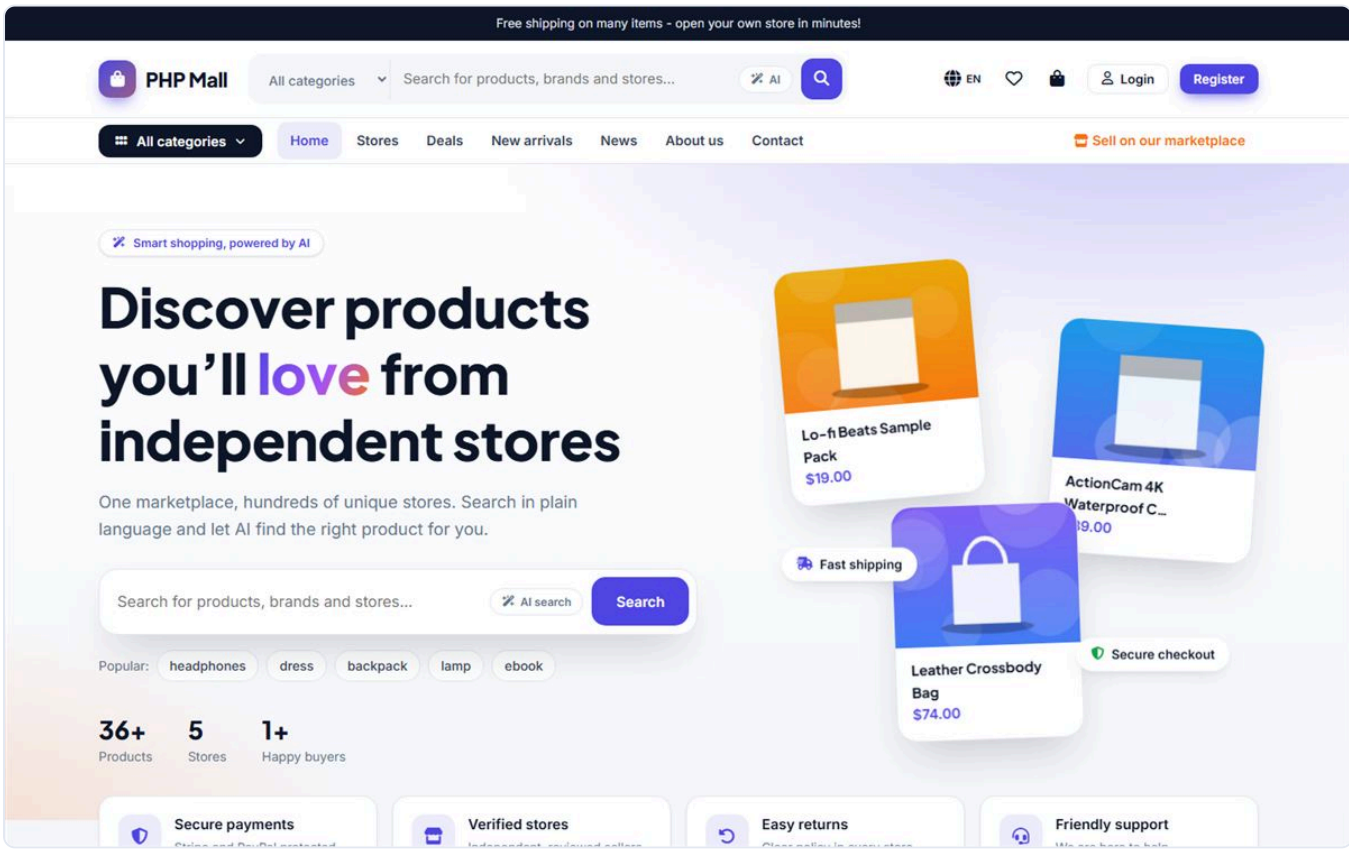
STOREFRONT (BUYERS)

Marketplace Homepage

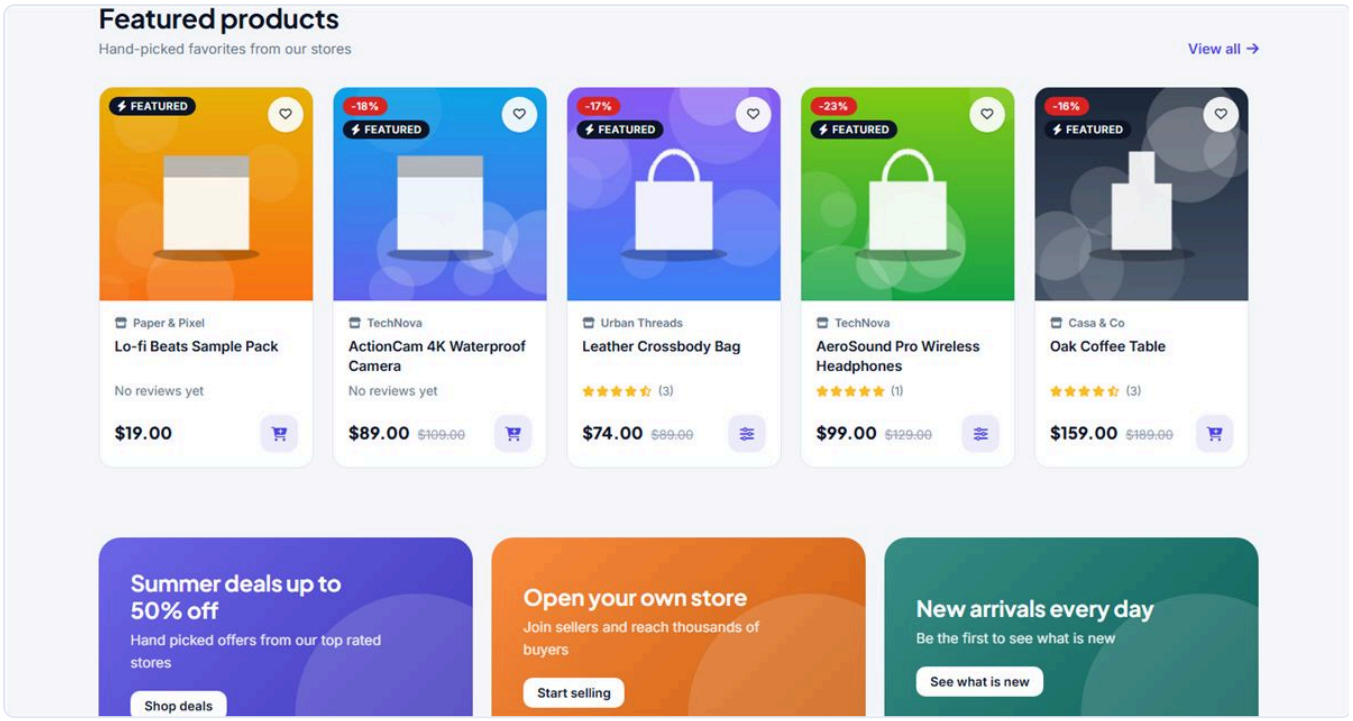
The homepage presents the marketplace and leads visitors to products.

Sections

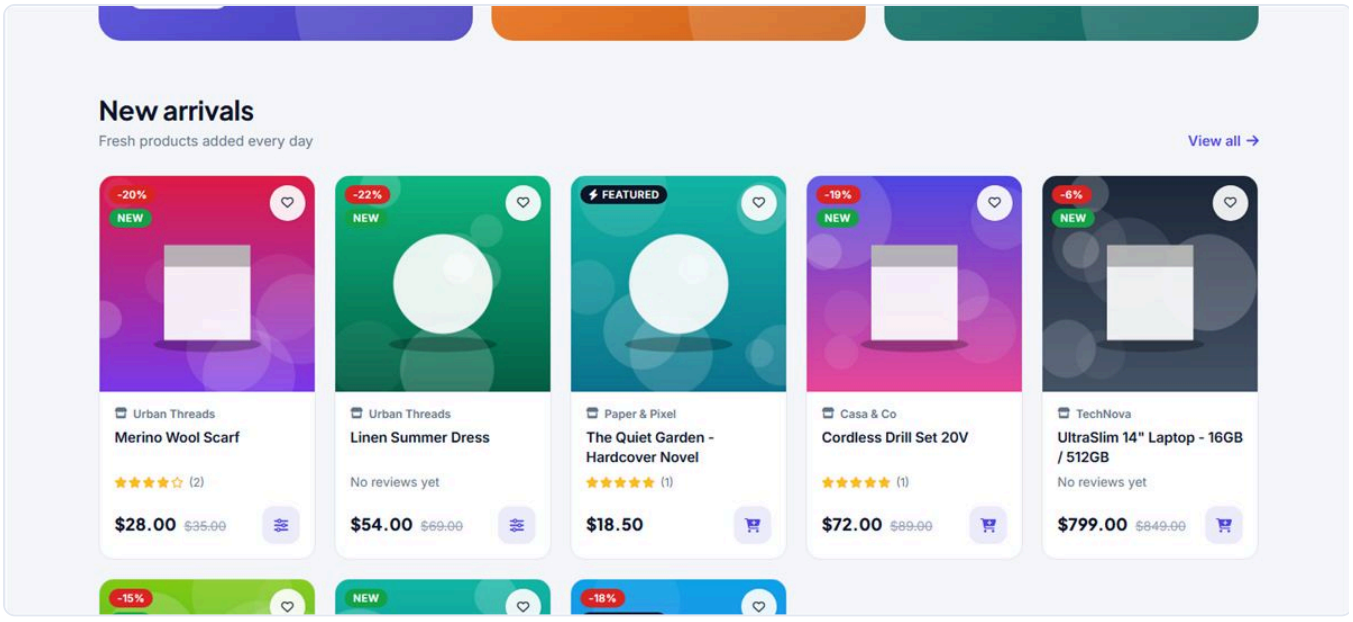
- **Hero and search** – a prominent search box with popular categories.
- **Categories** – icon grid of the main categories from your text file.
- **Featured products** – listings that vendors upgraded with a paid feature.
- **Deals and new arrivals** – discounted and recent products.
- **Banners** – promotional images managed in Catalog → Banners.
- **Top stores** – best vendors.



Homepage hero section



Featured products



Deals and promotional banners

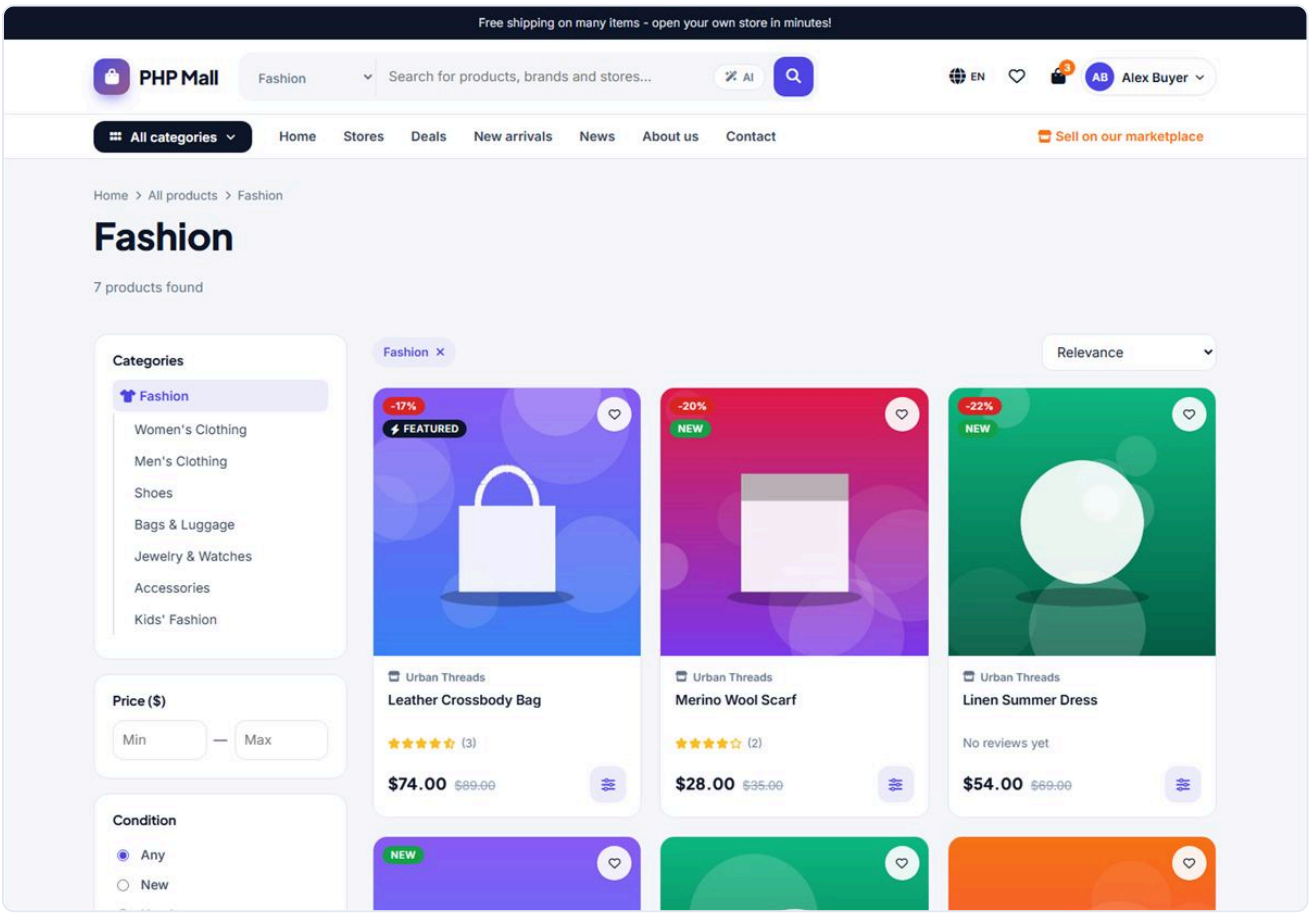
STOREFRONT (BUYERS)

Product Search and Filters

Buyers can narrow thousands of products in a few clicks.

Filters

- Keyword
- Category and sub-category
- Price range
- Location
- Vendor / store
- Sort by newest, price or popularity



Search results with filters

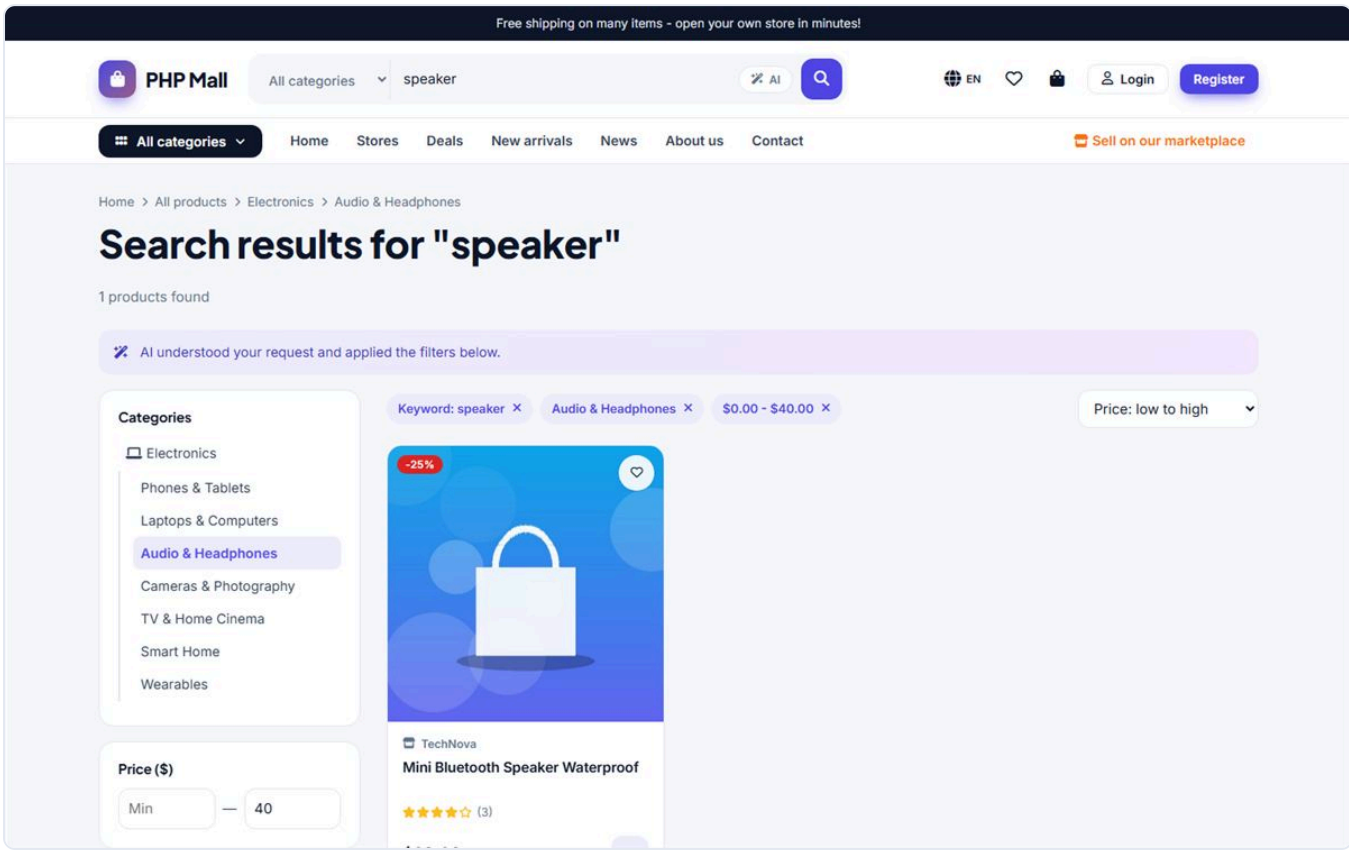
See also AI product search.

STOREFRONT (BUYERS)

AI Product Search

Instead of guessing keywords, shoppers can type a sentence like “a gift for a hiking friend under $50”.

The AI turns the sentence into search filters (category, keywords, price) and the normal search shows the results. It needs an AI key configured in Settings → AI. If no key is set, the normal search is used.



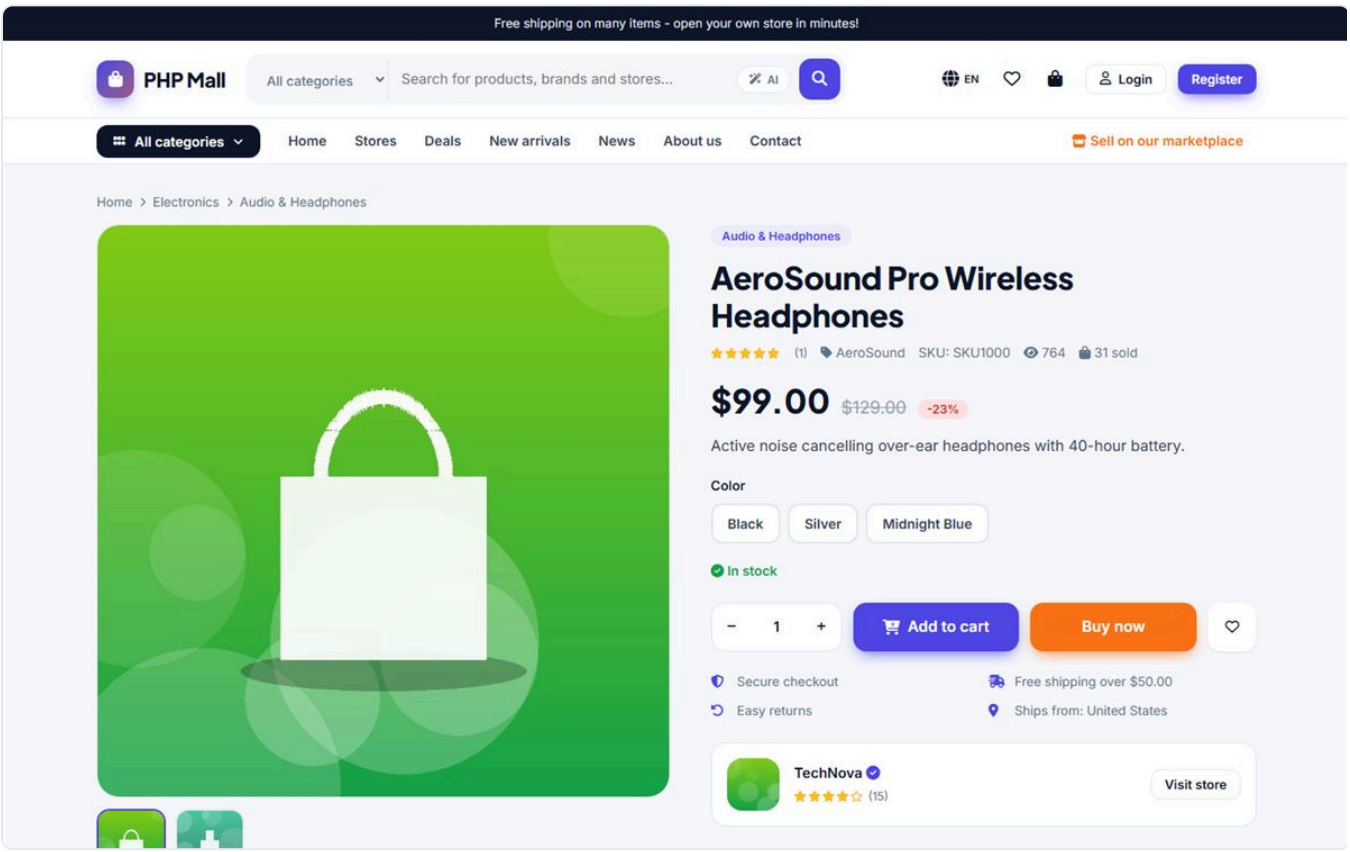
AI search box

STOREFRONT (BUYERS)

Product Page

The product page contains everything needed to decide and buy.

- Gallery with several images
- Price, discount and stock status
- Add to cart / buy now
- Digital downloads where the vendor offers them
- Vendor card with link to the store
- Shipping and return information from the vendor
- Customer reviews and ratings
- Message the seller
- Related products



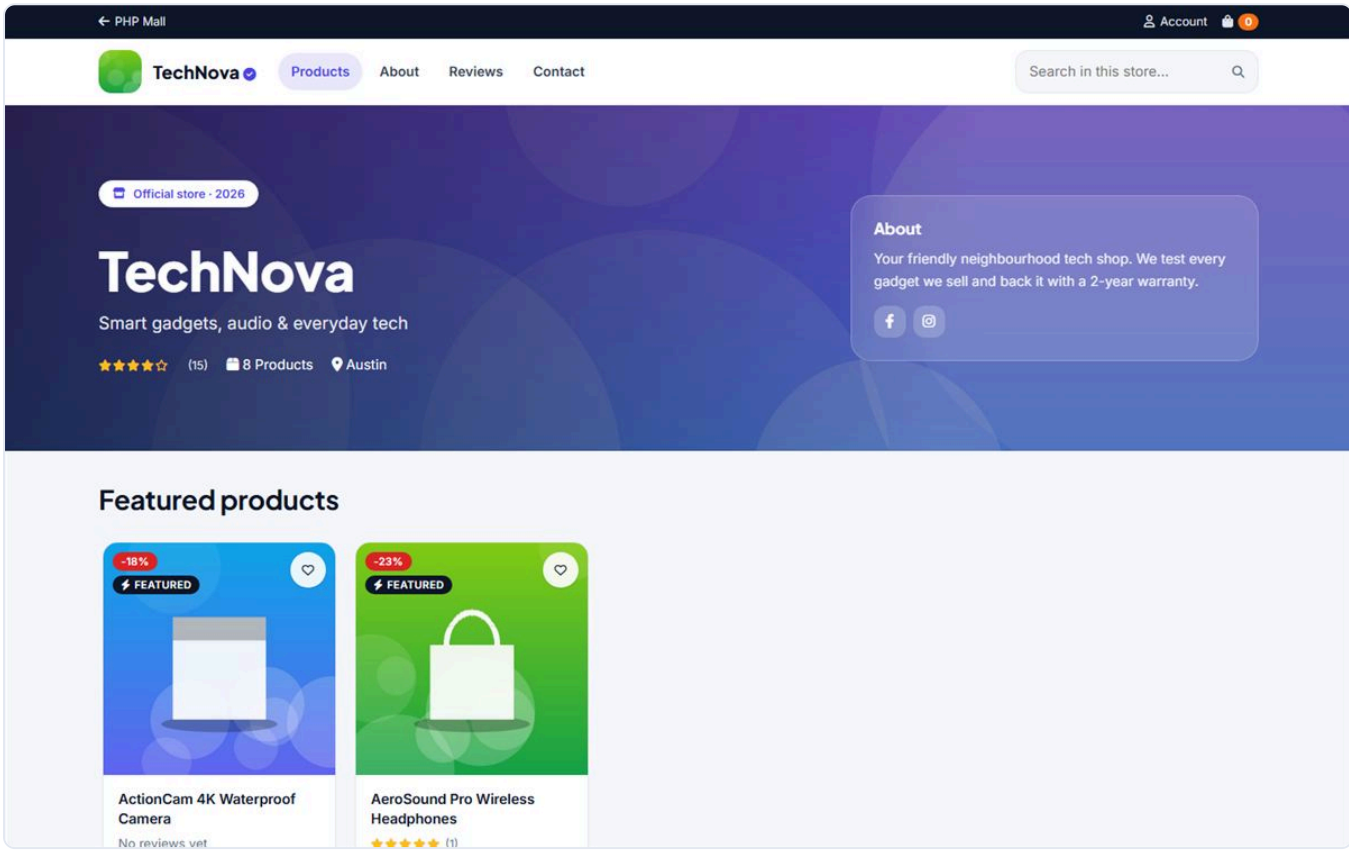
Product page

STOREFRONT (BUYERS)

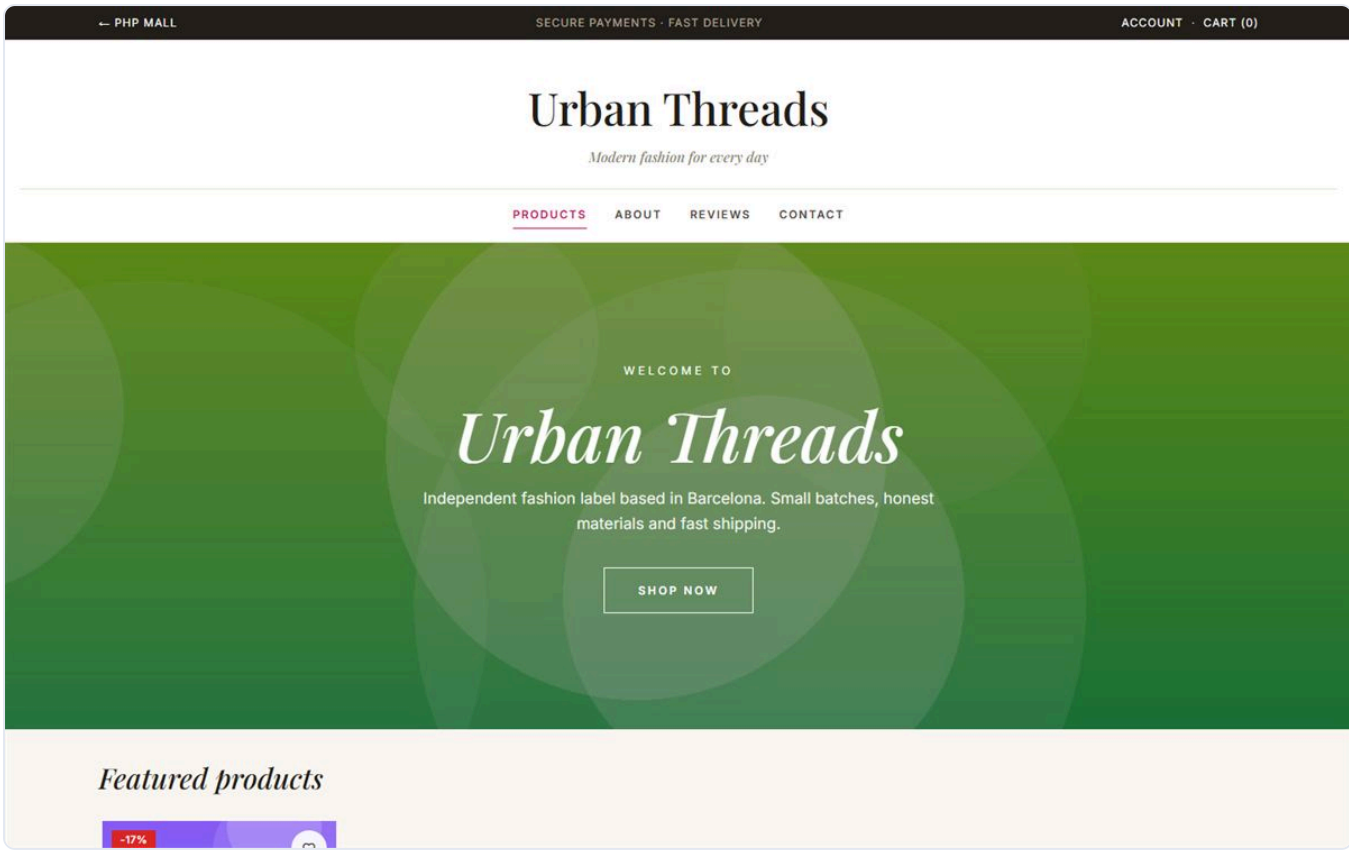
Vendor Store Pages and Templates

Every vendor automatically receives a storefront at `/store-name`.

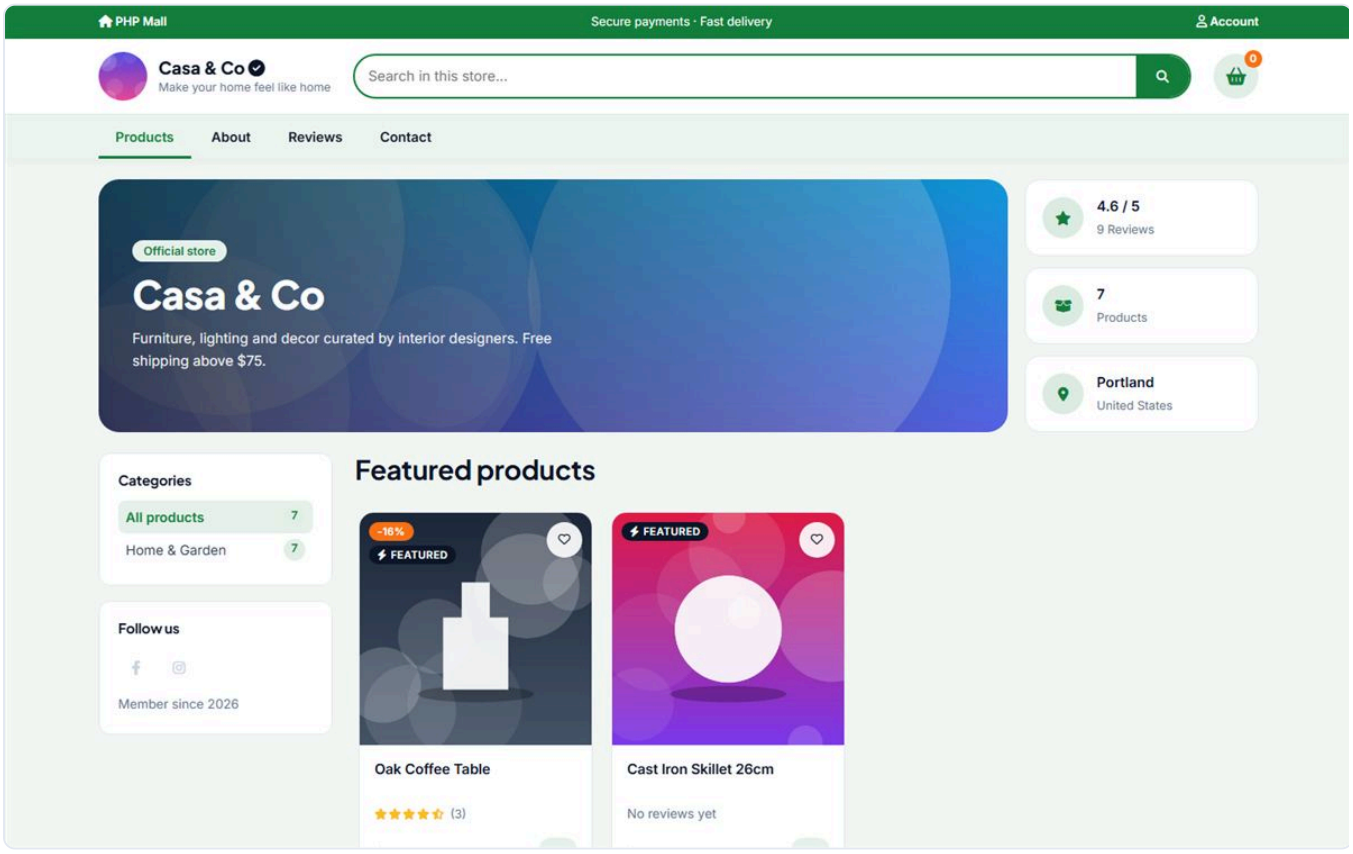
Vendors choose one of five templates in the vendor panel: Aurora, Boutique, Fresh, Metro and Minimal.



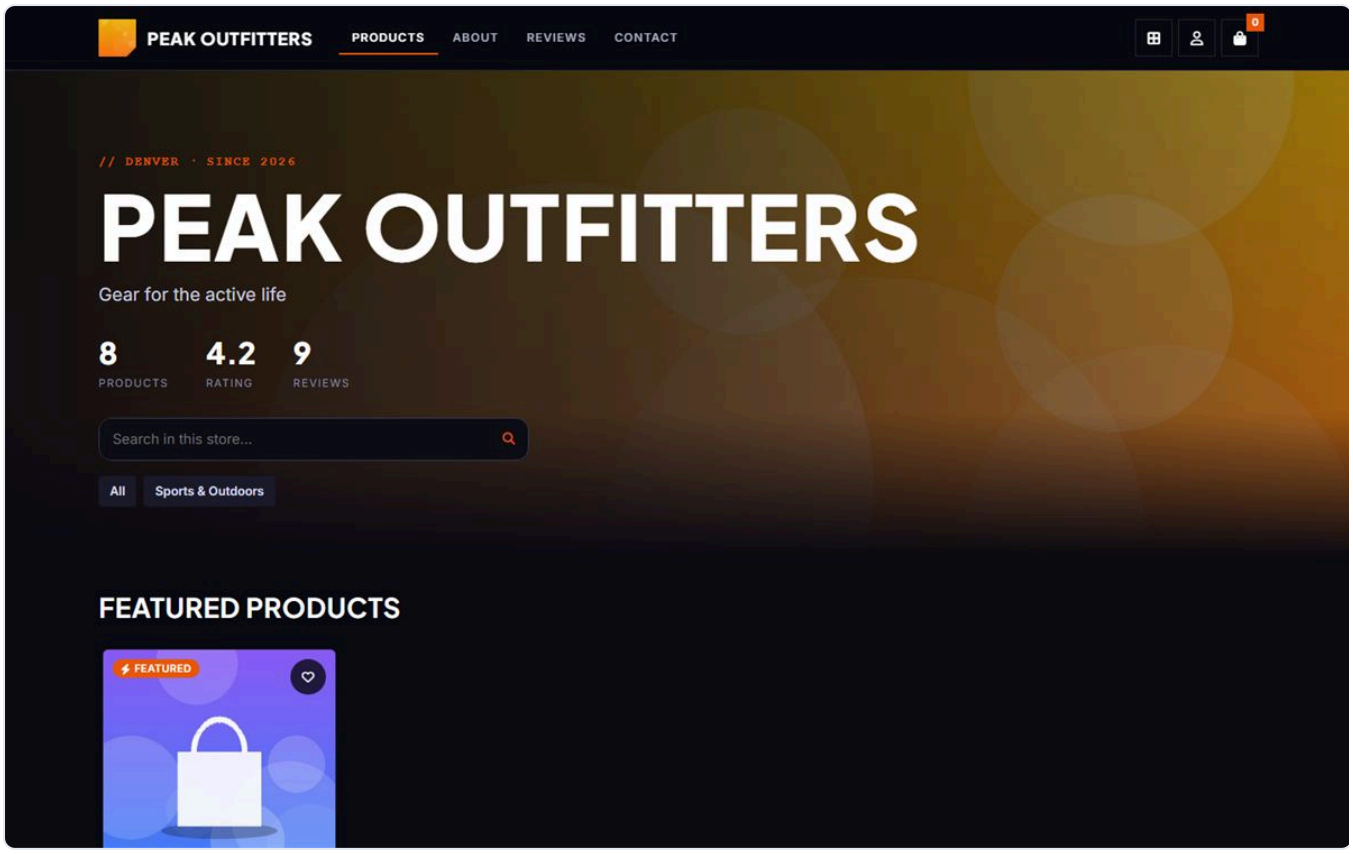
Aurora template



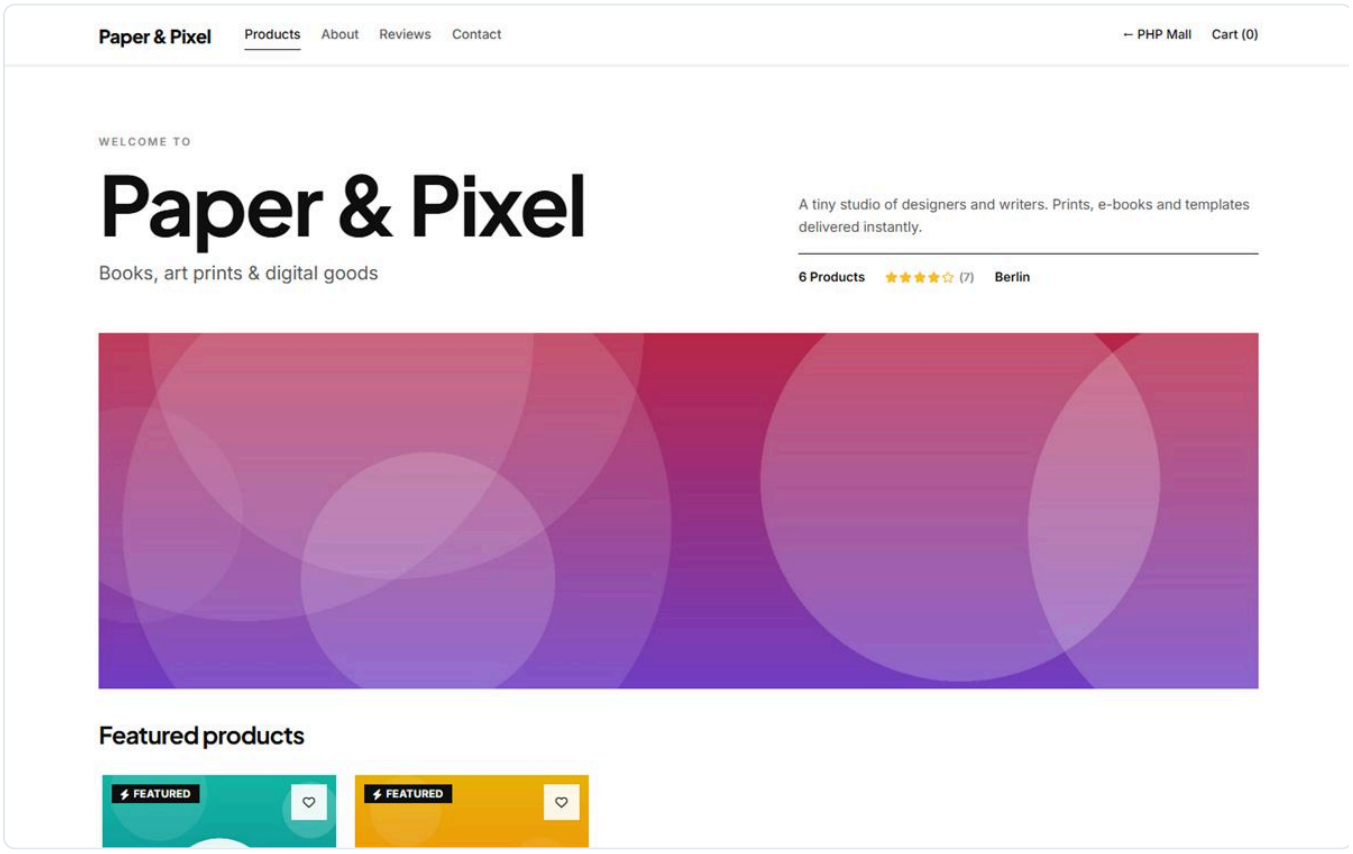
Boutique template



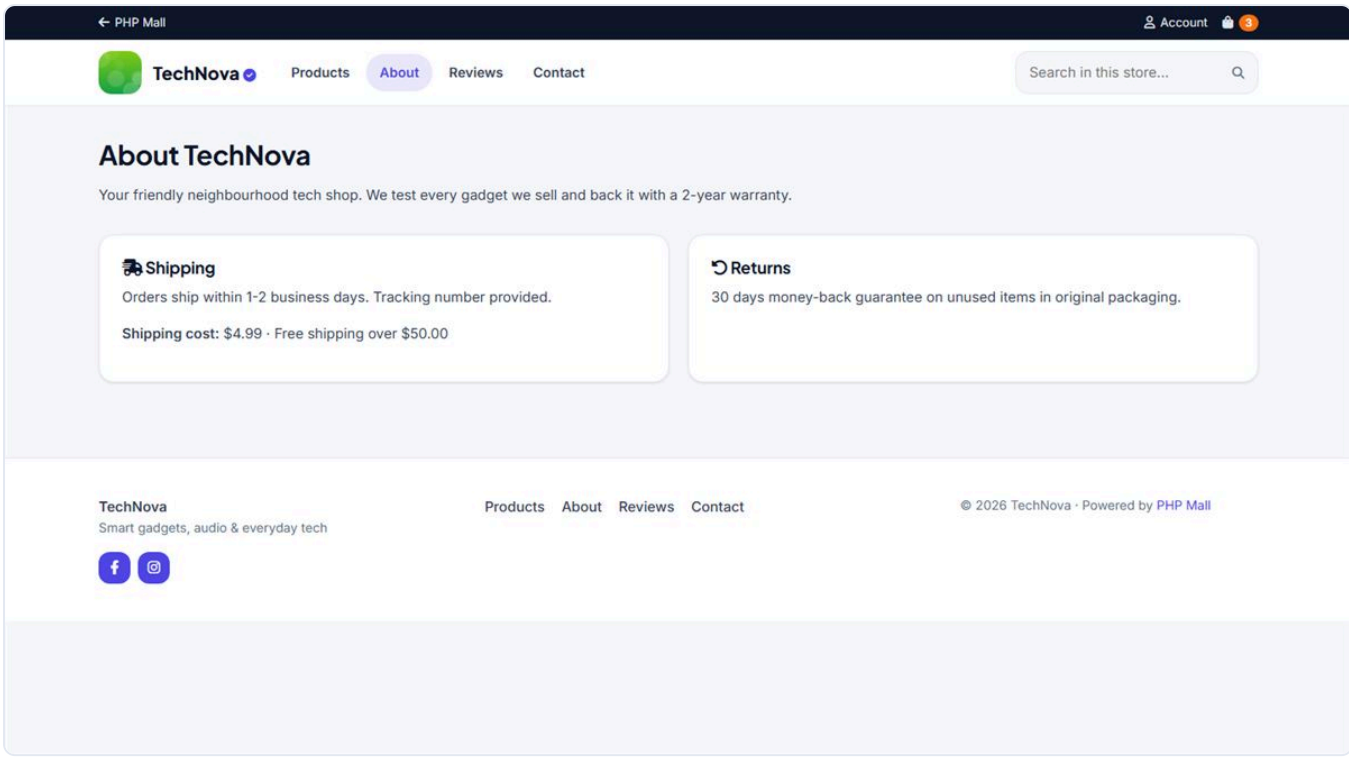
Fresh template



Metro template



Minimal template



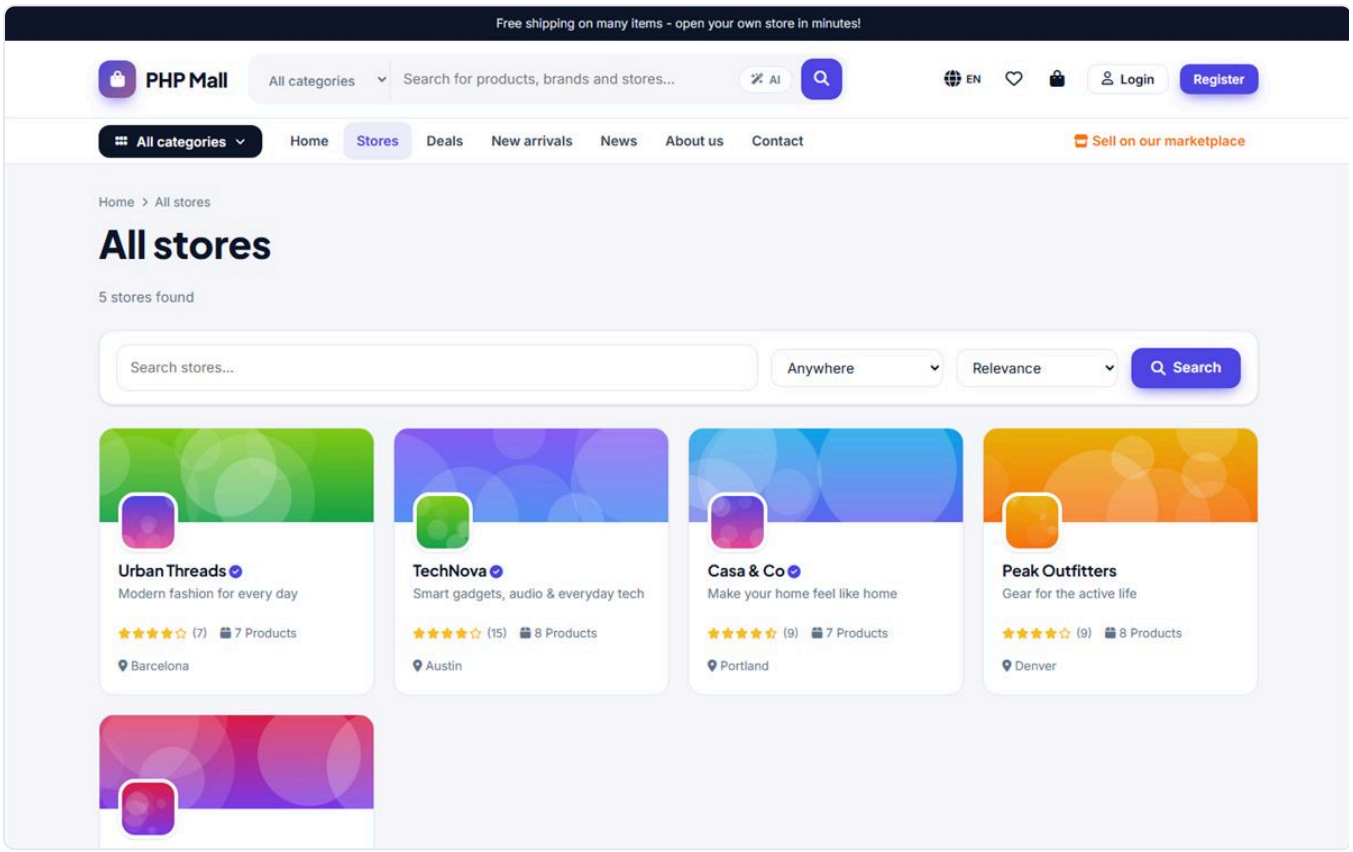
Store about page

STOREFRONT (BUYERS)

Stores Directory

The directory lists every active store.

Shoppers can search by name, filter by category or location and open any store.



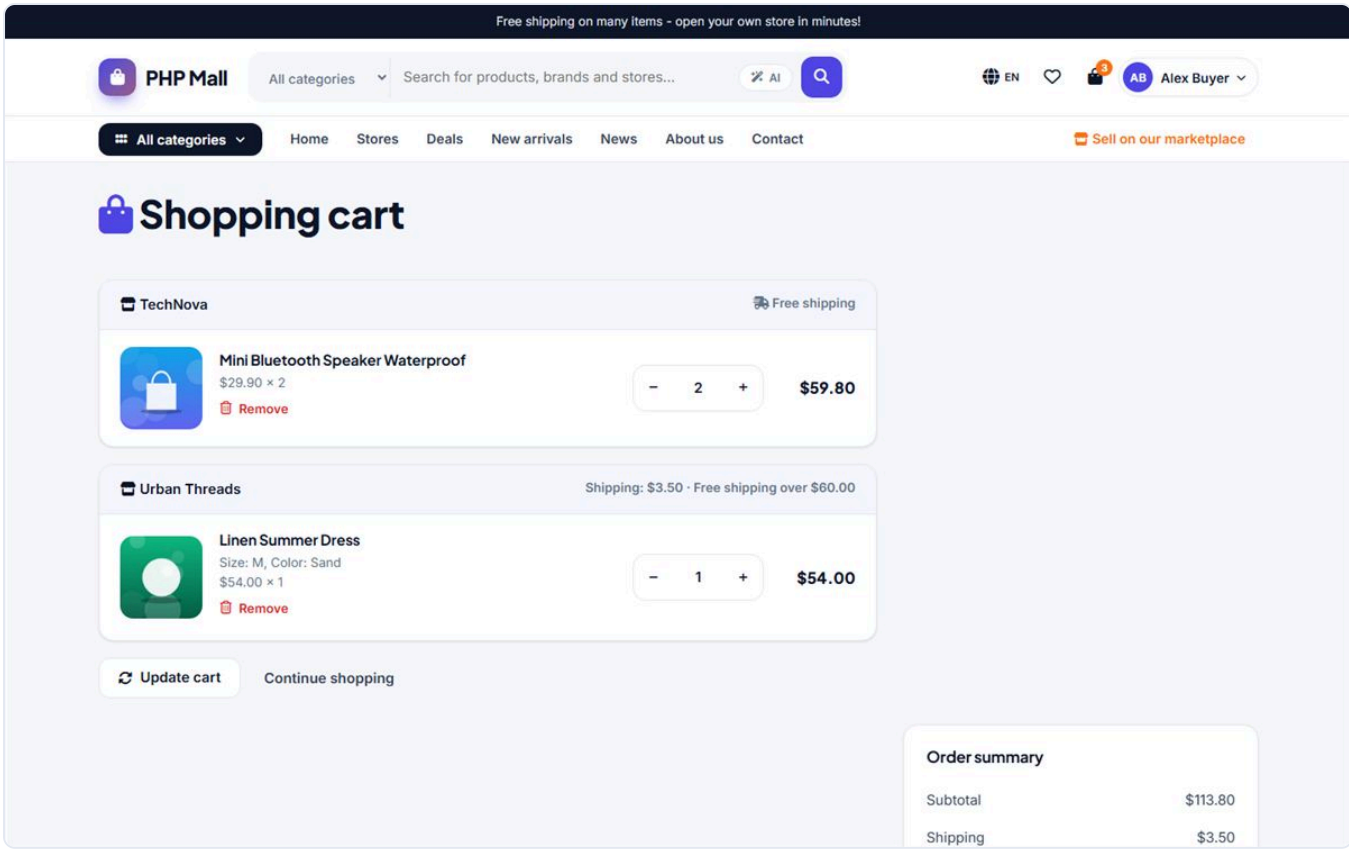
Stores directory

STOREFRONT (BUYERS)

Shopping Cart

The cart can contain products from several vendors at once.

- Change quantities or remove items
- Items are grouped by store
- Enter a coupon code
- Shipping is calculated per vendor



The cart

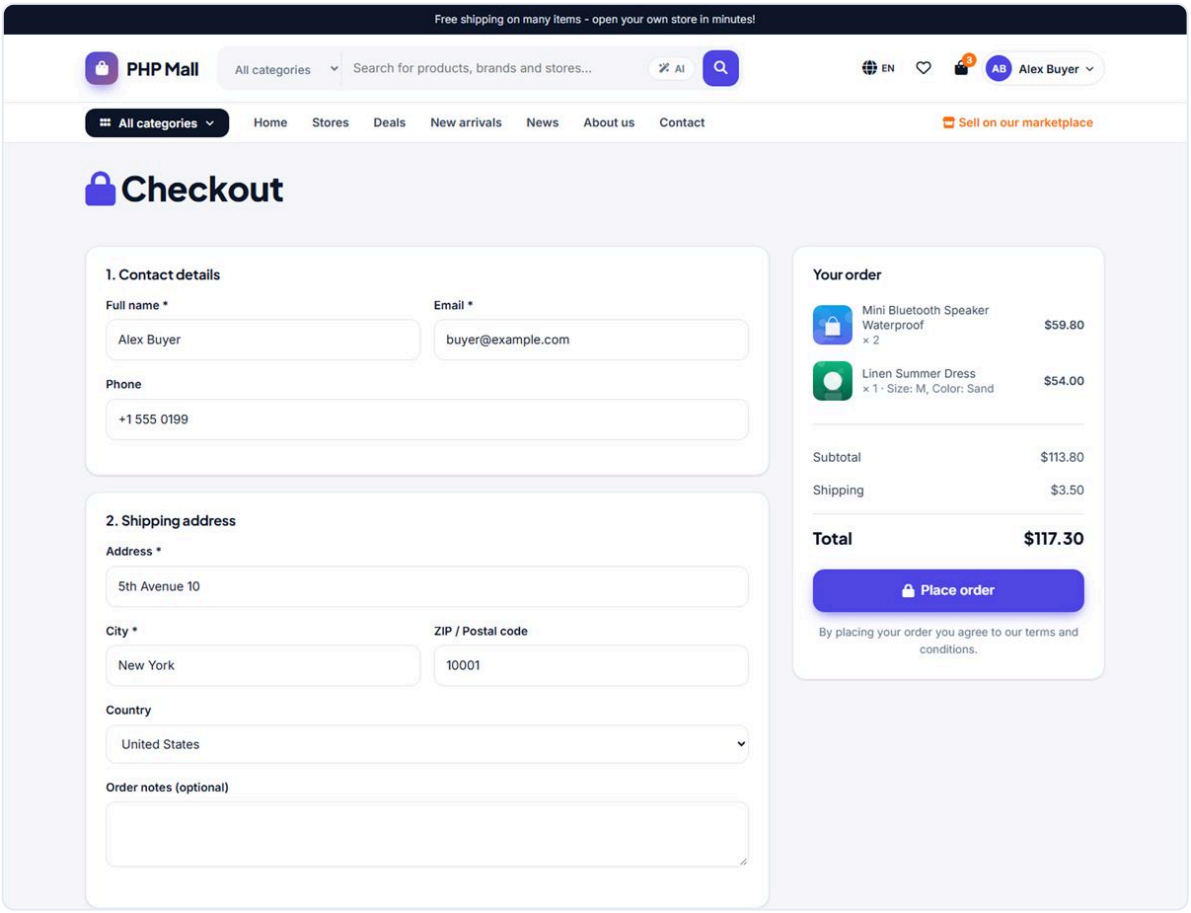
STOREFRONT (BUYERS)

Checkout and Payment

Checkout is a single page with secure hosted payment.

1. Buyer enters the shipping address.
2. Chooses Stripe (card) or PayPal.
3. Is redirected to the secure payment page of the provider.
4. Returns to the shop where the order is confirmed and e-mails are sent to the buyer and vendors.

Card data never touches your server.

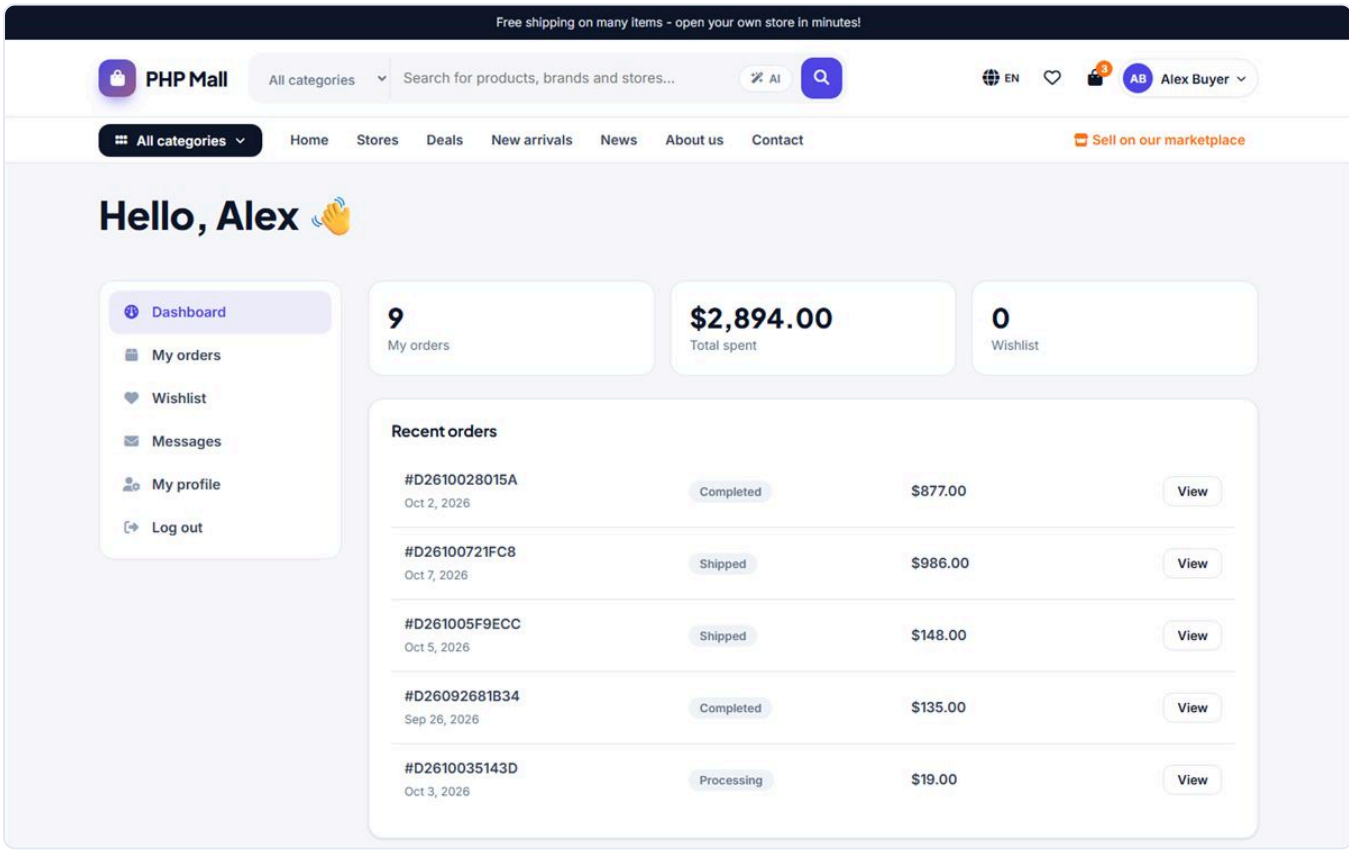


Checkout page

STOREFRONT (BUYERS)

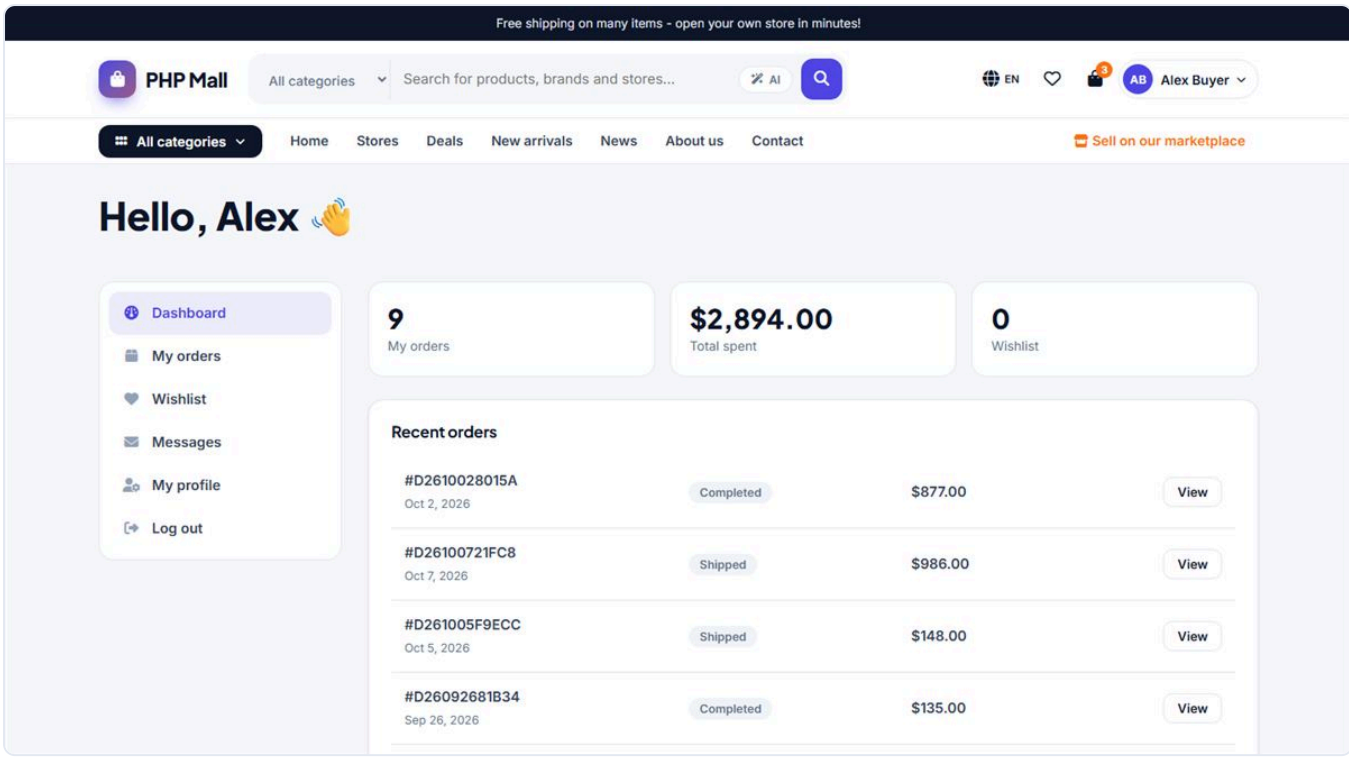
Buyer Registration and Account

Buyers can register, log in and follow their orders.

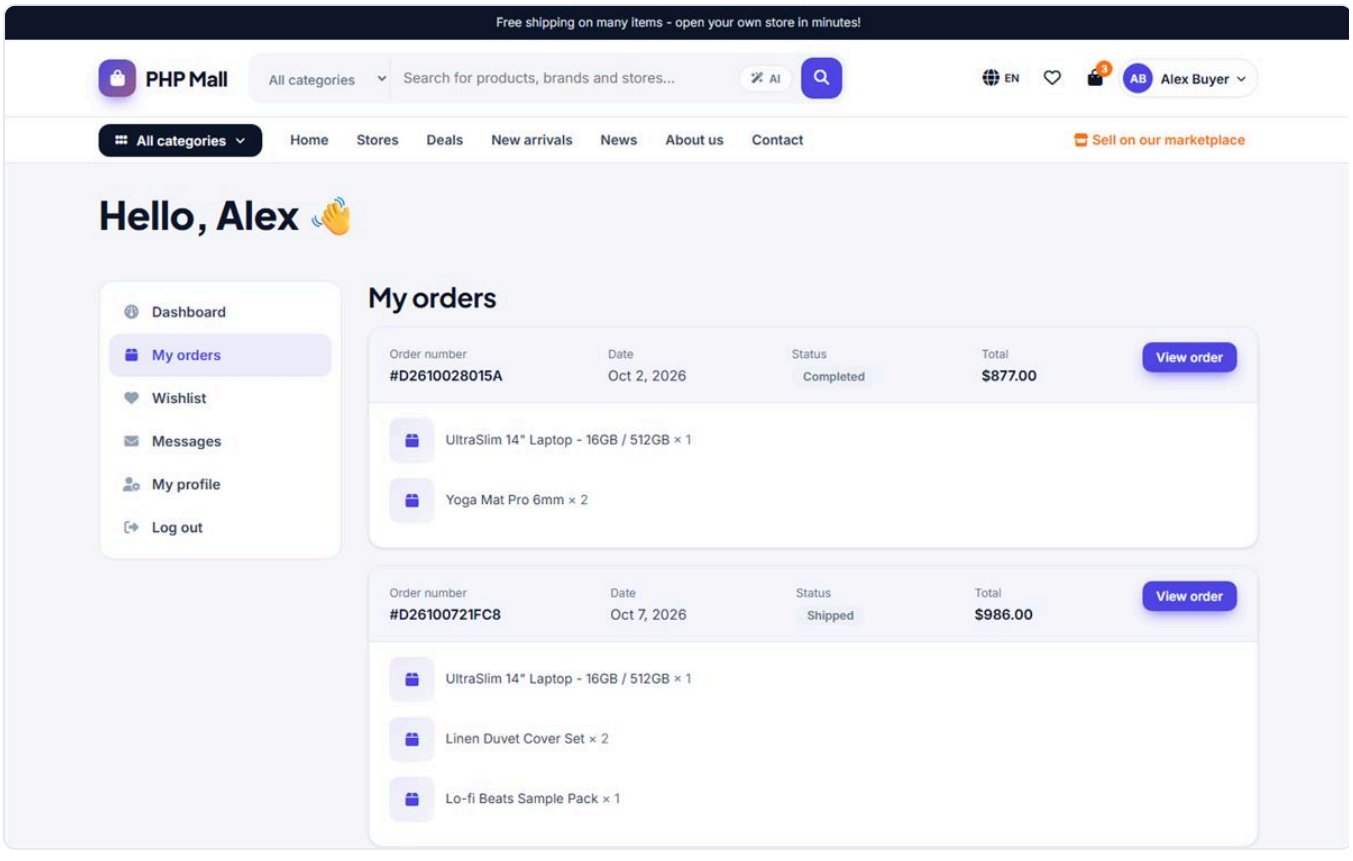


Registration form

- Order history and status tracking
- Downloads of digital products
- Review purchased products
- Edit profile and password
- Forgotten password by e-mail



Buyer account



Order history

STOREFRONT (BUYERS)

Multi-language Storefront

The shop can be shown in as many languages as you add.

Visitors switch language from the header. Translations are managed in Settings → Languages and Interface texts.



Spanish version of the storefront

STOREFRONT (BUYERS)

News, FAQ, Contact and Pages

Informational content builds trust and helps SEO.

- **News** – blog style articles
- **FAQ** – questions and answers
- **Contact** – form that e-mails the admin
- **Newsletter** – subscription form
- **Pages** – terms, privacy, about and any custom page

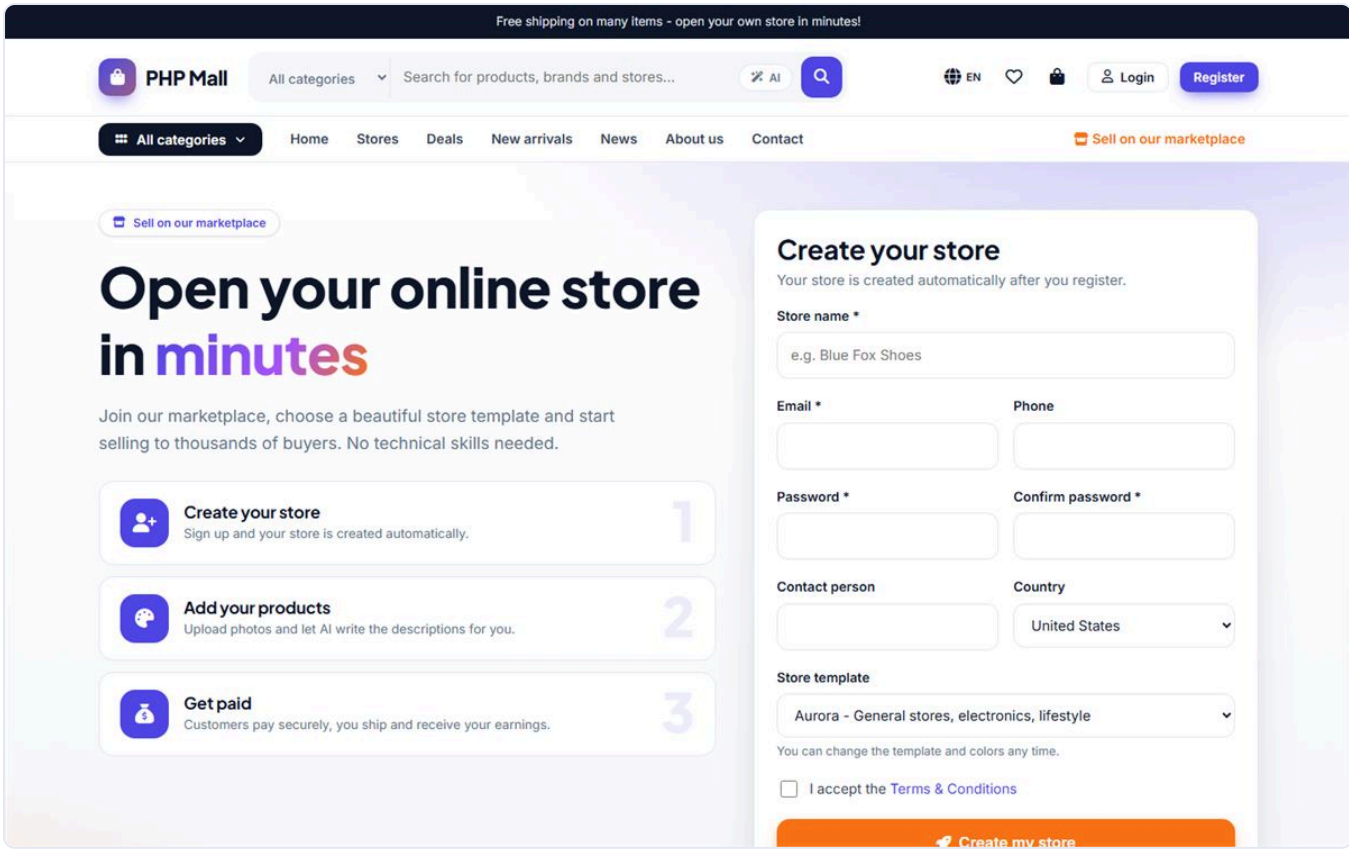
All are edited in the admin panel.

VENDOR PANEL

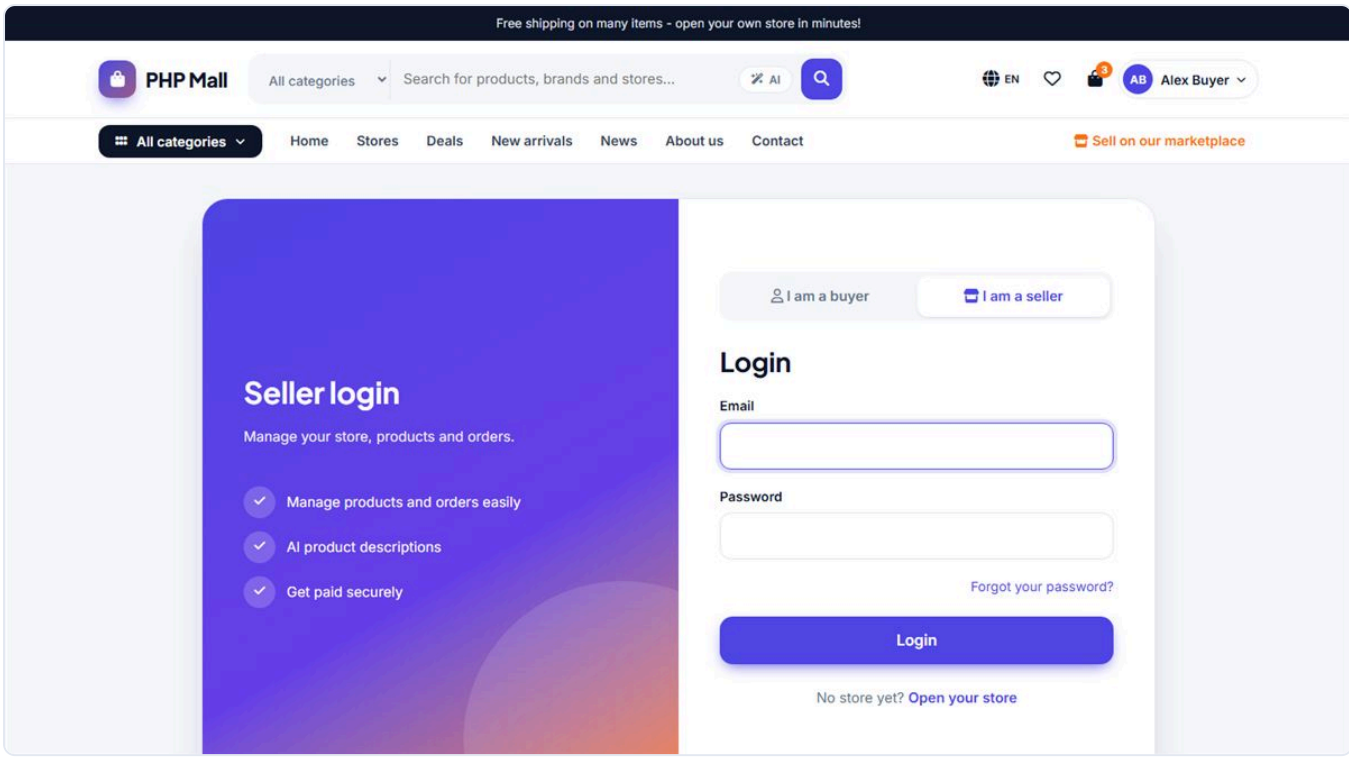
Becoming a Vendor

Vendors register on the *Sell* page and receive a store right away.

1. Visitor opens *Sell on the marketplace*.
2. Fills in name, e-mail, password and store name.
3. The store is created. If you require approval it waits in Vendors → Pending.
4. Vendor logs in to the vendor panel.



Seller landing page



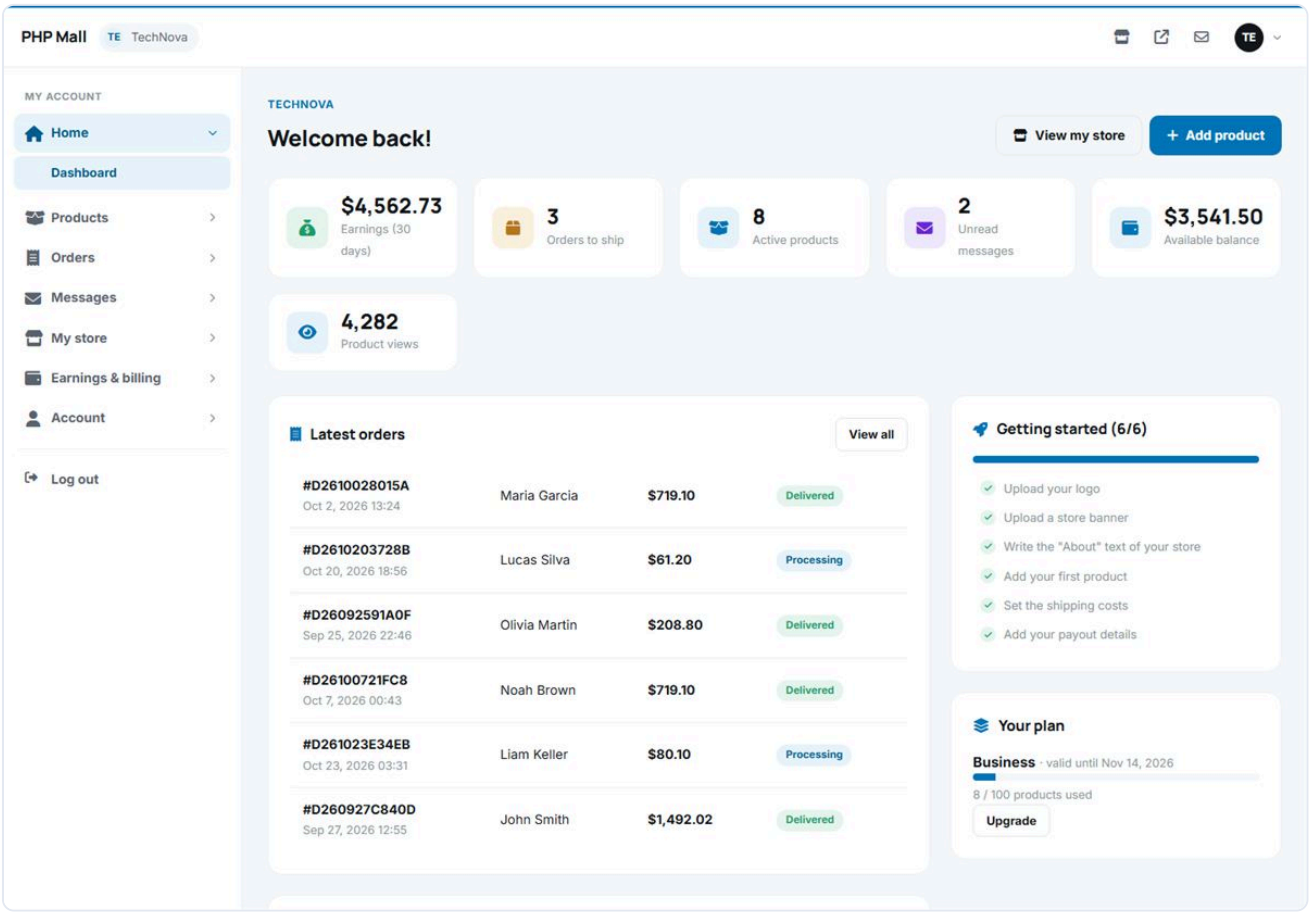
Vendor login

VENDOR PANEL

Vendor Dashboard

The dashboard is the first screen vendors see.

- Revenue and order counters
- Latest orders to process
- Balance available for payout
- Plan and listing usage
- Shortcuts to add a product



Vendor dashboard

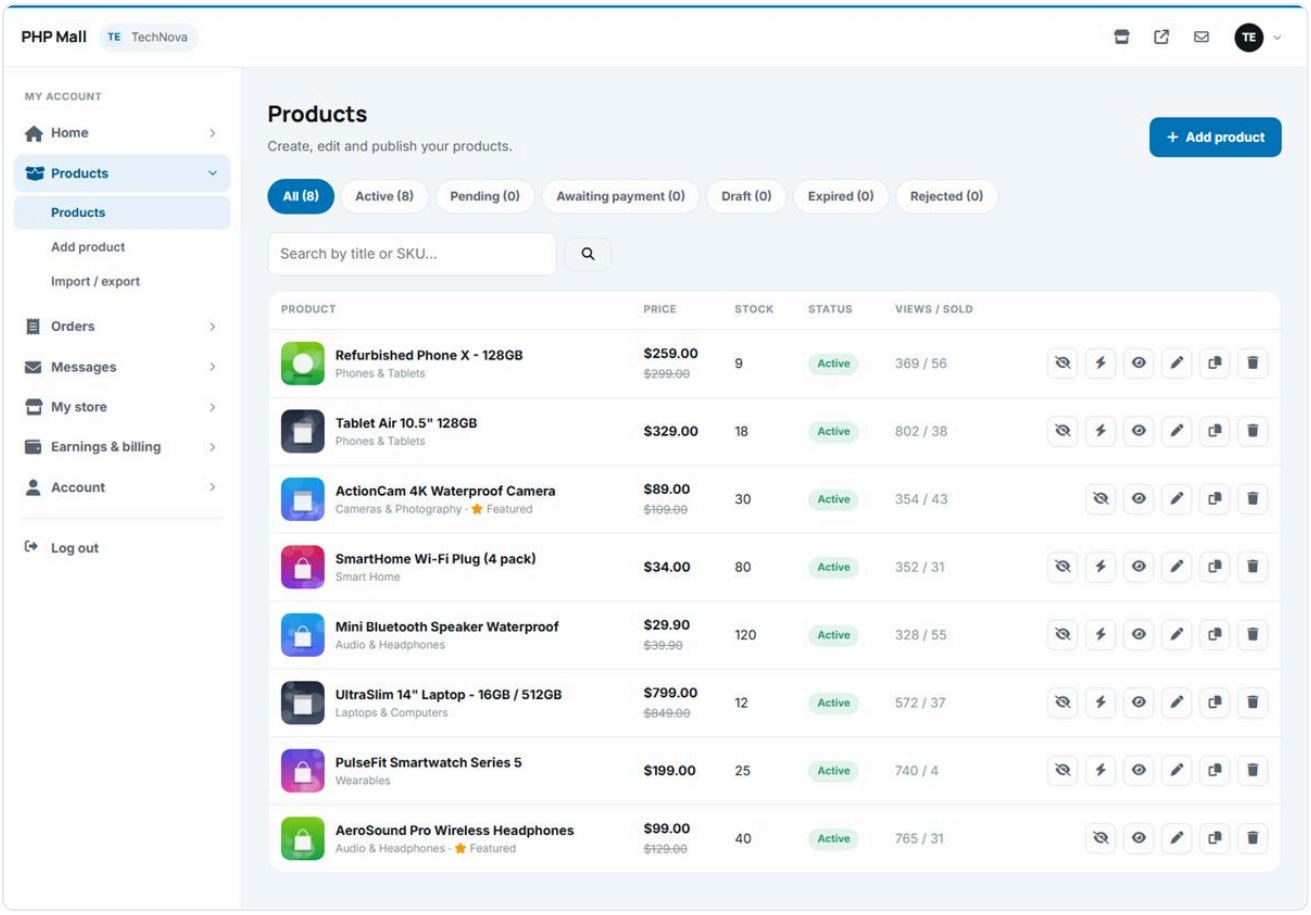
VENDOR PANEL

Adding and Editing Products

The product form is the same in the vendor and admin panels.

Menu: Products → Add product

- Title and category
- Price, sale price and stock
- Several images
- Description with the rich text editor
- Optional digital file for download products
- Location and condition
- Status: published or draft



My products list

If listing fees are enabled the vendor is told the cost before publishing (see plans and fees).

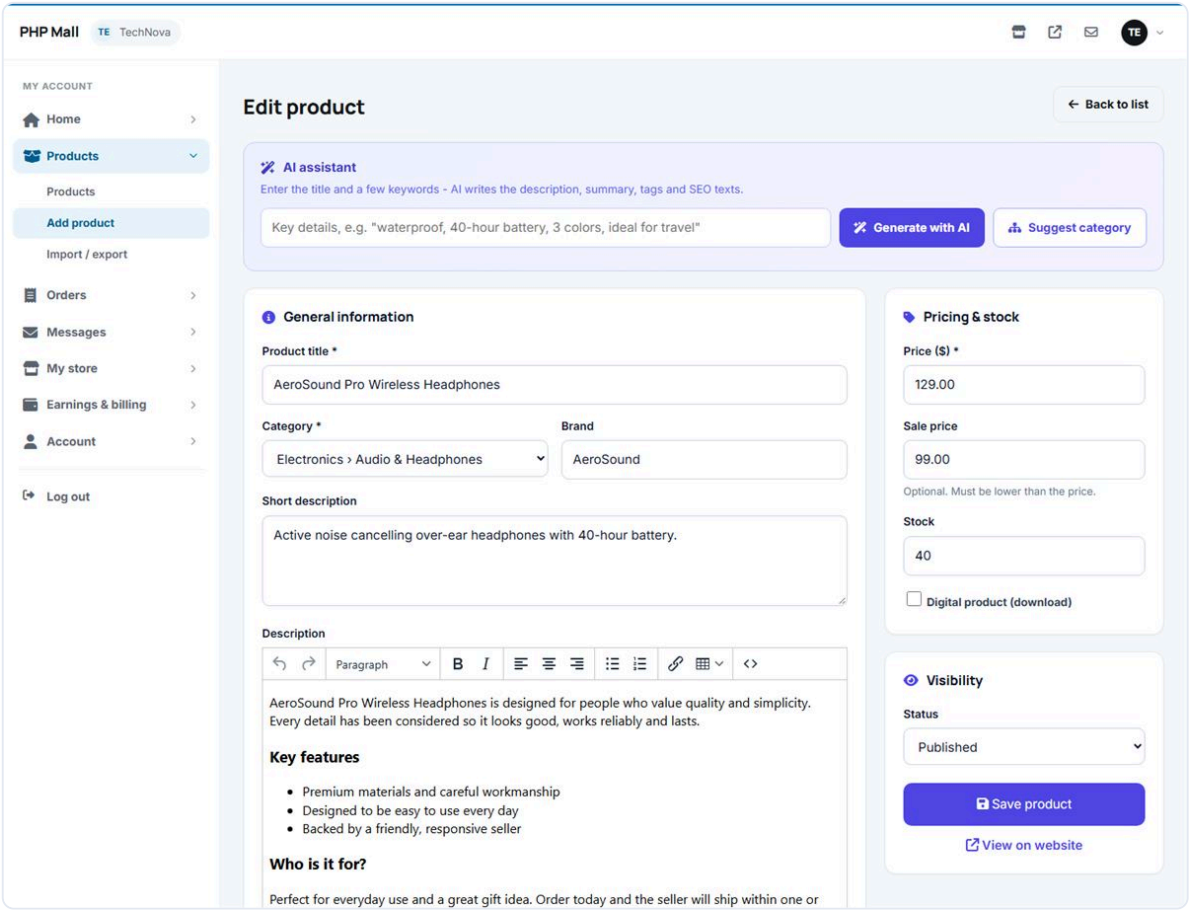
VENDOR PANEL

AI Product Descriptions

Vendors save time with the built-in AI assistant.

1. Enter a title or a few keywords.
2. Click **Generate with AI**.
3. Review the text, edit it and save.

The AI key is configured by the administrator in Settings → AI.



AI assistant in the product form

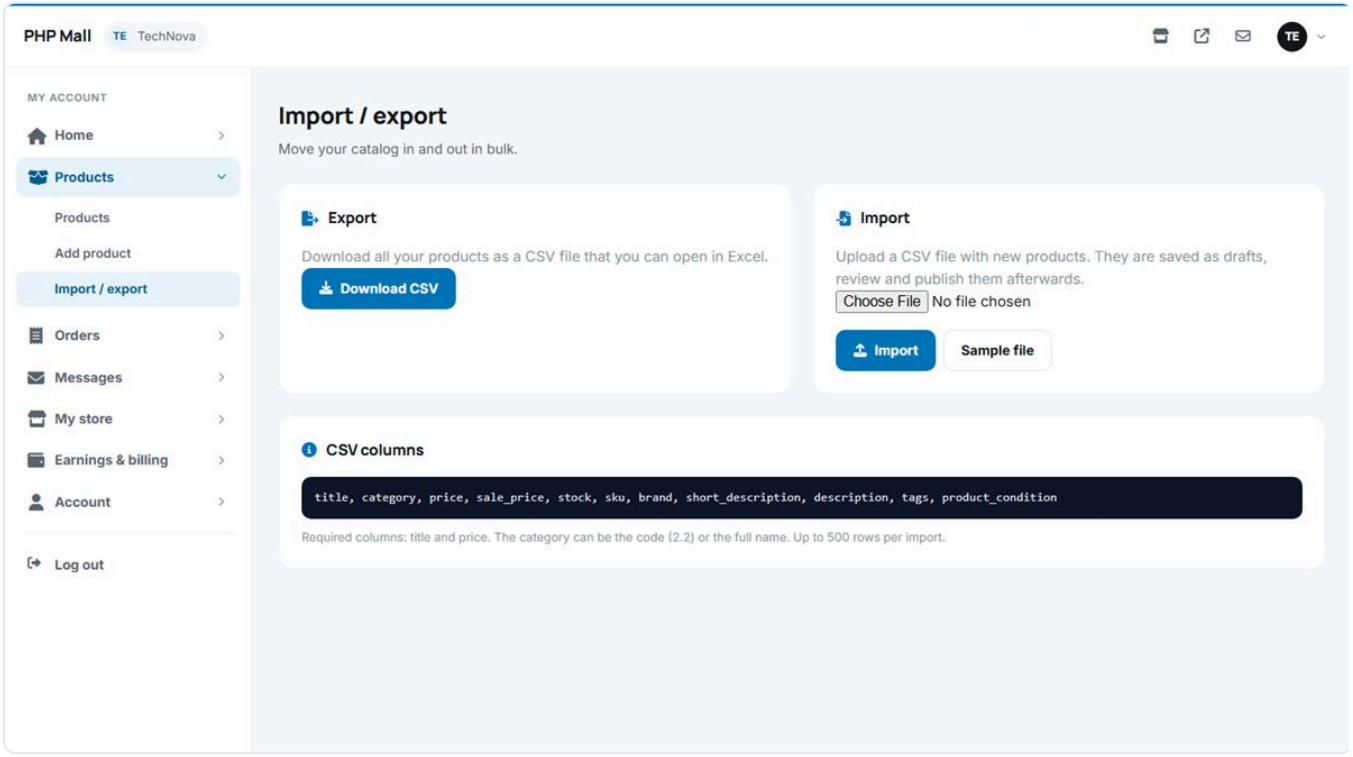
VENDOR PANEL

Import and Export Products

Large catalogs can be managed in a spreadsheet.

Menu: Products → Import / Export

- Download the CSV template
- Fill in your products
- Upload it to import or update
- Export the whole catalog at any time



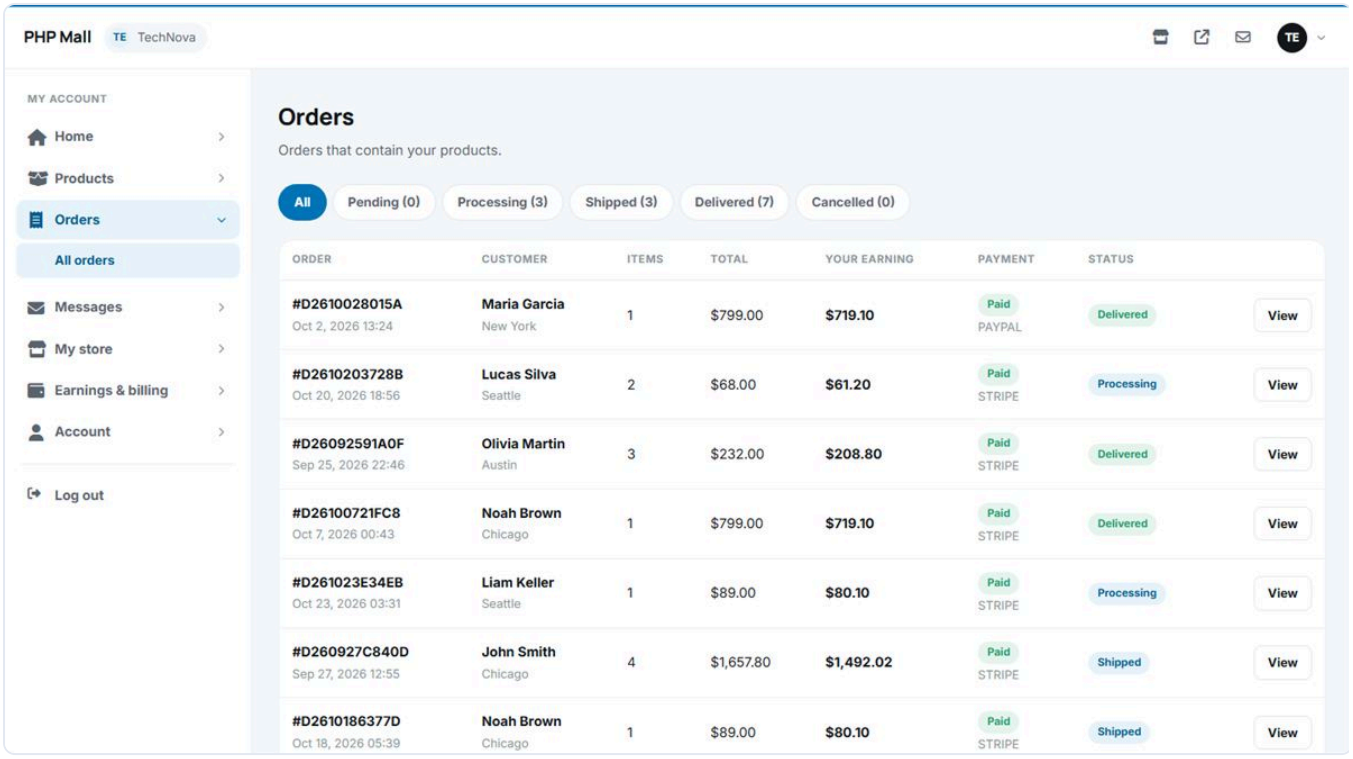
Import and export

VENDOR PANEL

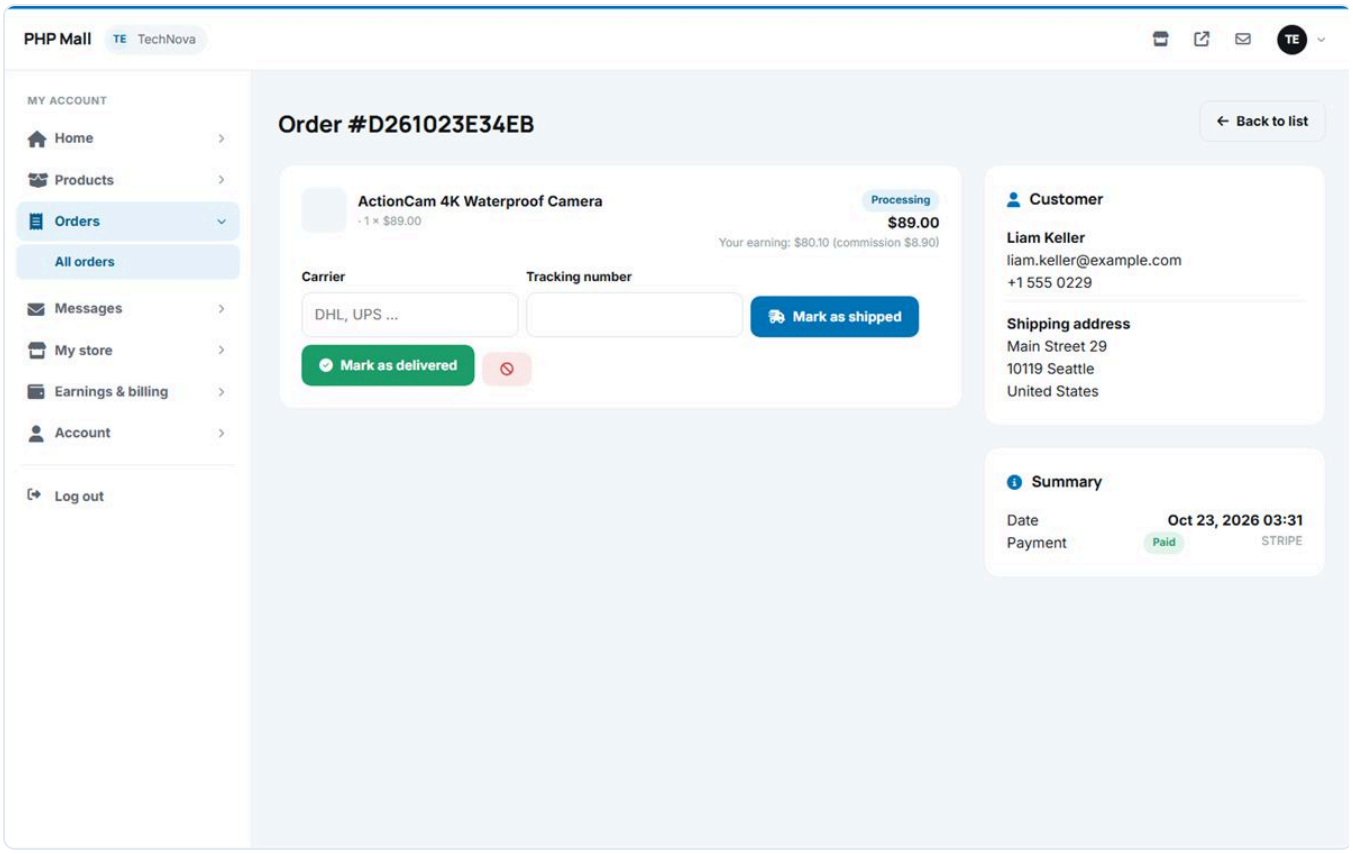
Managing Orders

Vendors only see orders that contain their products.

- Open an order to see items and shipping address
- Set status: pending, processing, shipped, delivered, cancelled
- Add a tracking number; the buyer is notified
- Earnings are credited to the vendor balance when the order is delivered



Orders list



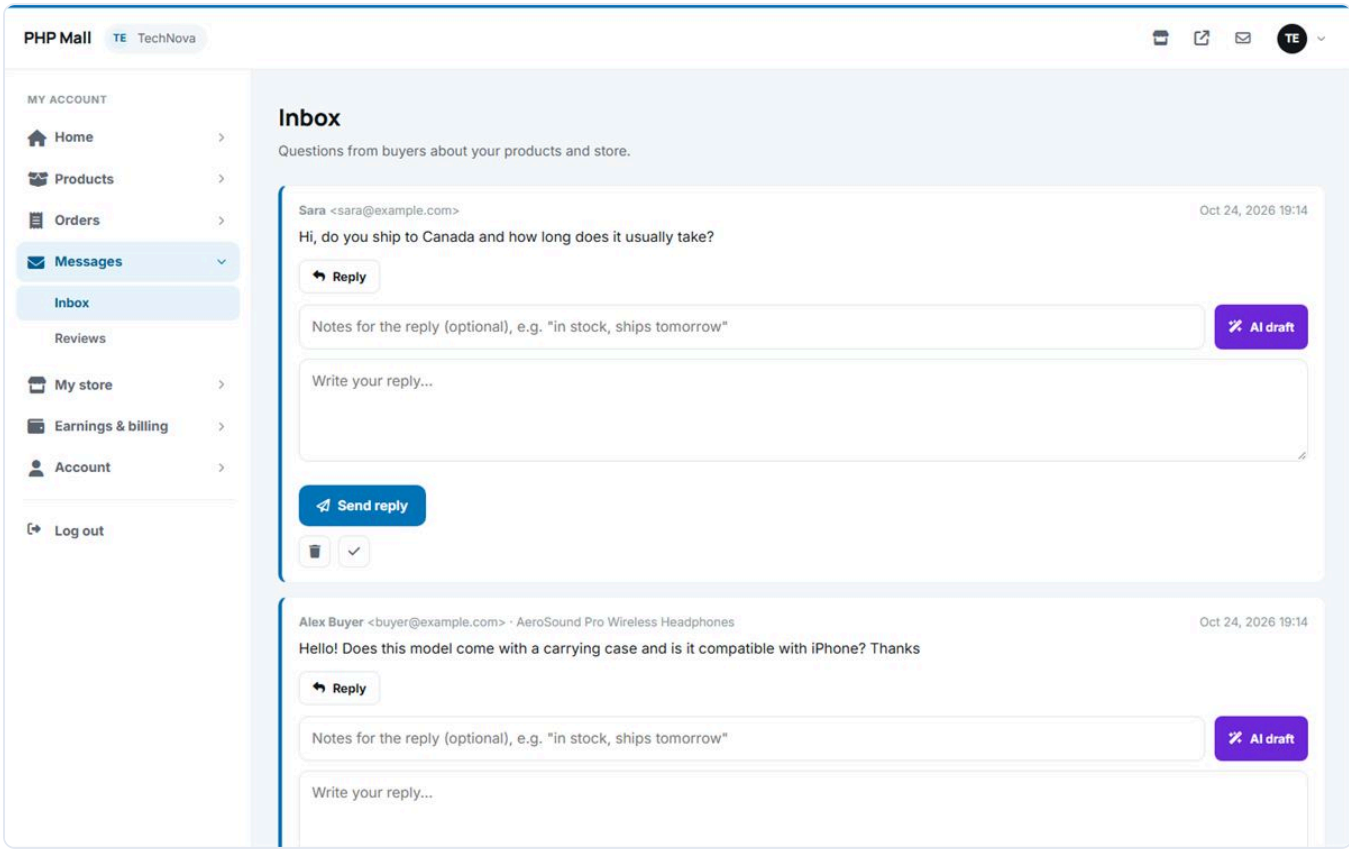
Order details

VENDOR PANEL

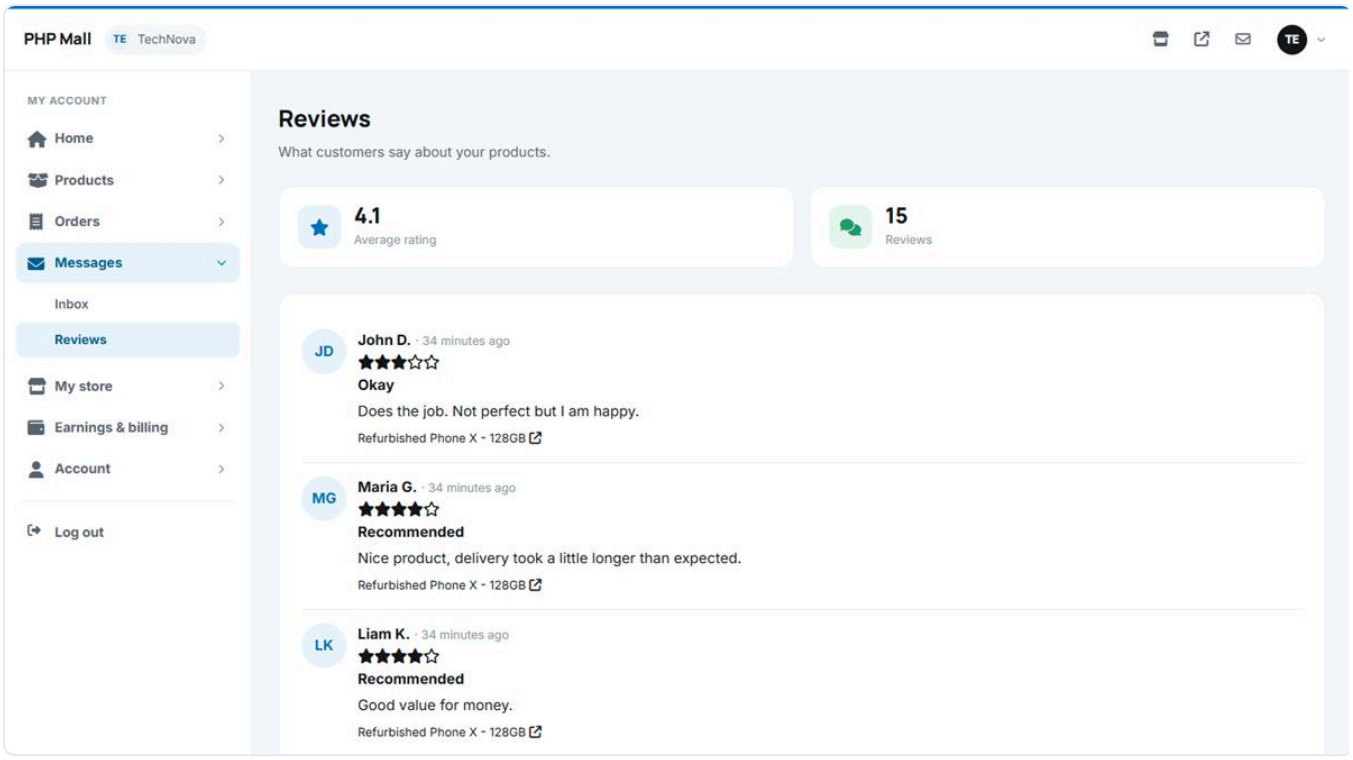
Messages and Reviews

Good communication improves sales.

- Inbox with questions from buyers
- Reply from the panel; the buyer gets an e-mail
- See product reviews and ratings



Inbox


PHP Mall
TE TechNova
MY ACCOUNT
Home
Products
Orders
Messages
Inbox
Reviews
My store
Earnings & billing
Account
Log out
Reviews
What customers say about your products.
4.1
Average rating
15
Reviews
JD
John D. · 34 minutes ago
Okay
Does the job. Not perfect but I am happy.
Refurbished Phone X - 128GB
MG
Maria G. · 34 minutes ago
Recommended
Nice product, delivery took a little longer than expected.
Refurbished Phone X - 128GB
LK
Liam K. · 34 minutes ago
Recommended
Good value for money.
Refurbished Phone X - 128GB

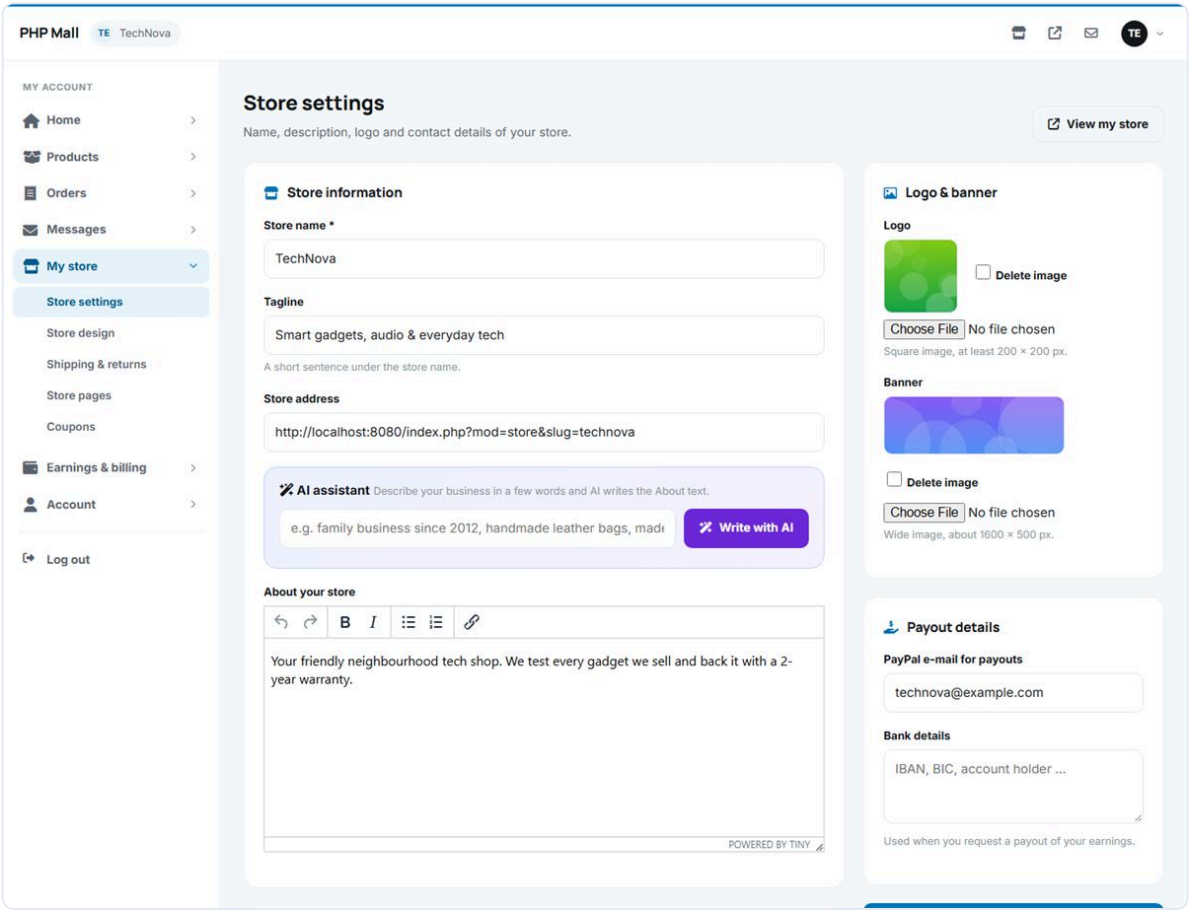
Reviews

VENDOR PANEL

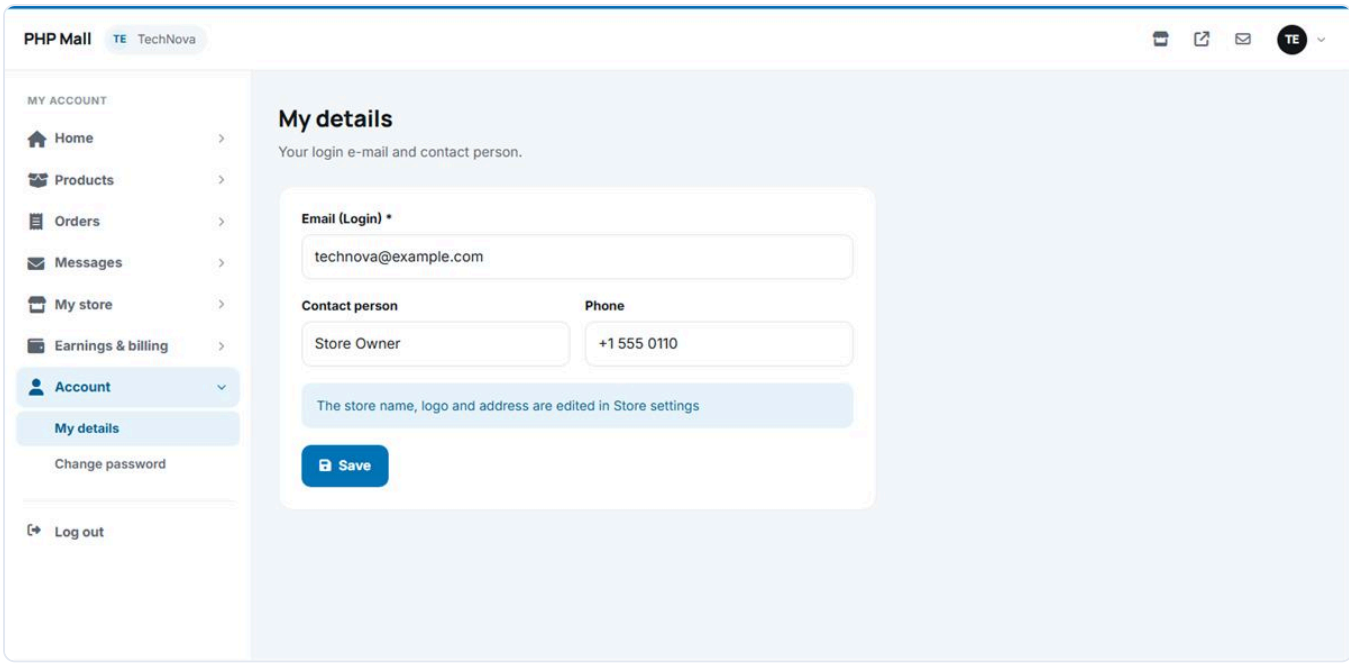
Store Profile and Settings

This is the identity of the store.

Menu: My store → Settings



Store settings



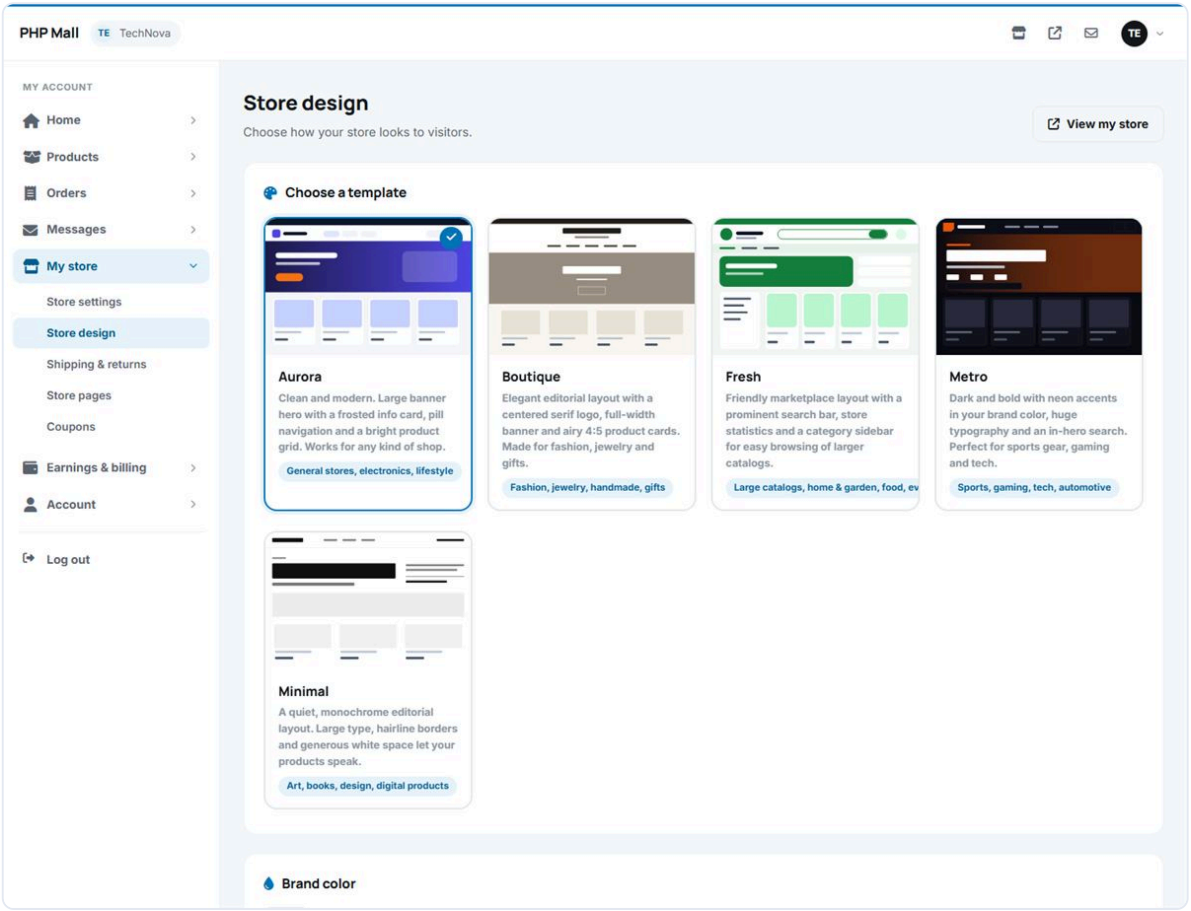
Store profile

VENDOR PANEL

Store Design and Templates

Pick one of five templates and make it your own.

Menu: My store → Design



Design settings

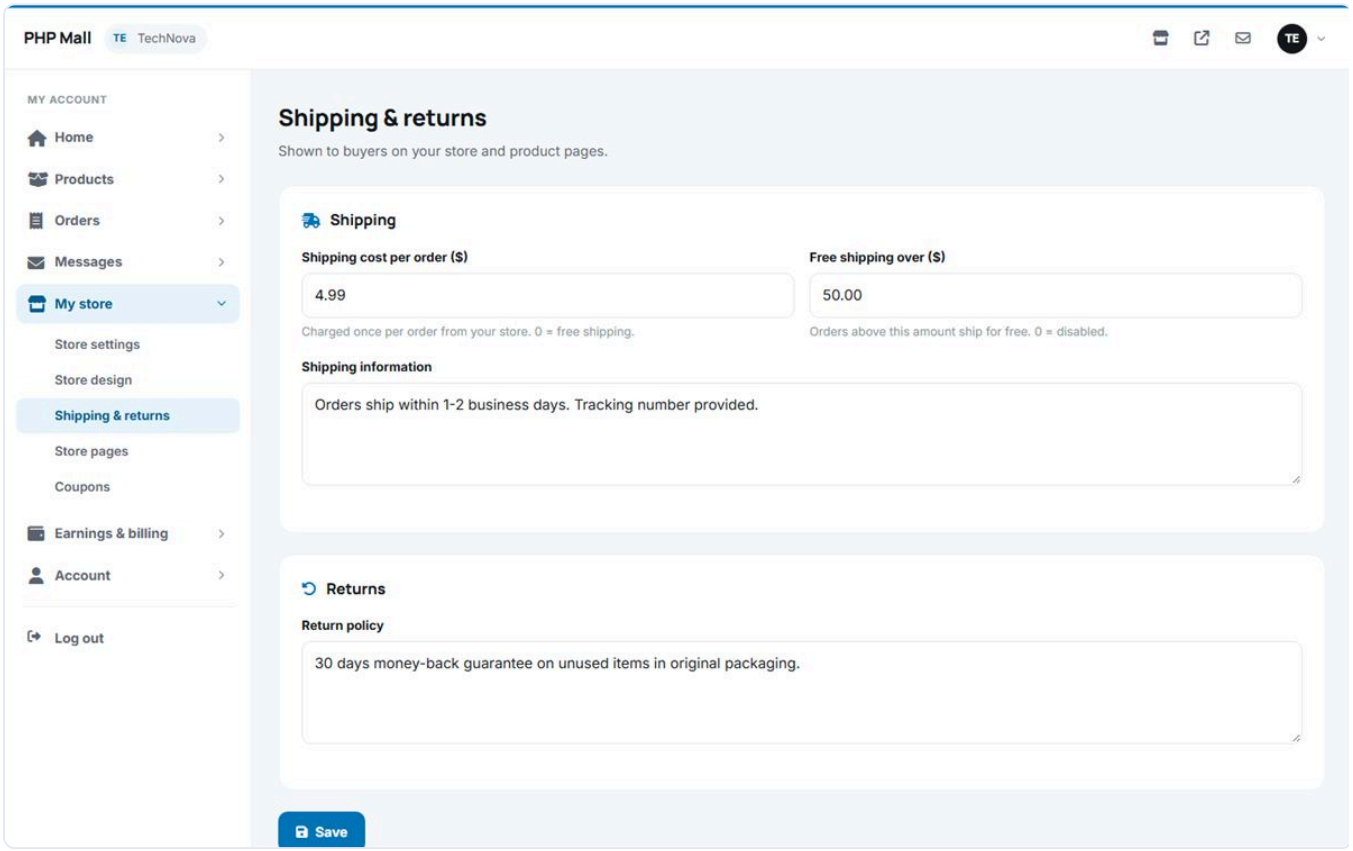
See all templates in Vendor store pages.

VENDOR PANEL

Shipping and Returns

Shipping rules are defined once and used for every product.

Menu: My store → Shipping & returns



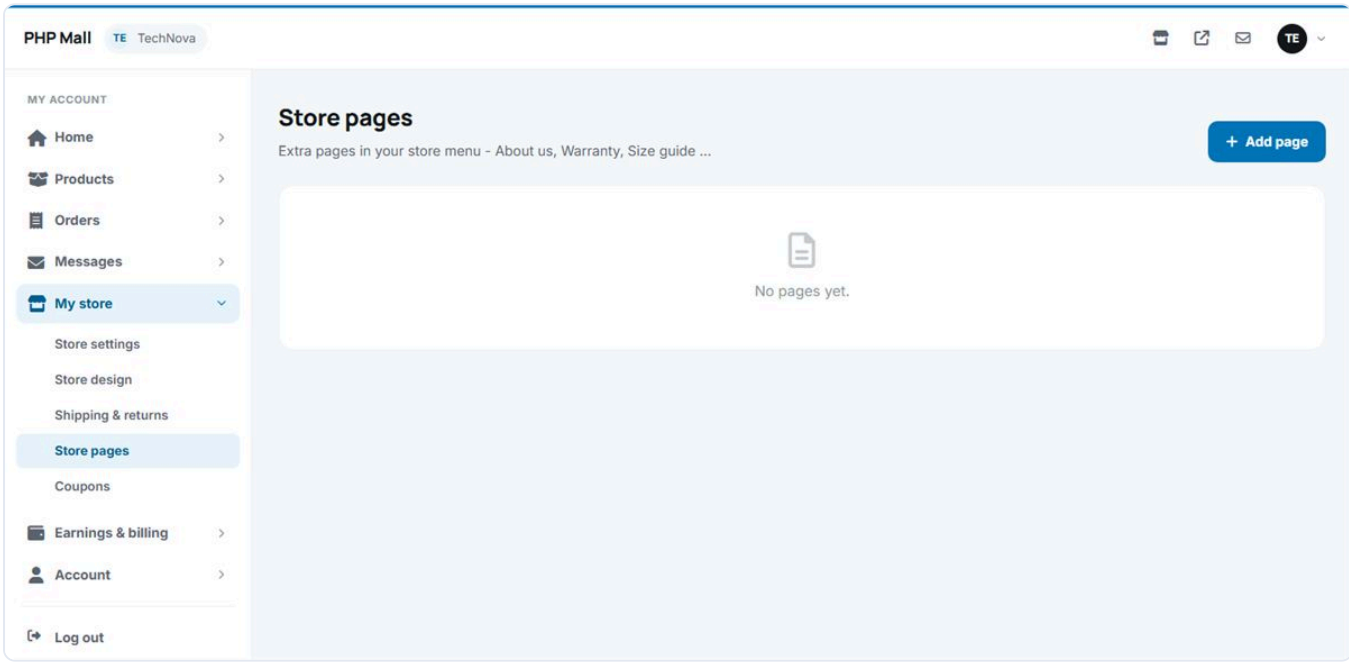
Shipping and returns

VENDOR PANEL

Store Pages

Each store can have extra pages shown in its menu.

Menu: My store → Pages



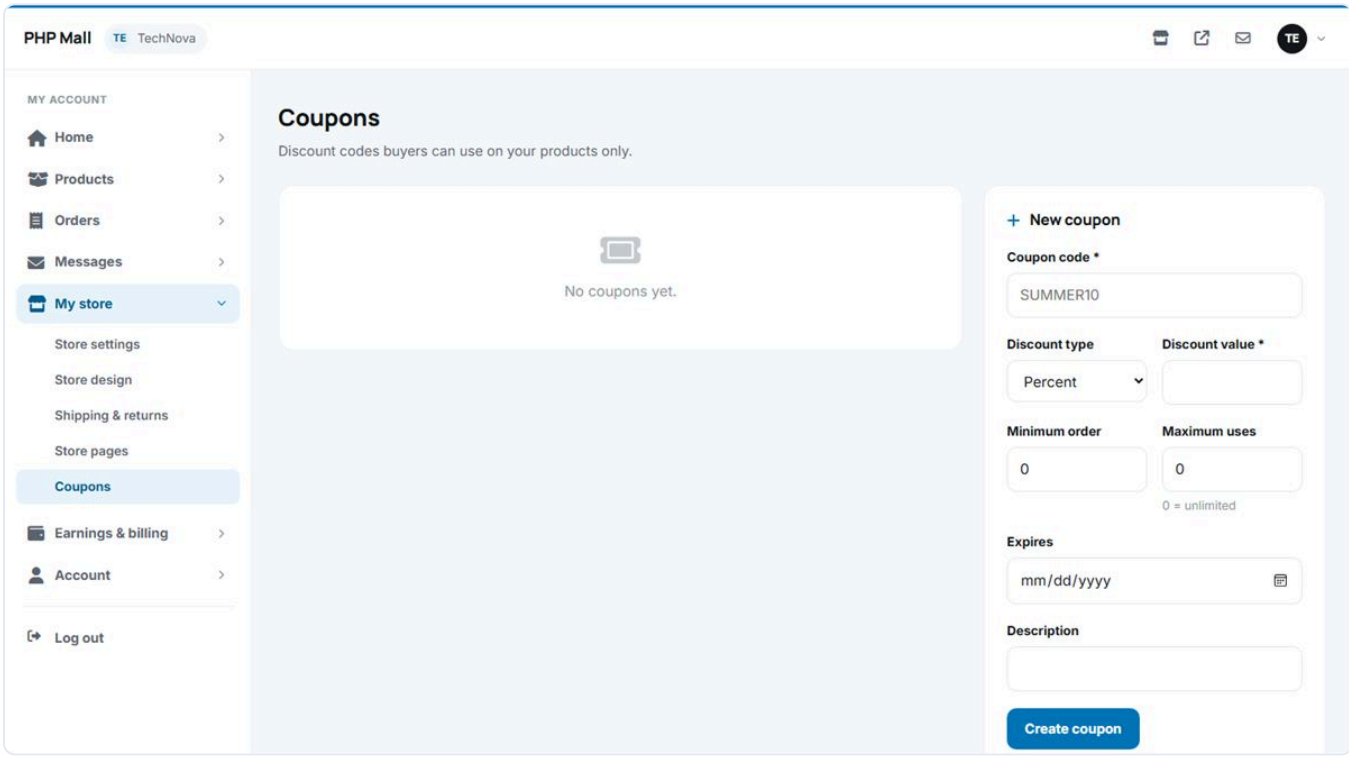
Store pages

VENDOR PANEL

Discount Coupons

Coupons help promote sales.

Menu: My store → Coupons



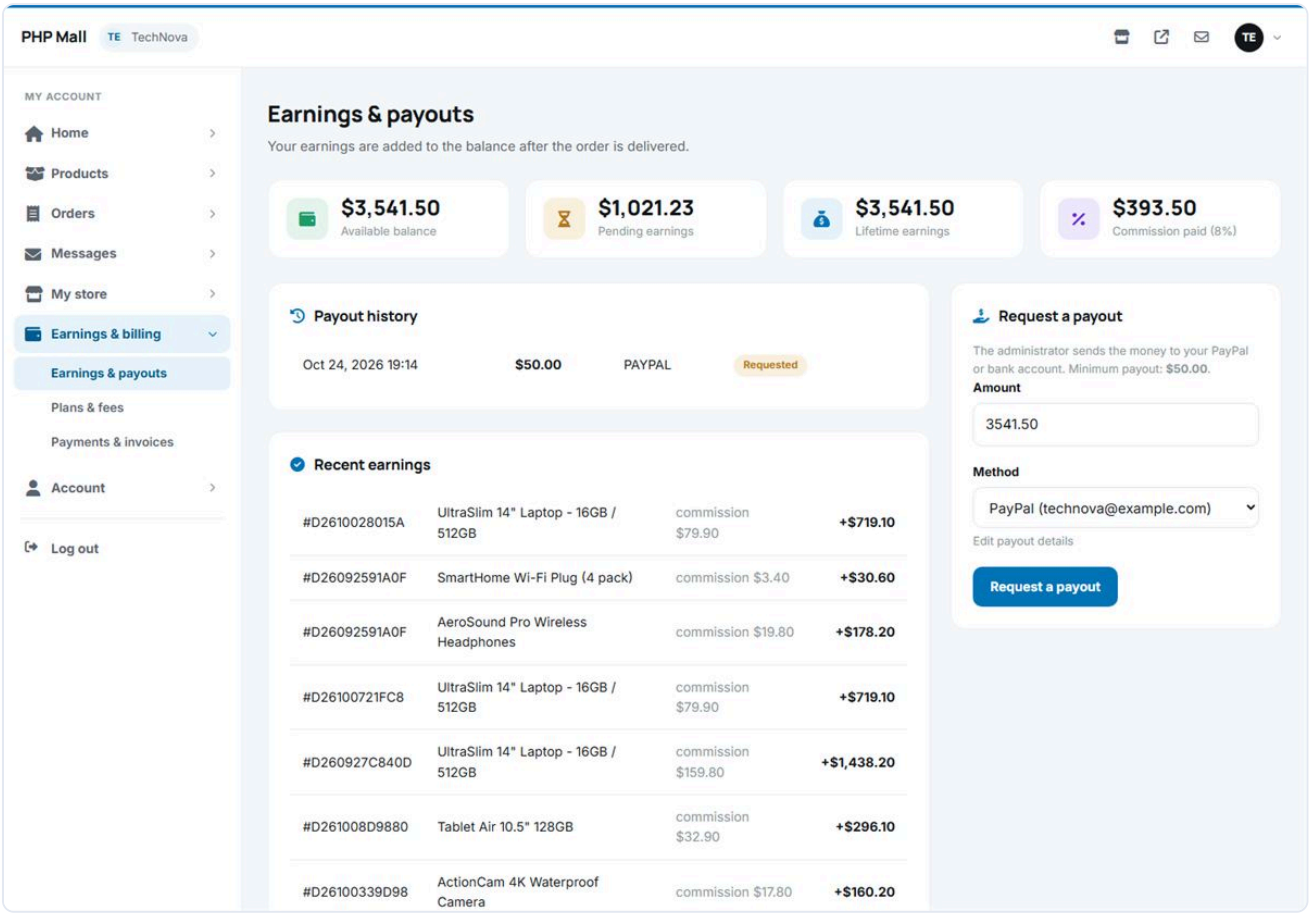
Vendor coupons

VENDOR PANEL

Earnings and Payouts

Vendors see how much they earned and ask to be paid.

- Balance is credited when orders are delivered
- The commission is already deducted
- Request a payout; the admin marks it as paid



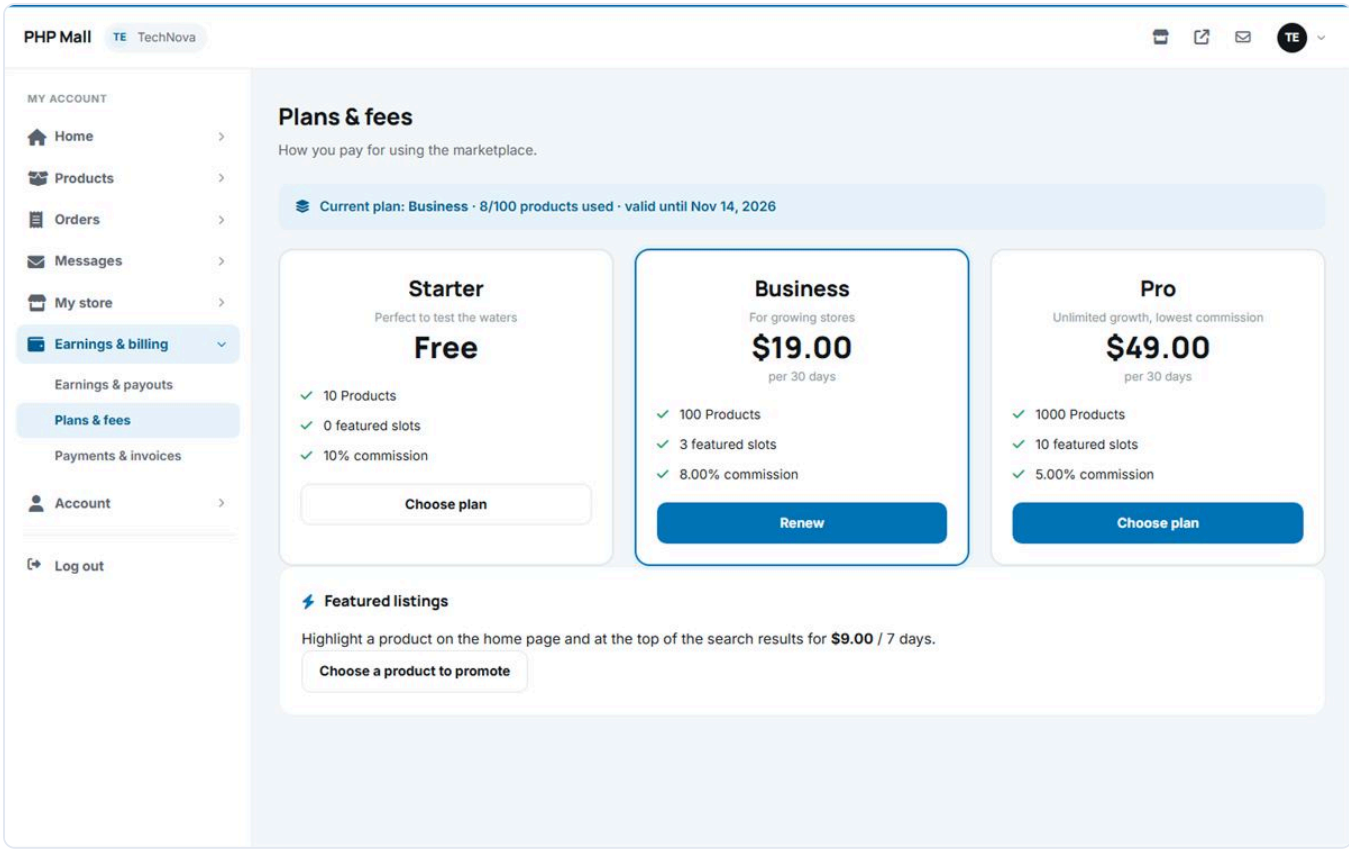
Earnings and payouts

VENDOR PANEL

Plans, Listing Fees and Featured Listings

Depending on the marketplace model vendors may pay to sell.

- **Free** – no charge
- **Per listing** – a number of free listings, then a fee for each, valid for a number of days
- **Monthly plans** – subscribe to a plan with a listing limit
- **Featured** – pay to highlight a product



Plans and fees

The administrator controls this in Payments → Vendor plans.

VENDOR PANEL

Account Details and Password

Keep the account secure.

Menu: Account → Details / Password

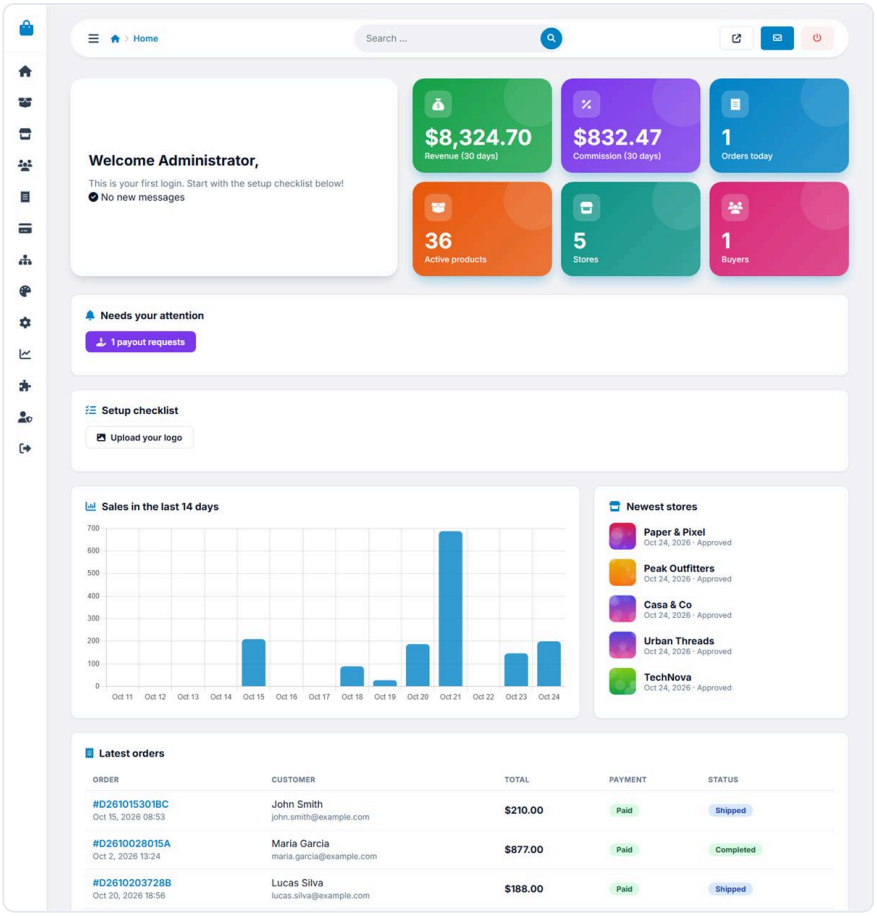
Use a long, unique password.

ADMIN PANEL

Admin Login and Dashboard

The admin panel is at `/ADMIN/`.

- Statistics cards for sales, vendors, buyers and products
- Quick links to common tasks
- Messages and login logs
- Change password



Admin dashboard

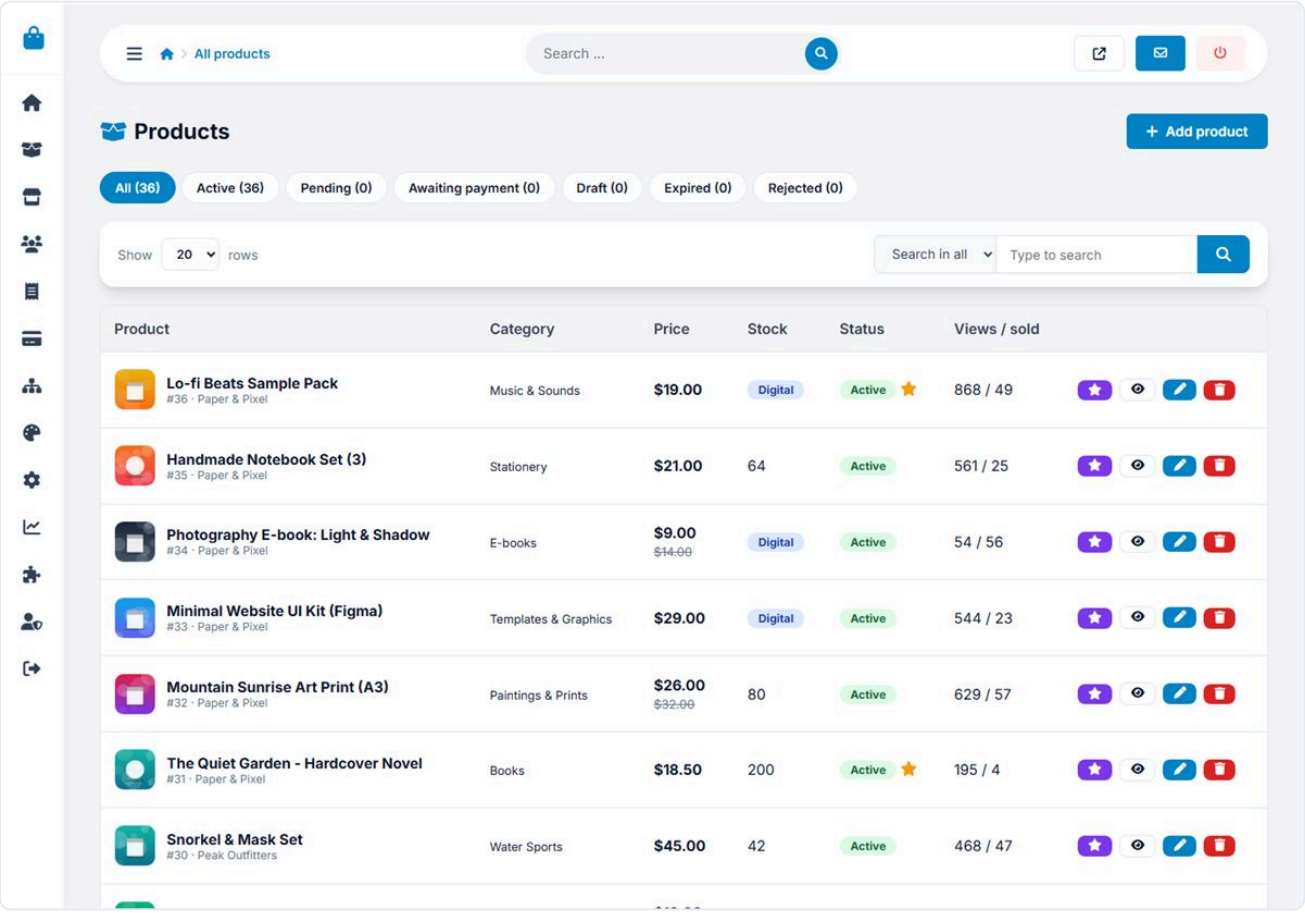
ADMIN PANEL

Managing Products

Administrators see all products.

Menu: Products

- Search and filter
- Edit any product
- Feature or unpublish
- Add a product on behalf of a vendor
- Moderate reviews



Products list

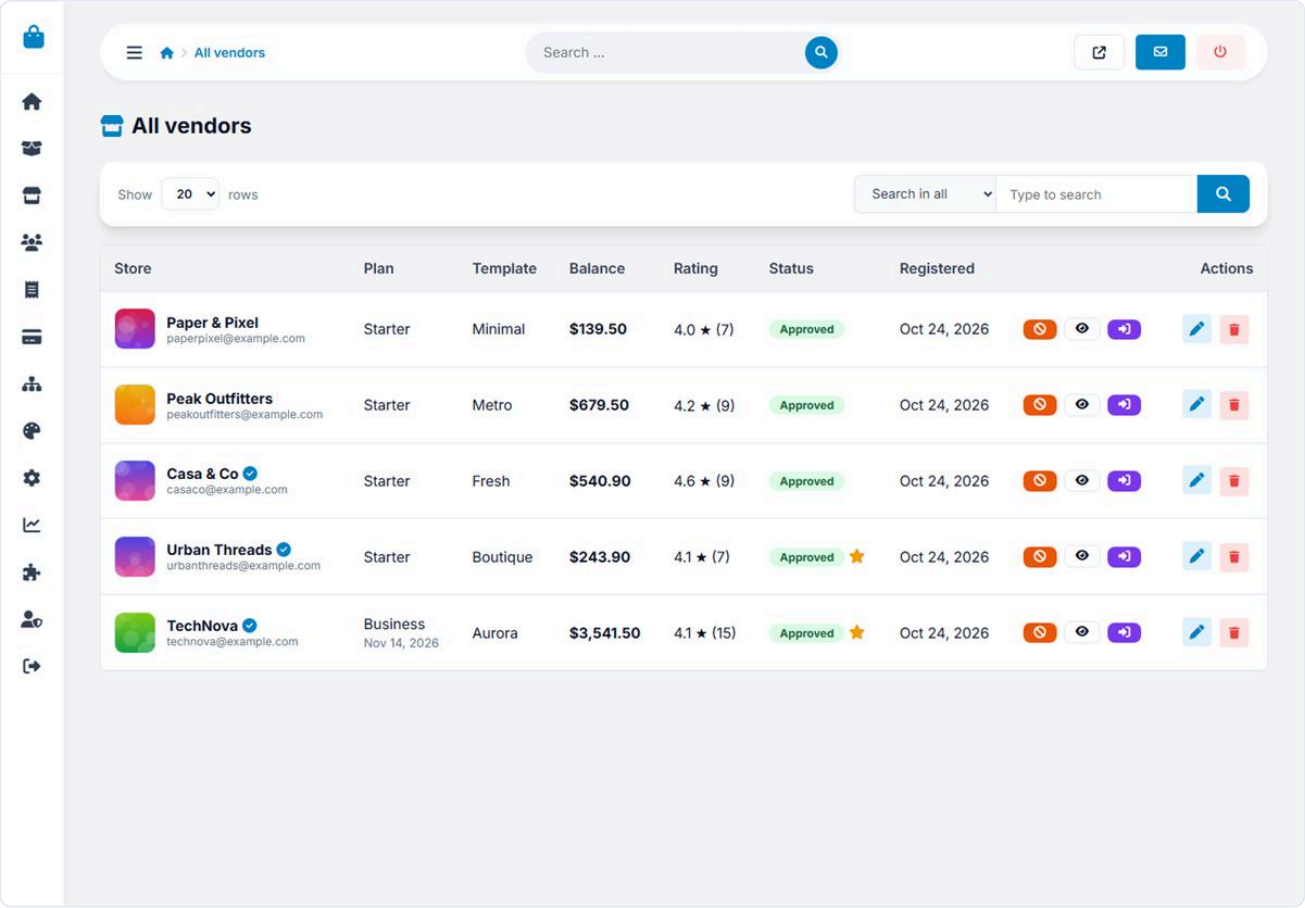
ADMIN PANEL

Managing Vendors

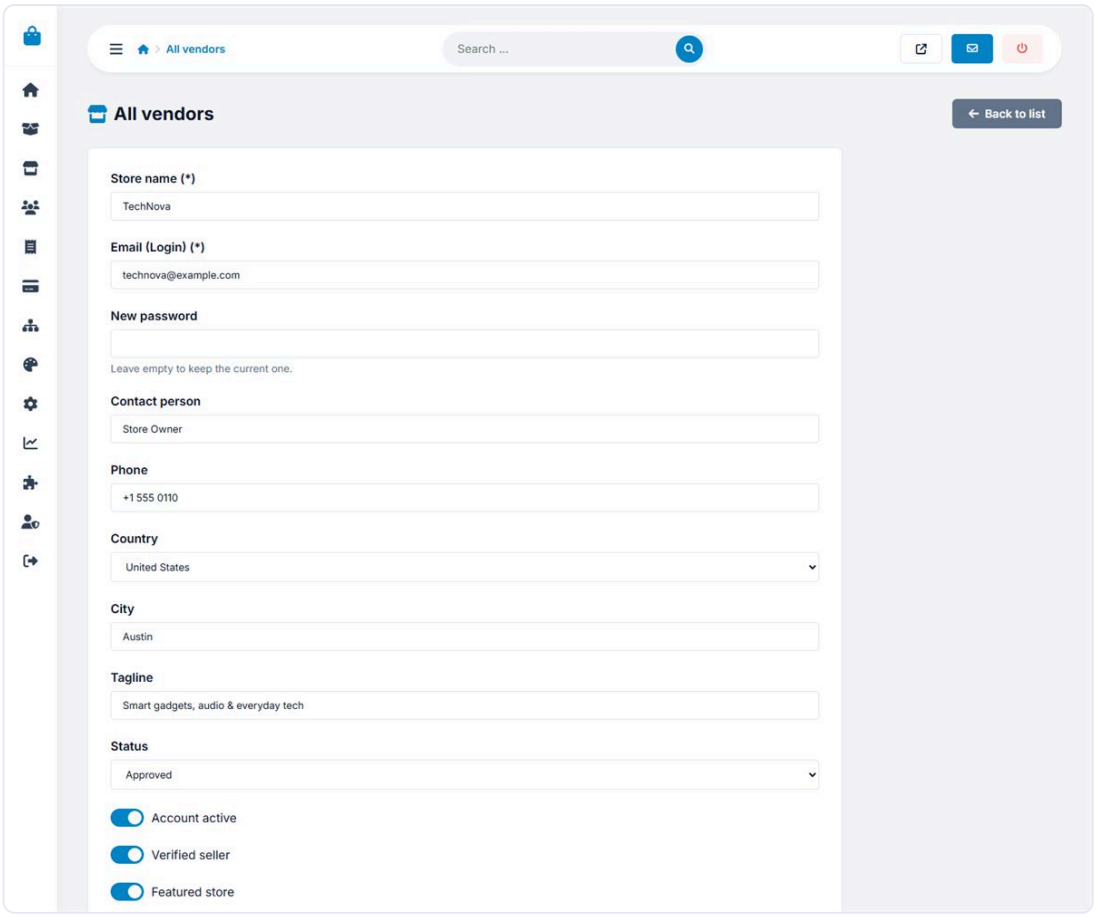
Control who sells on your marketplace.

Menu: Vendors

- All vendors and pending approvals
- Edit store details
- Override commission and charge type for a vendor
- Suspend or delete



Vendors list



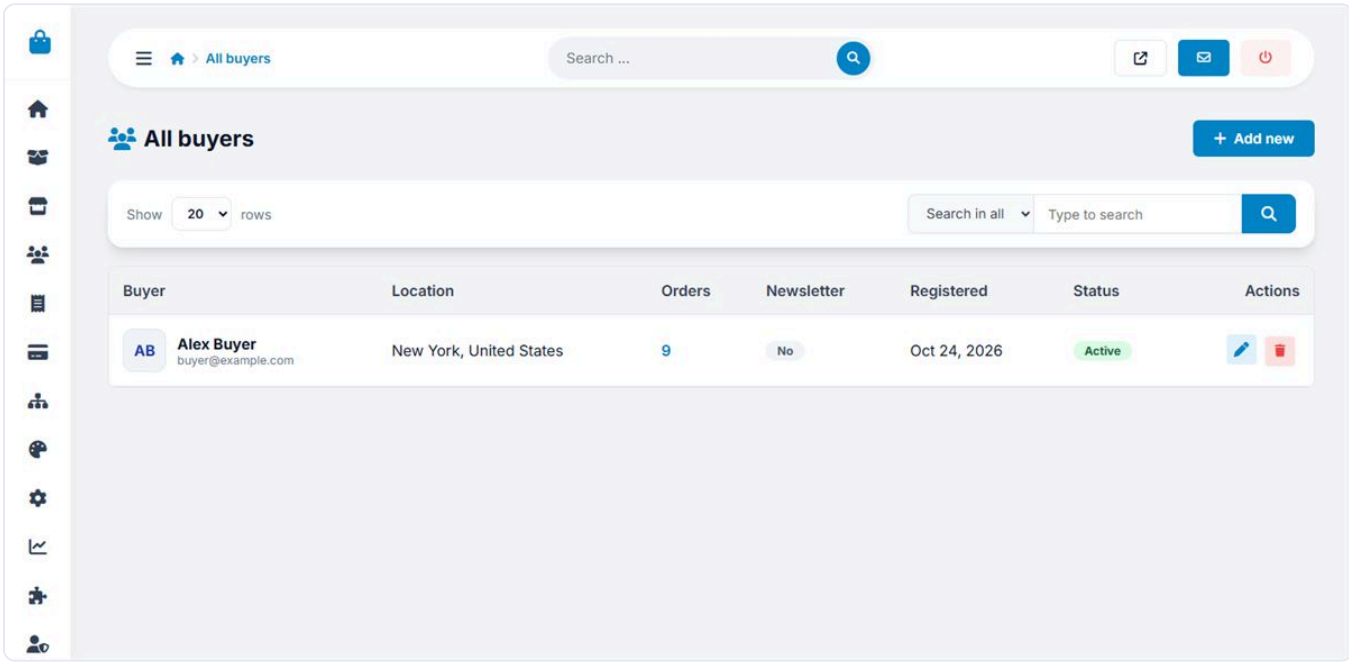
Editing a vendor

ADMIN PANEL

Buyers and Newsletter

See who buys on your site.

Menu: Buyers



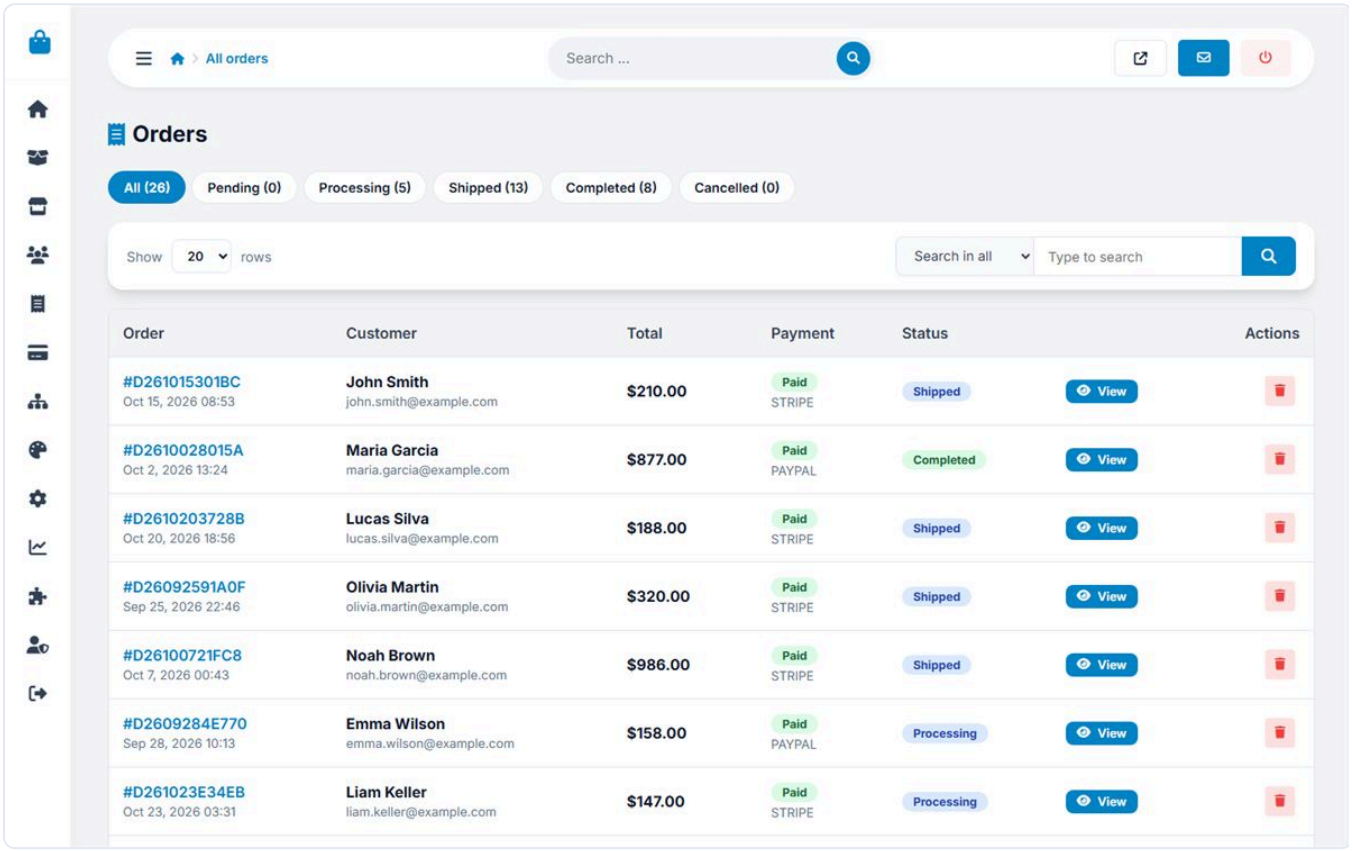
Buyers list

ADMIN PANEL

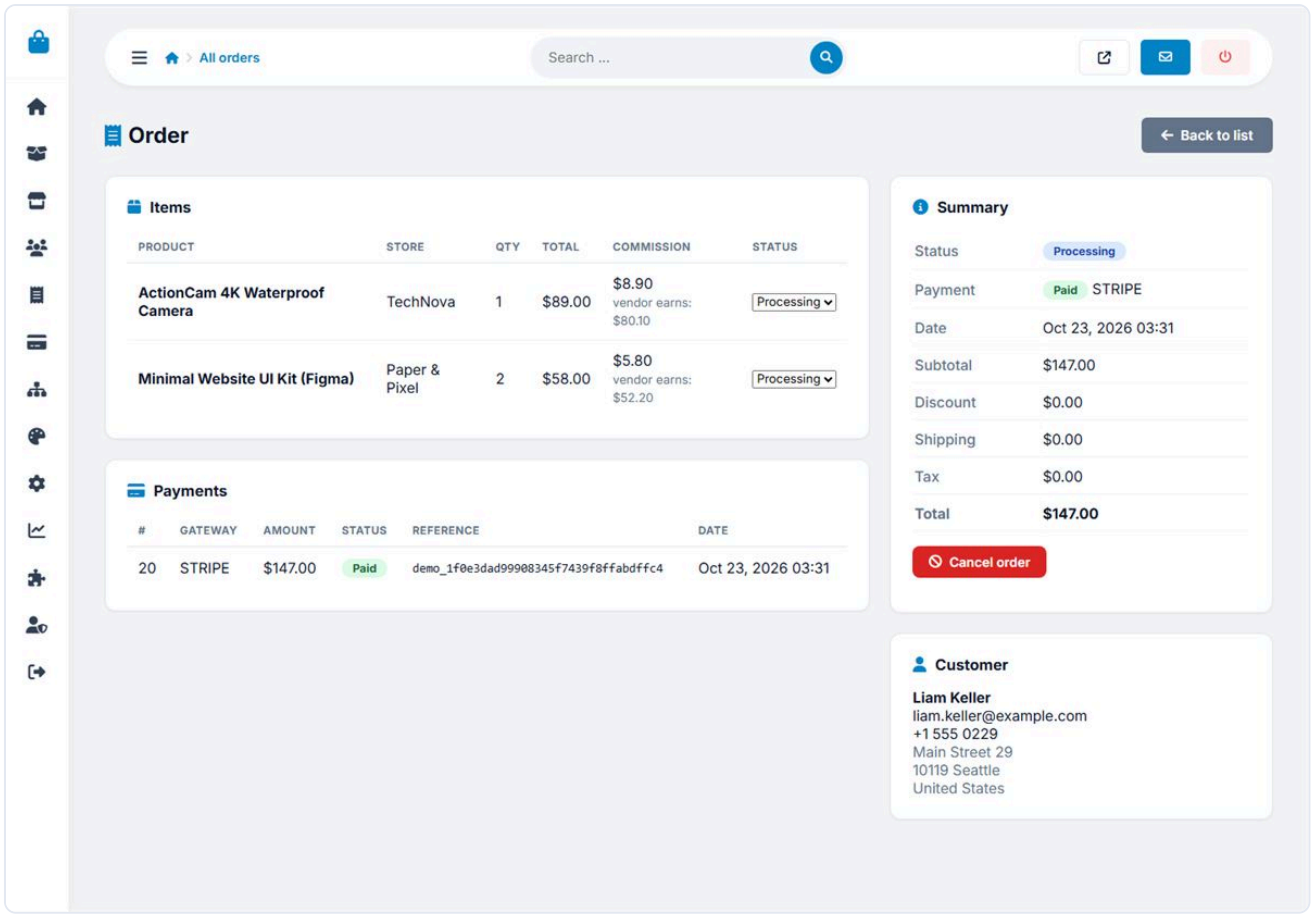
Orders

All orders in one place.

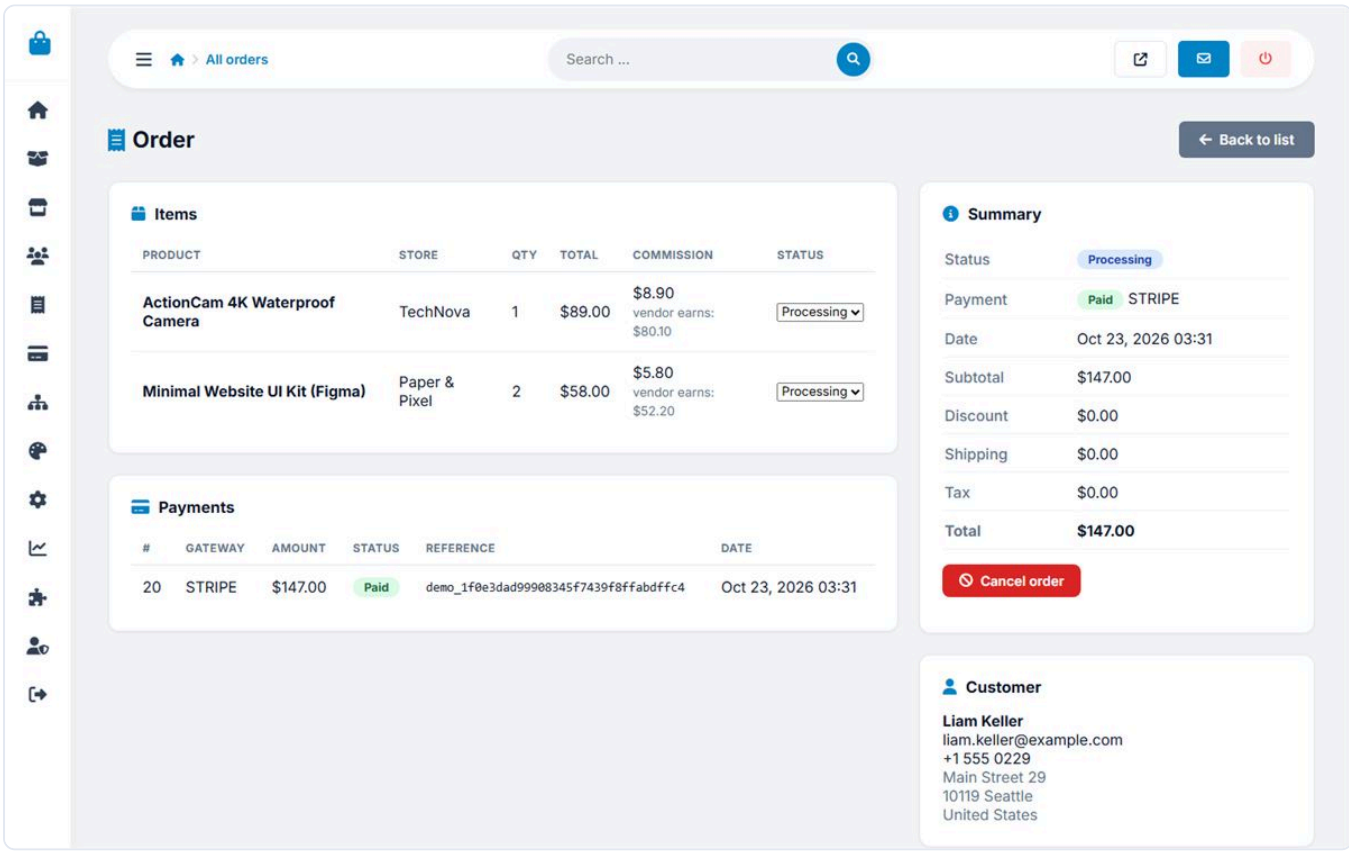
Menu: Orders



Orders list



Order details



Order status

ADMIN PANEL

Payment Settings: Stripe and PayPal

Both providers are used through hosted payment pages.

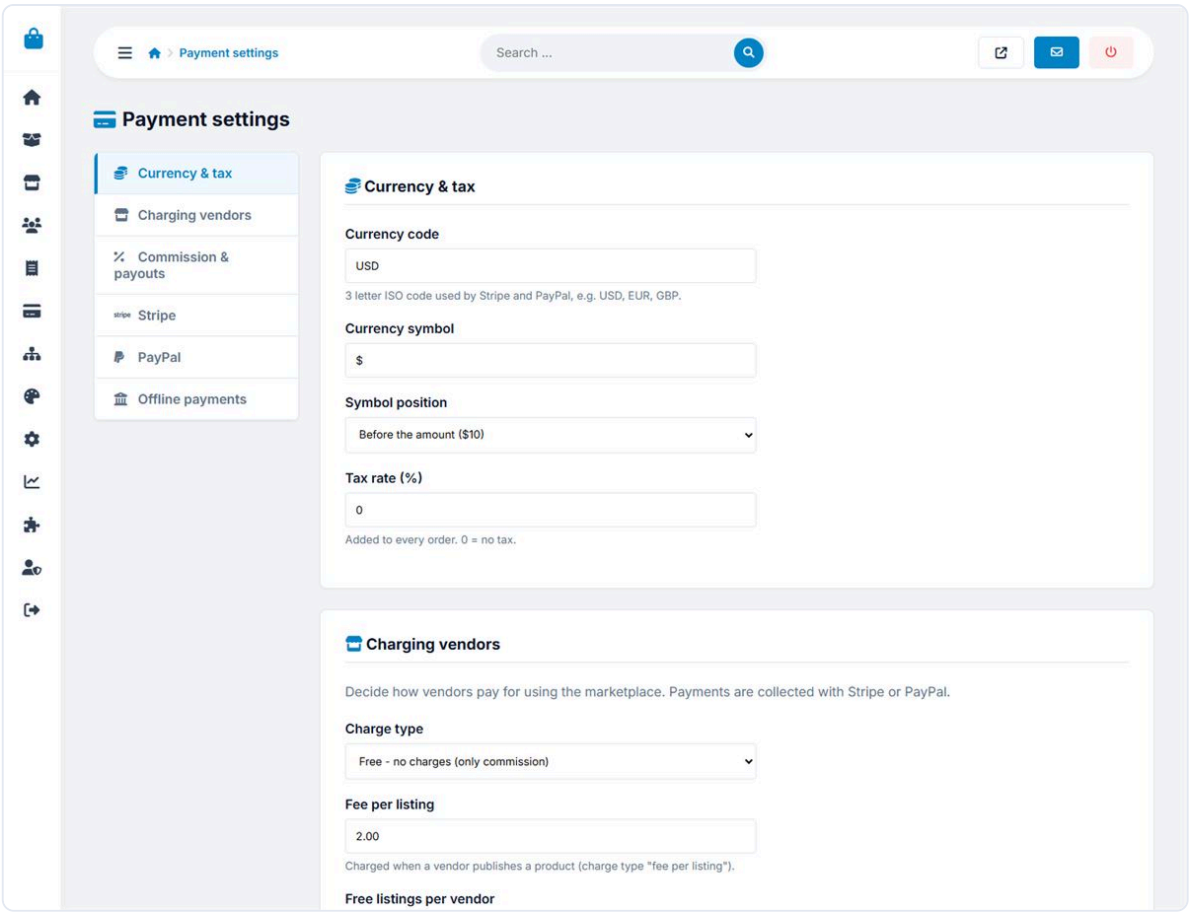
Stripe

1. Copy the publishable and secret key from the Stripe dashboard.
2. Paste them in Payments → Payment settings.
3. Create a webhook endpoint pointing to `include/webhook_stripe.php` and paste the signing secret.

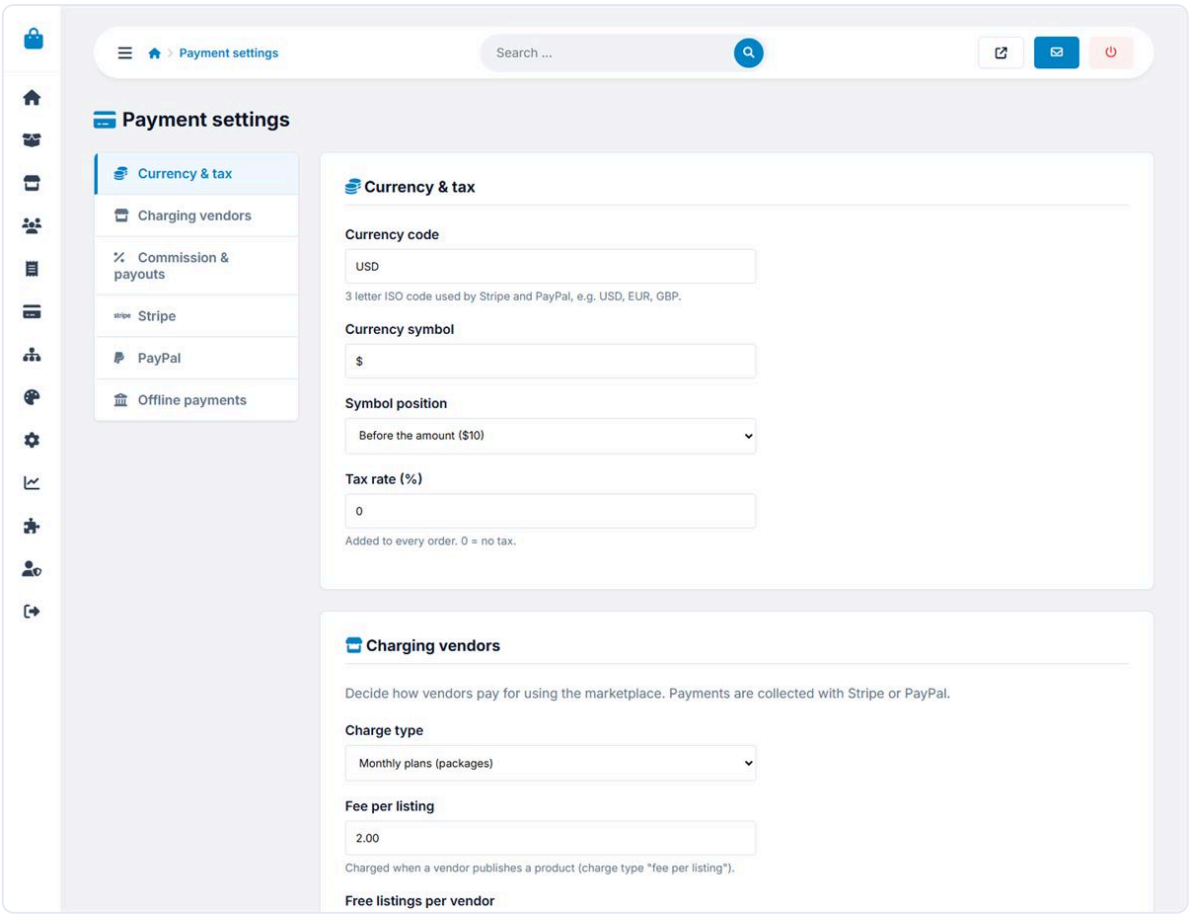
PayPal

1. Create a REST app in the PayPal developer dashboard.
2. Paste the client ID and secret.
3. Choose sandbox or live mode.

> Test with sandbox keys first.



Payment settings



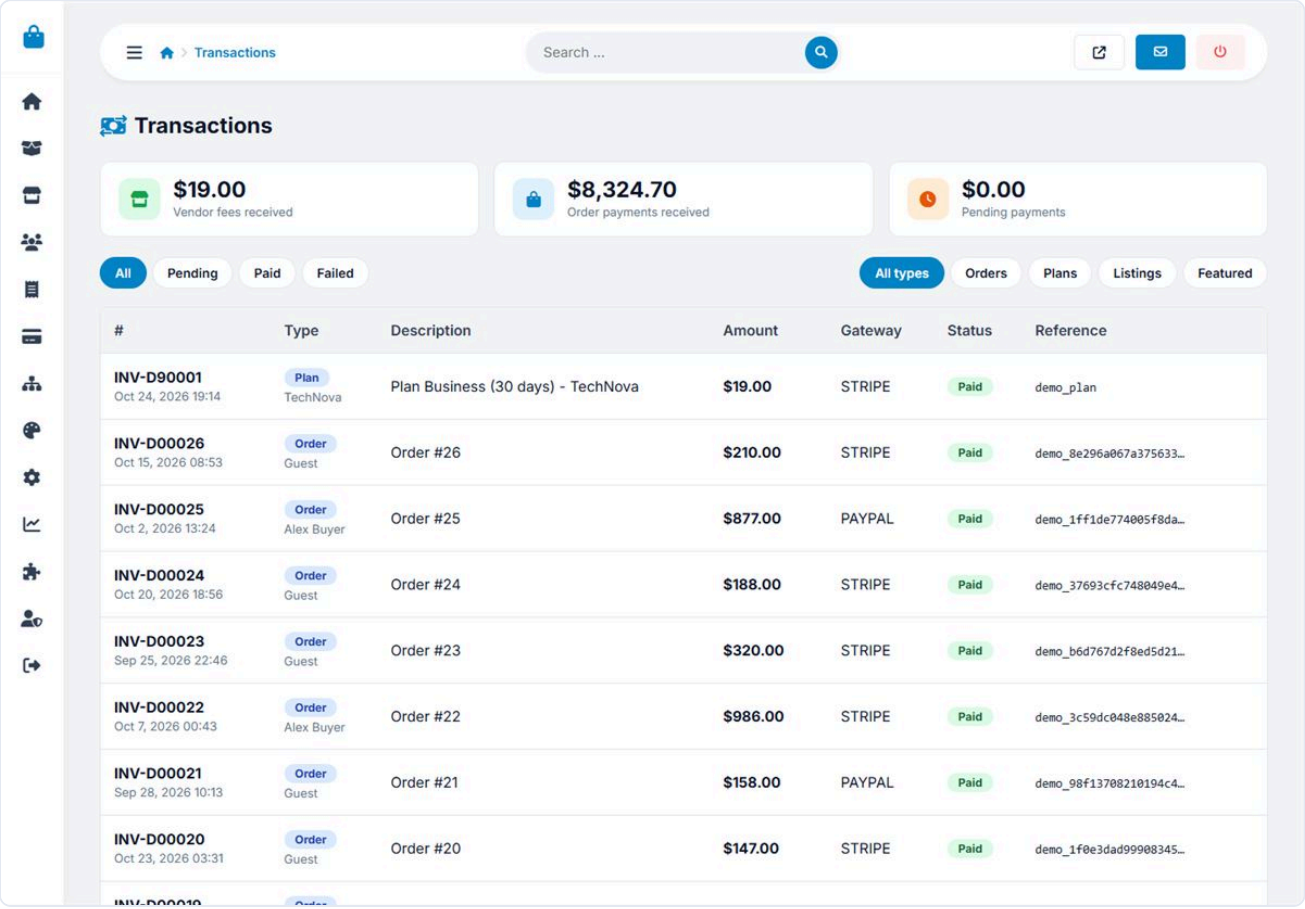
Gateway options

ADMIN PANEL

Transactions

Every payment is logged.

Menu: Payments → Transactions



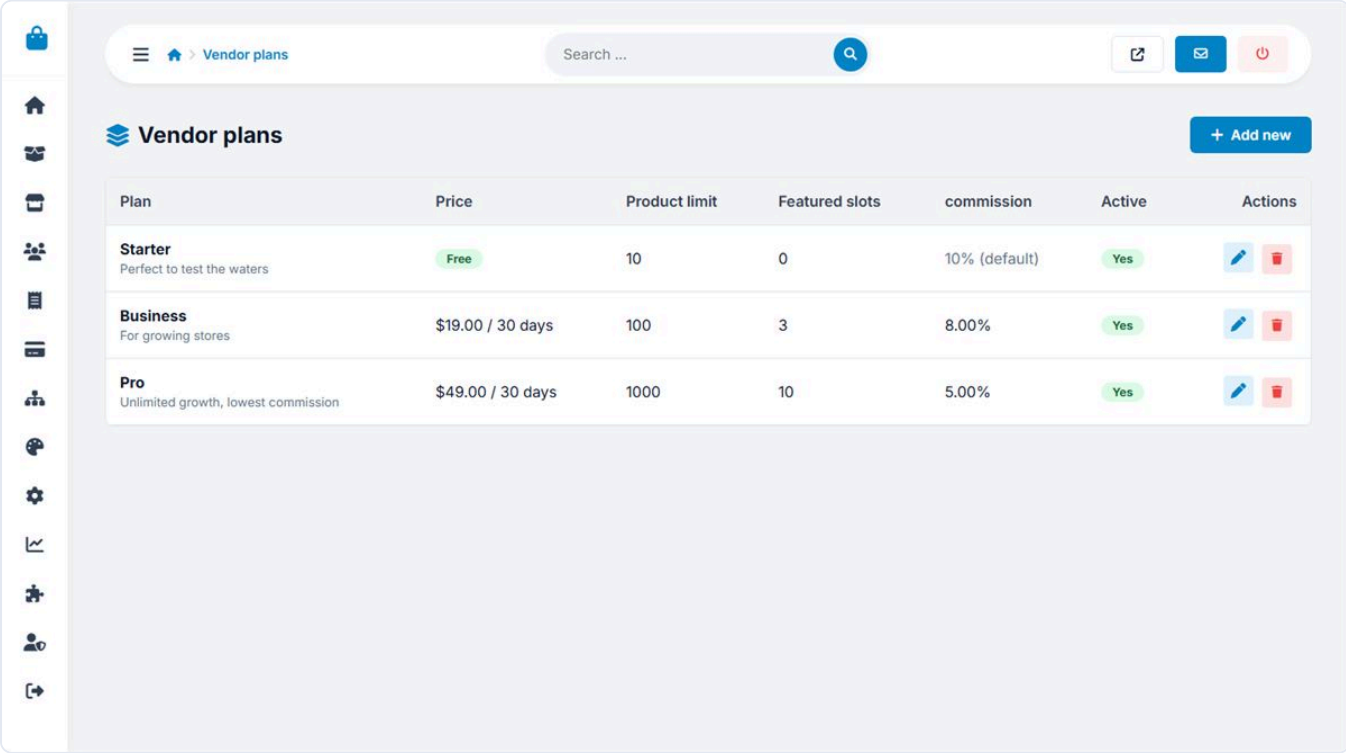
Transactions

ADMIN PANEL

Vendor Plans and Charging

Choose your revenue model.

Option	Description
Charge type 0	Free listings
Charge type 1	Fee per listing, with free listings quota and listing duration in days
Charge type 2	Monthly plans with listing limits
Featured	Price and number of days for a featured upgrade



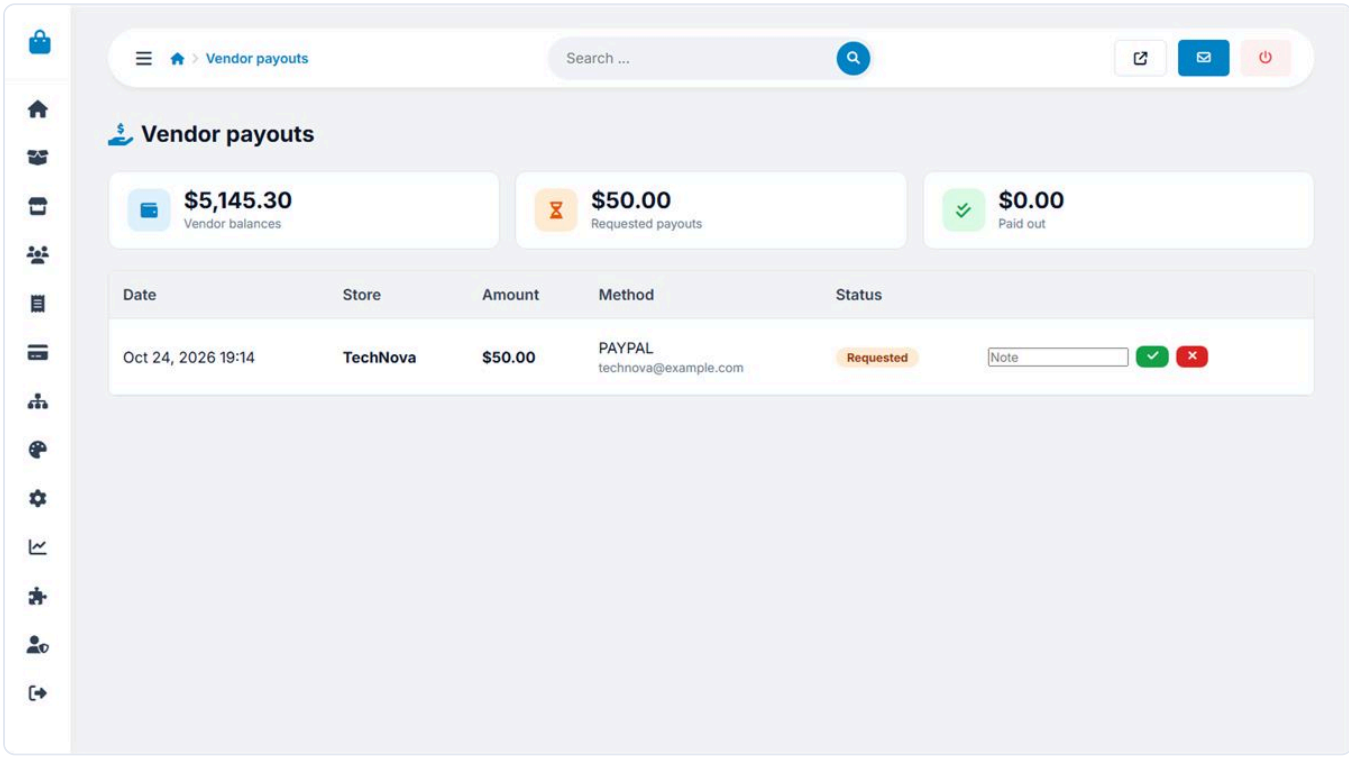
Vendor plans

ADMIN PANEL

Vendor Payouts

Pay your vendors their earnings.

Menu: Payments → Payouts



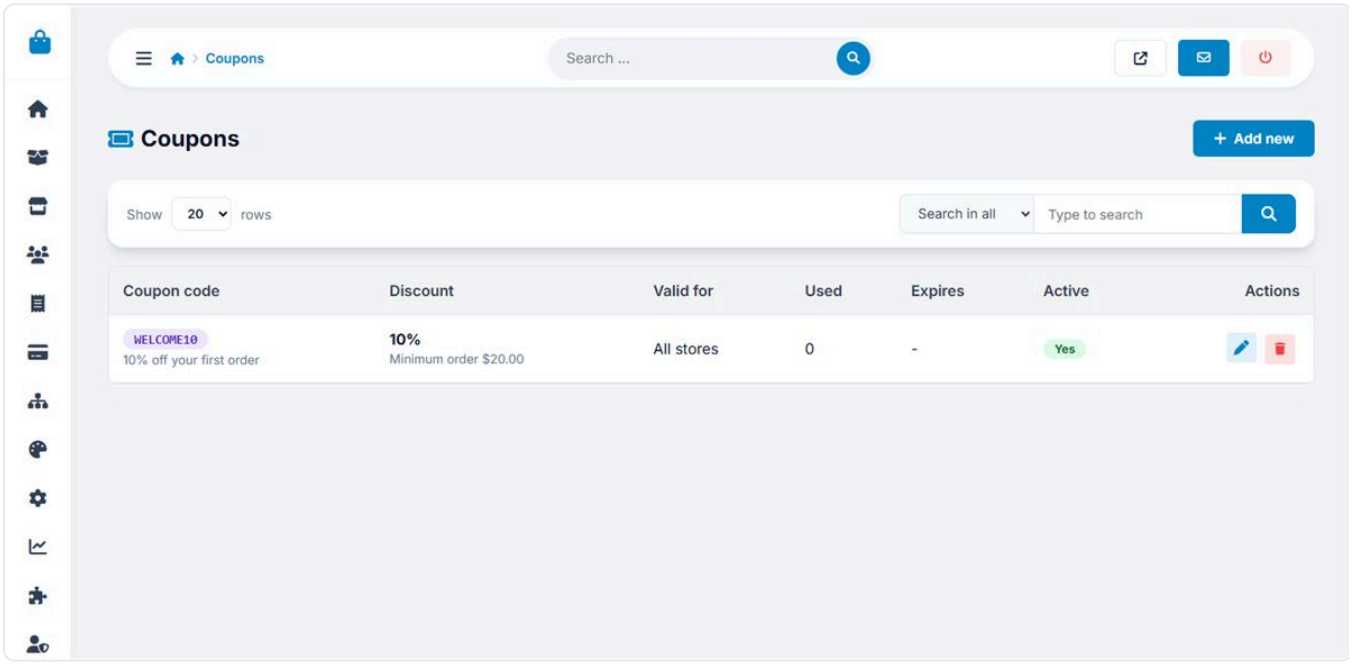
Payout requests

ADMIN PANEL

Coupons

Marketplace level coupons.

Menu: Payments → Coupons



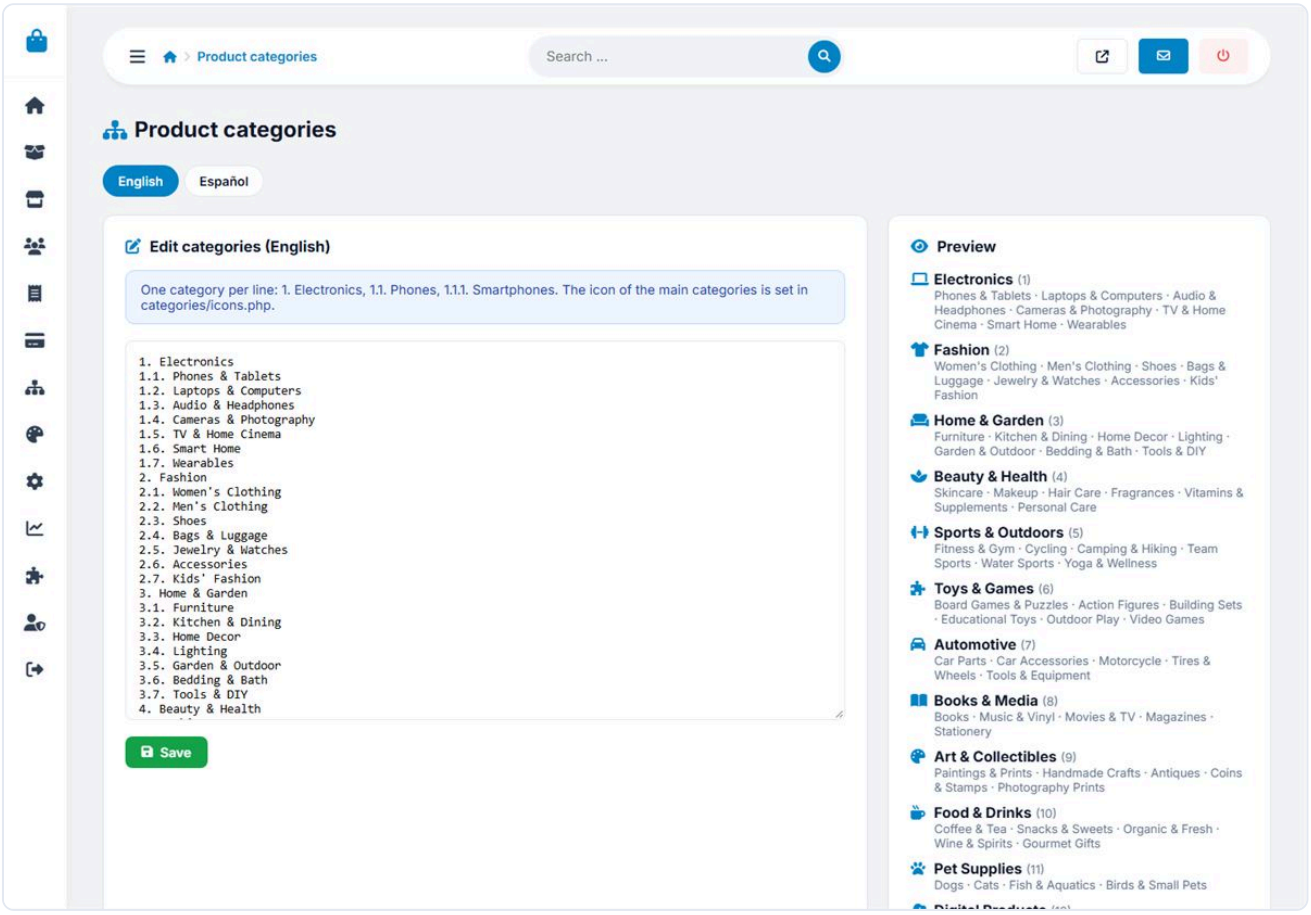
Coupons

ADMIN PANEL

Categories (Text File)

Categories are plain text, not database rows.

Each language has a file `categories/categories_xx.php`. Edit it in *Catalog → Categories*; the structure is generated automatically.



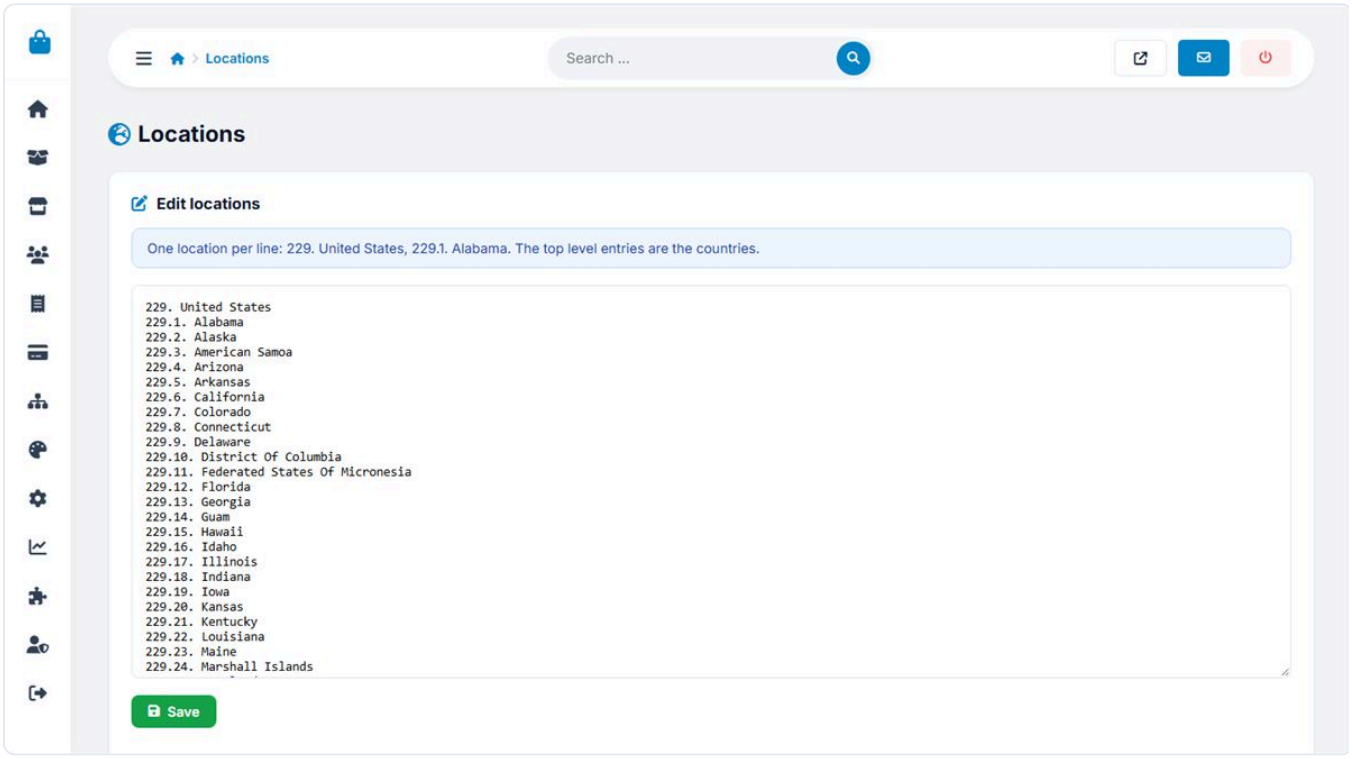
Category editor

ADMIN PANEL

Locations (Text File)

Locations are stored in `locations/locations.php`.

Menu: Catalog → Locations



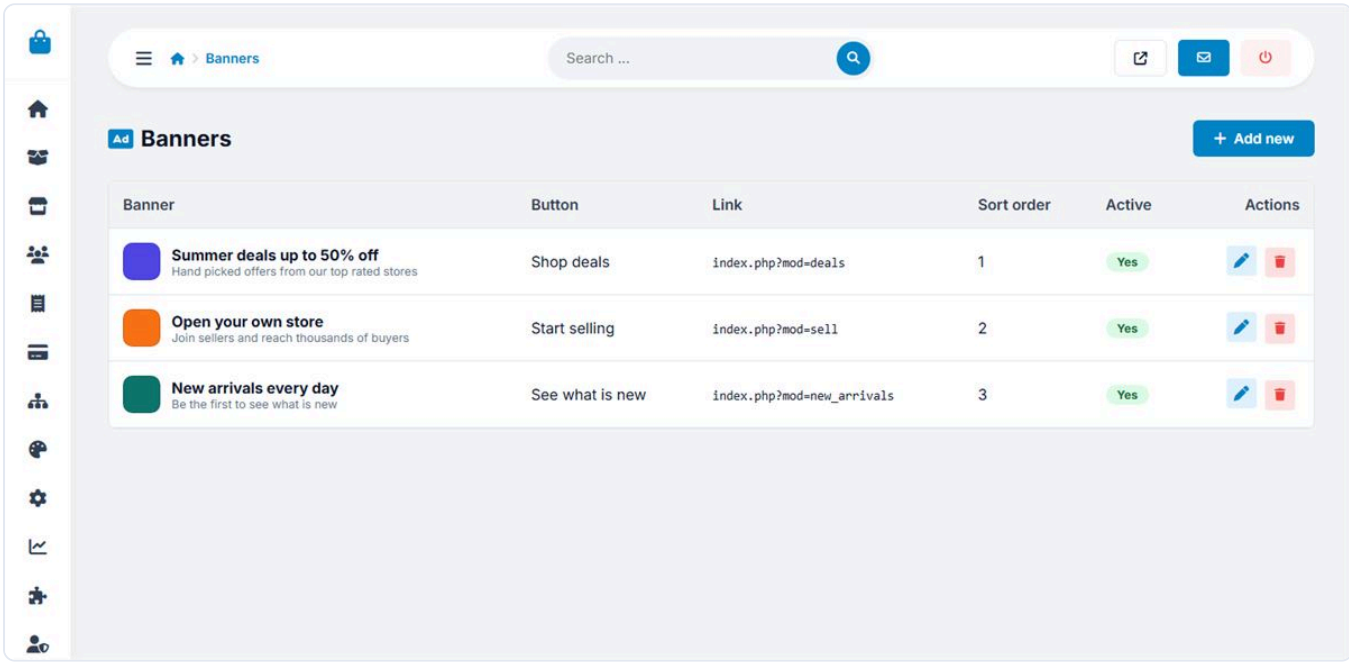
Location editor

ADMIN PANEL

Banners

Banners promote offers.

Menu: Catalog → Banners

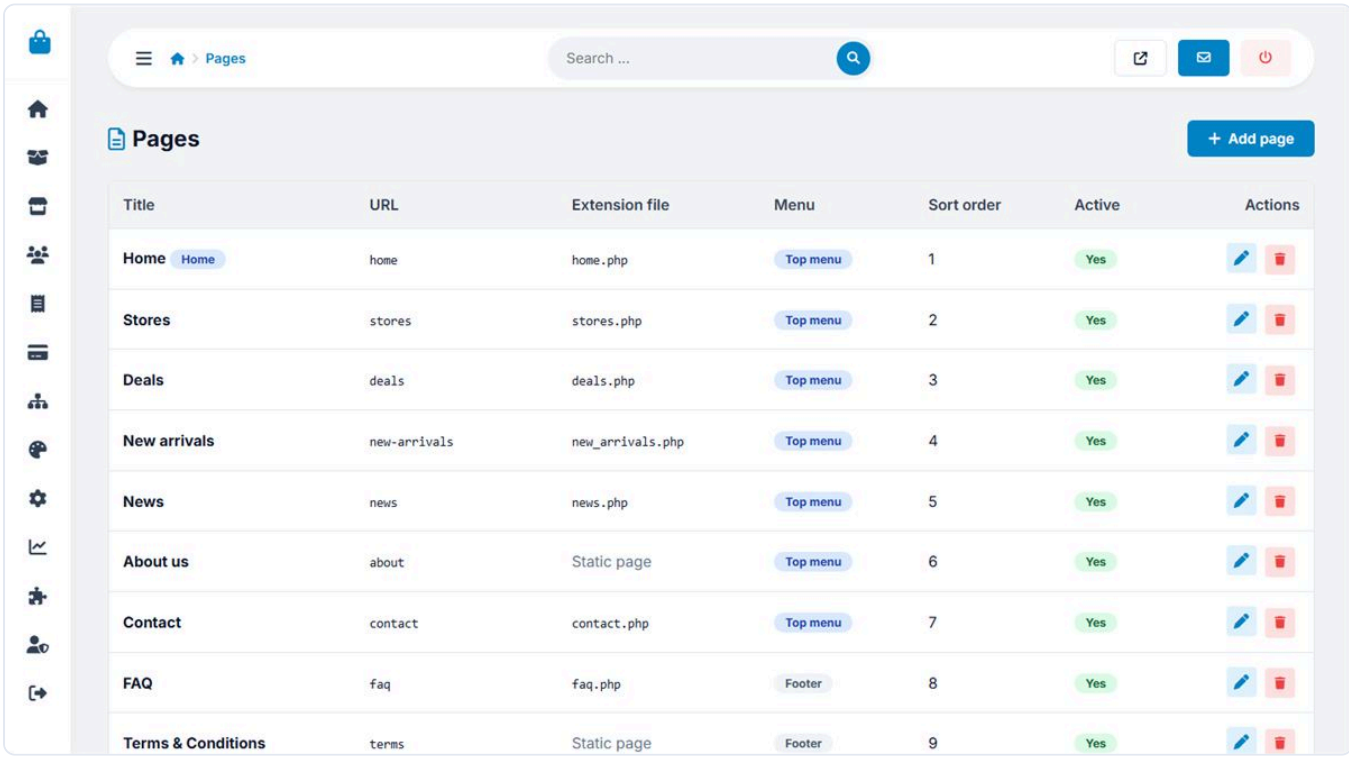


Banner manager

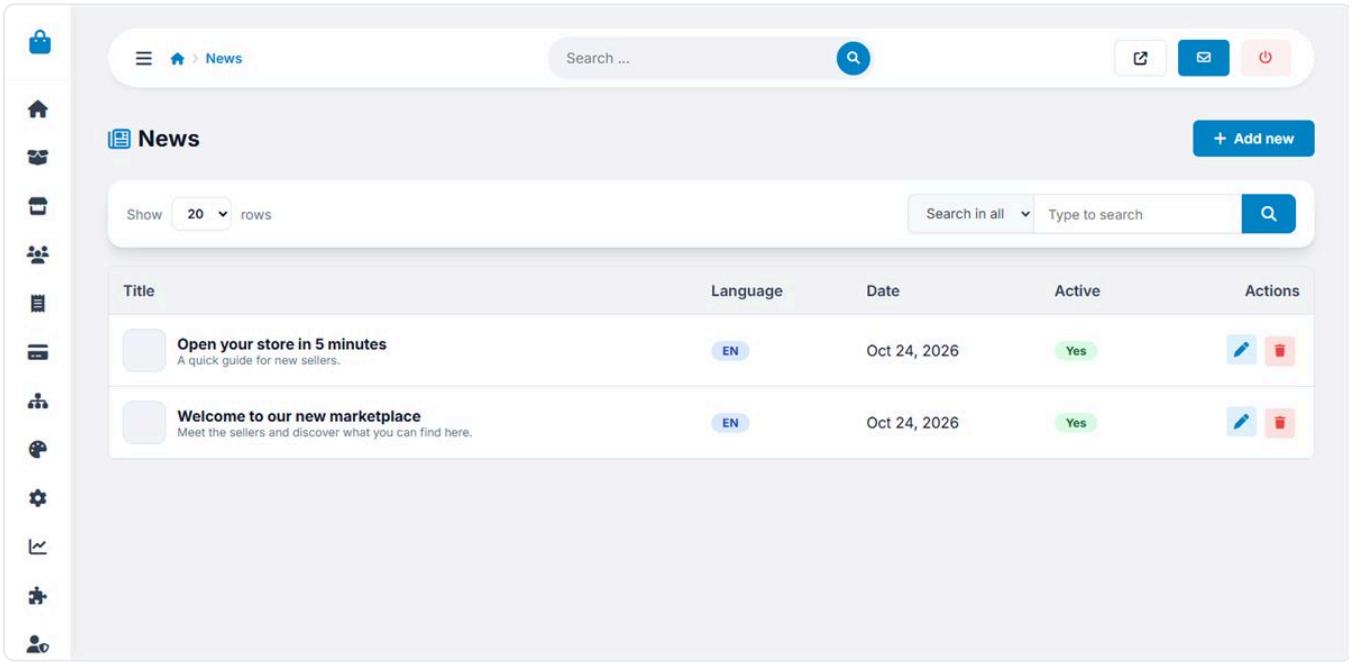
ADMIN PANEL

Pages, News and FAQ

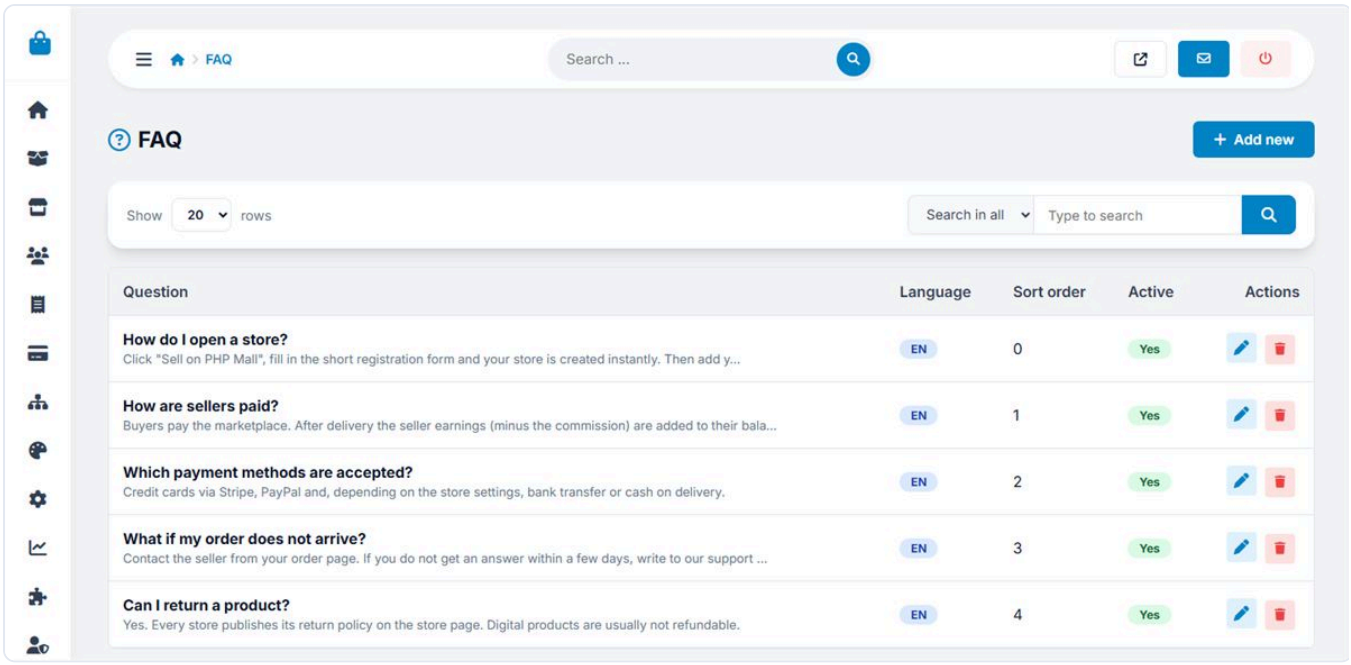
Manage content without code.



Pages



News

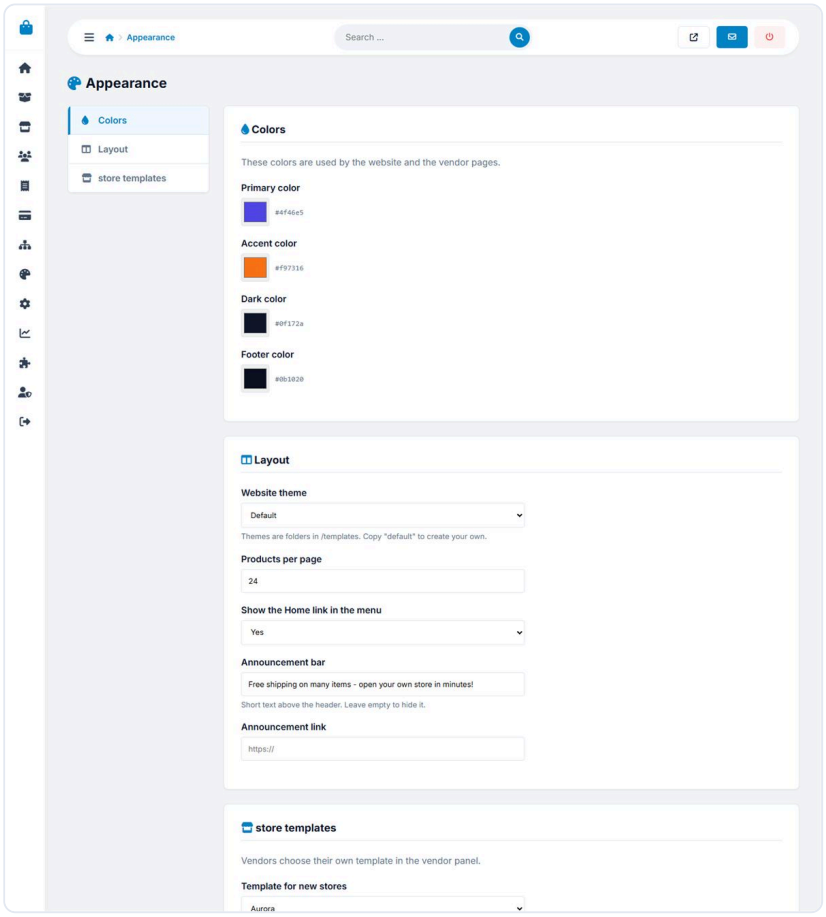

FAQ
Search ...
FAQ
+ Add new
Show 20 rows
Search in all
Type to search
Question
Language
Sort order
Active
Actions
How do I open a store?
Click "Sell on PHP Mall", fill in the short registration form and your store is created instantly. Then add y...
EN
0
Yes
How are sellers paid?
Buyers pay the marketplace. After delivery the seller earnings (minus the commission) are added to their bala...
EN
1
Yes
Which payment methods are accepted?
Credit cards via Stripe, PayPal and, depending on the store settings, bank transfer or cash on delivery.
EN
2
Yes
What if my order does not arrive?
Contact the seller from your order page. If you do not get an answer within a few days, write to our support ...
EN
3
Yes
Can I return a product?
Yes. Every store publishes its return policy on the store page. Digital products are usually not refundable.
EN
4
Yes

FAQ

ADMIN PANEL

Logo, Favicon and Appearance

Brand the marketplace.

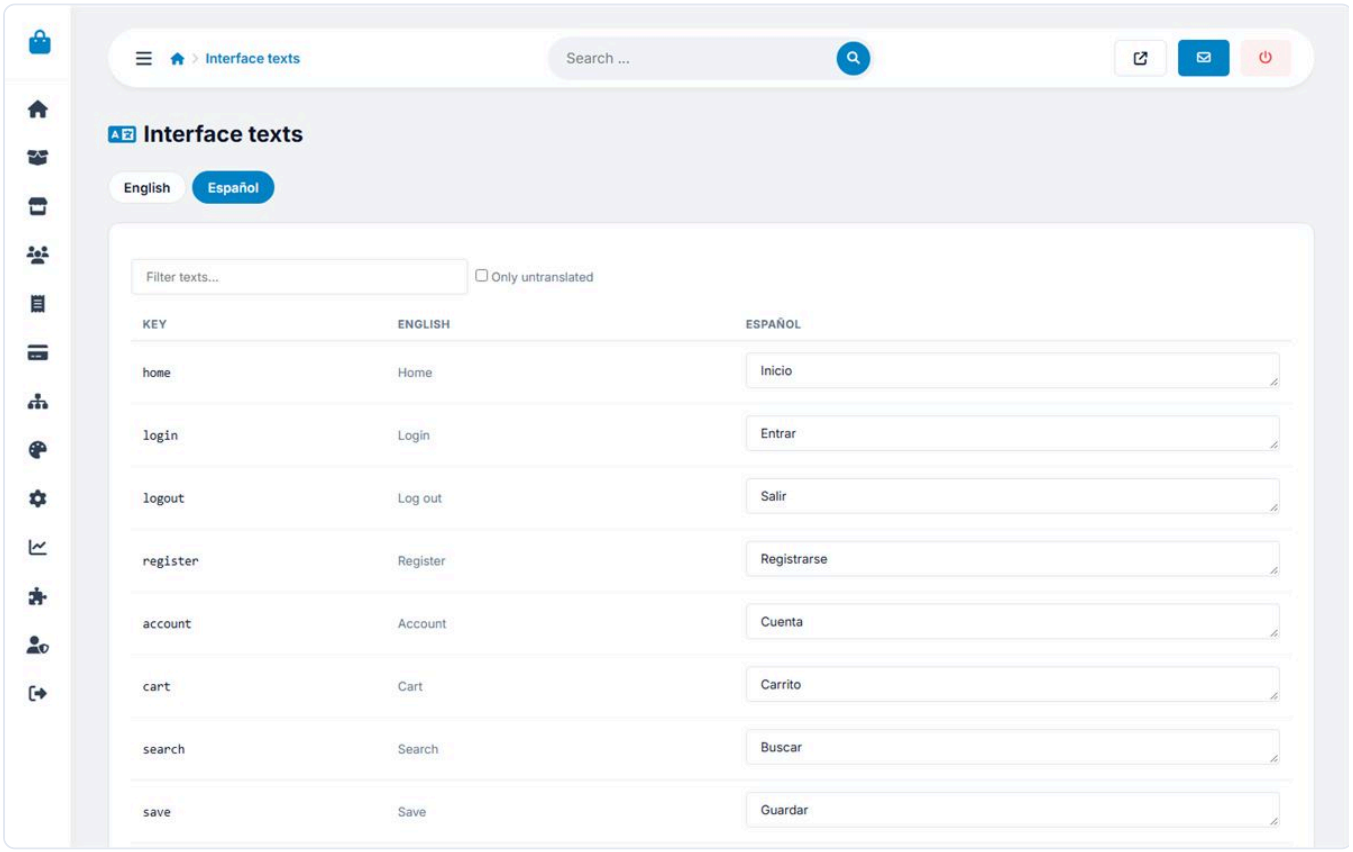


Appearance settings

ADMIN PANEL

Interface Texts

Change any label without editing code.



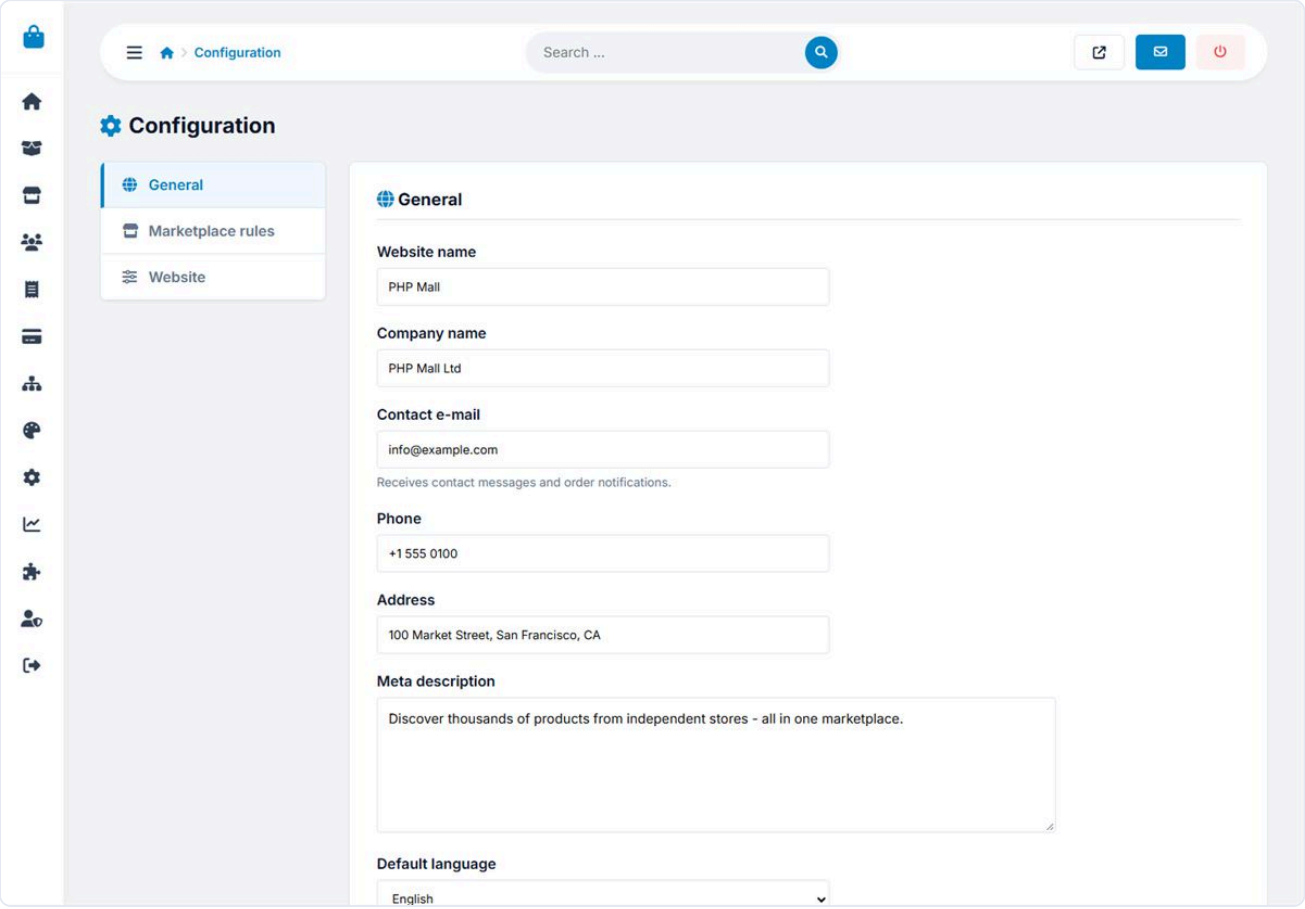
Interface text editor

ADMIN PANEL

Site Configuration

General settings of the marketplace.

Menu: Settings → Configuration



Configuration

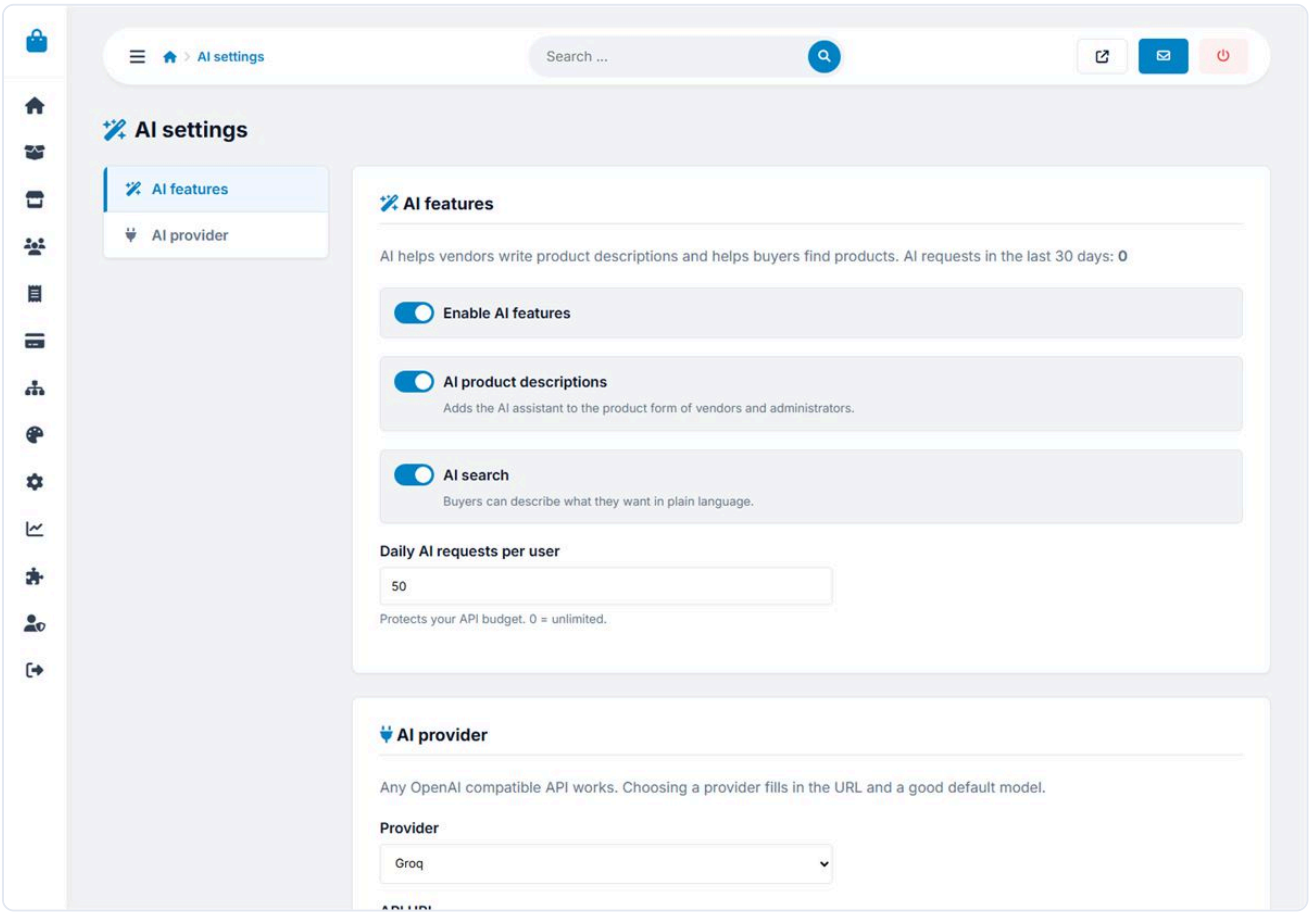
ADMIN PANEL

AI Settings

One OpenAI-compatible client powers all AI features.

Menu: Settings → AI

1. Select the provider.
2. Paste the API key.
3. Set the model name.
4. Save and test.



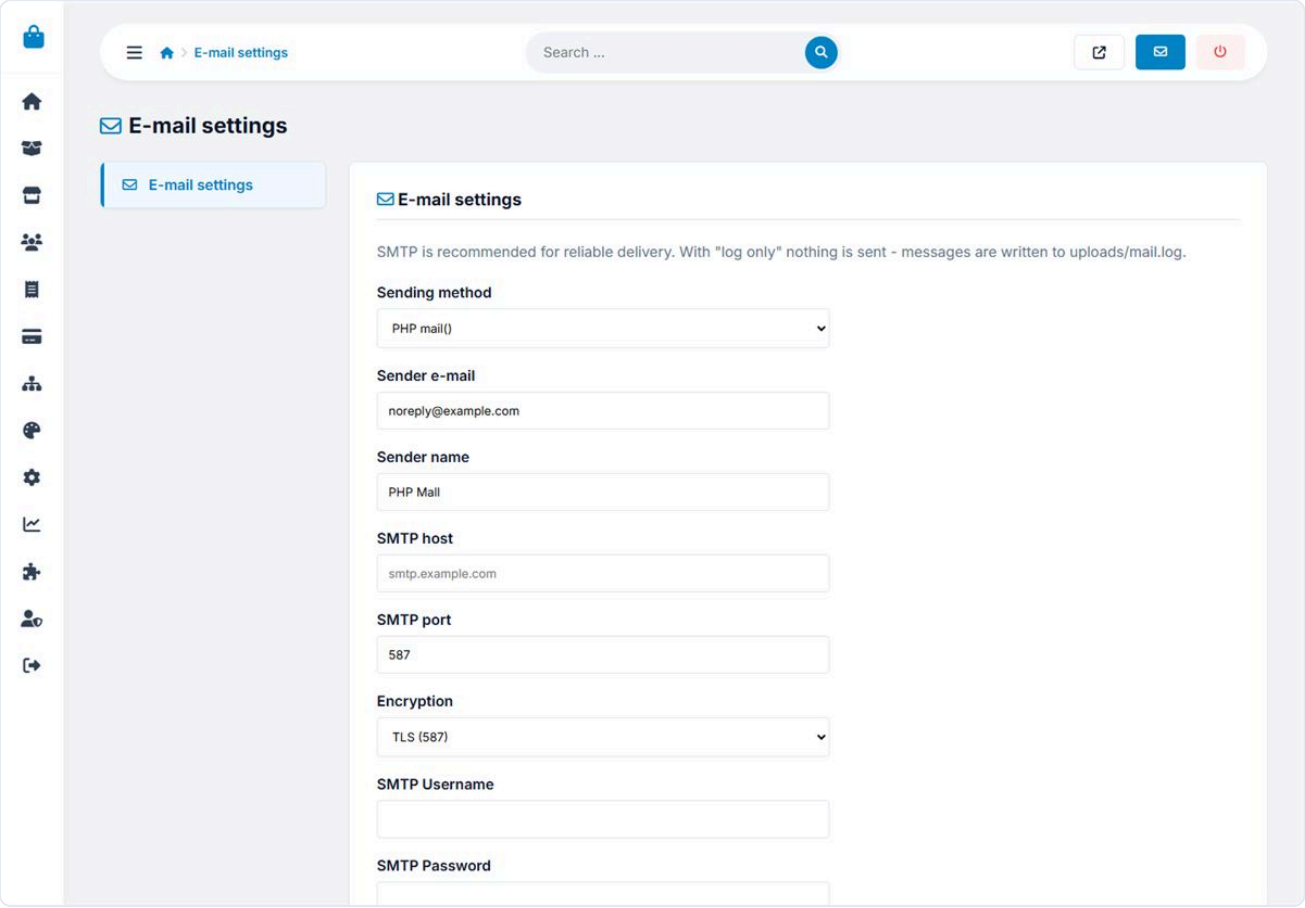
AI settings

ADMIN PANEL

E-mail Settings

Order and account e-mails depend on this.

Menu: Settings → E-mail



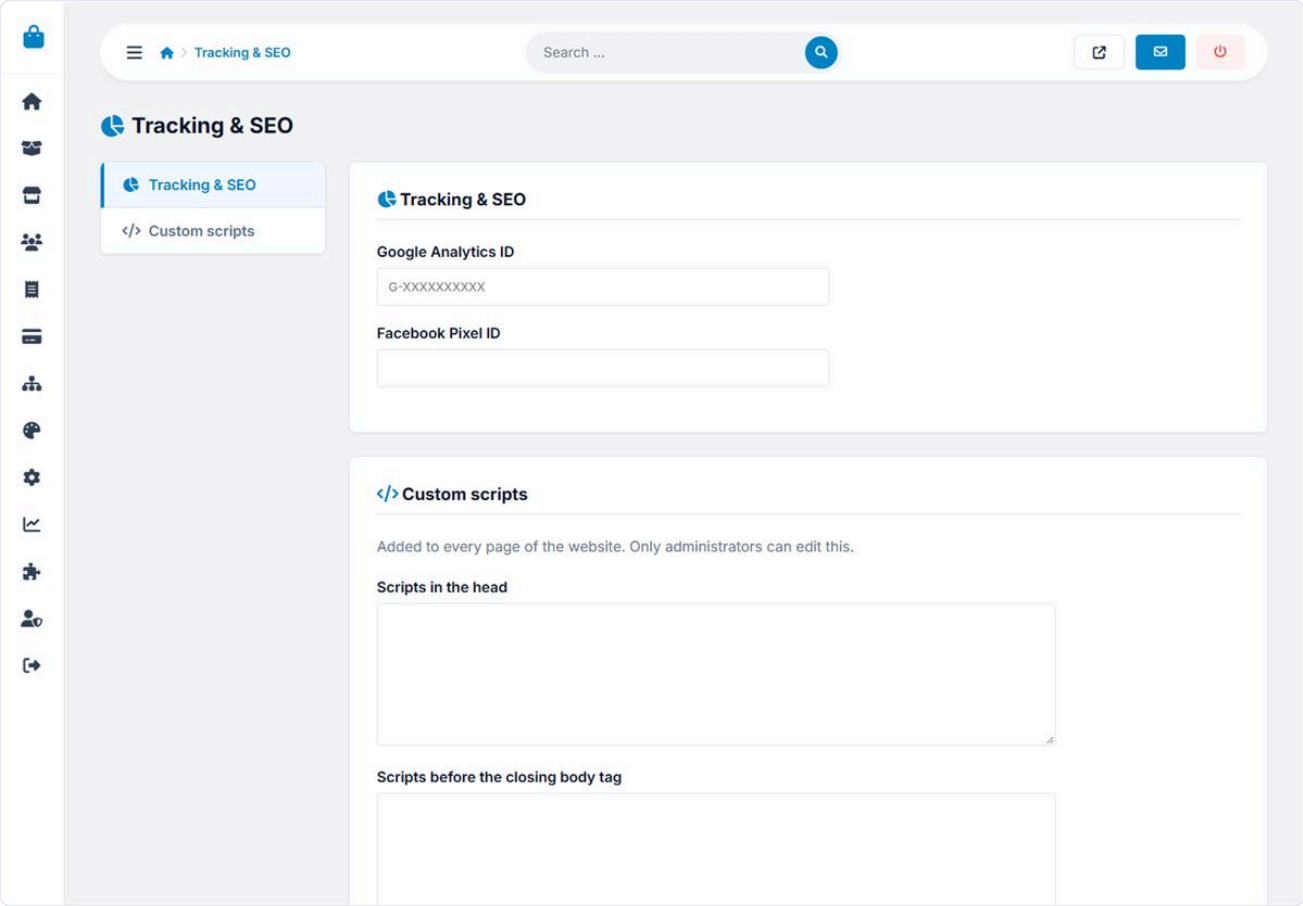
E-mail settings

ADMIN PANEL

Tracking and SEO

Measure and optimize traffic.

Menu: Settings → Tracking

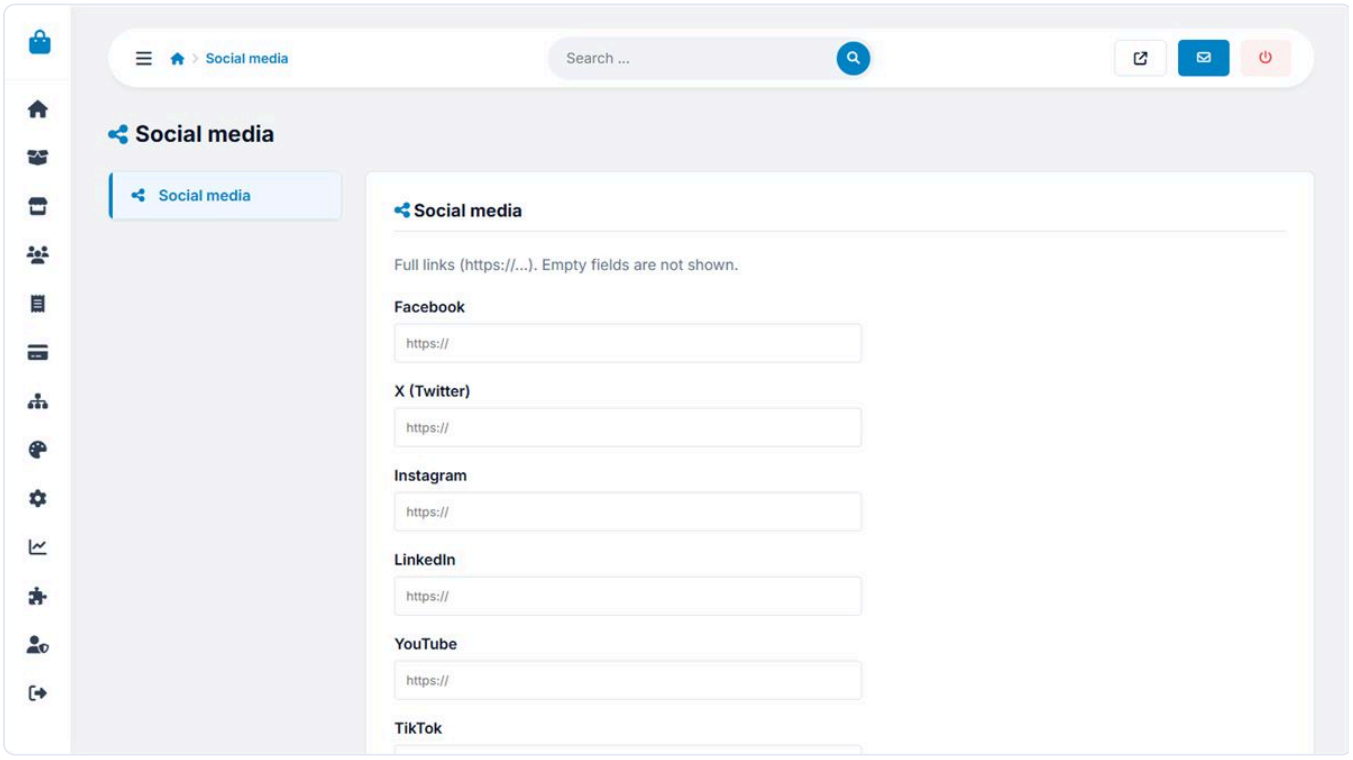


Tracking and SEO

ADMIN PANEL

Social Media Links

Link your social profiles.



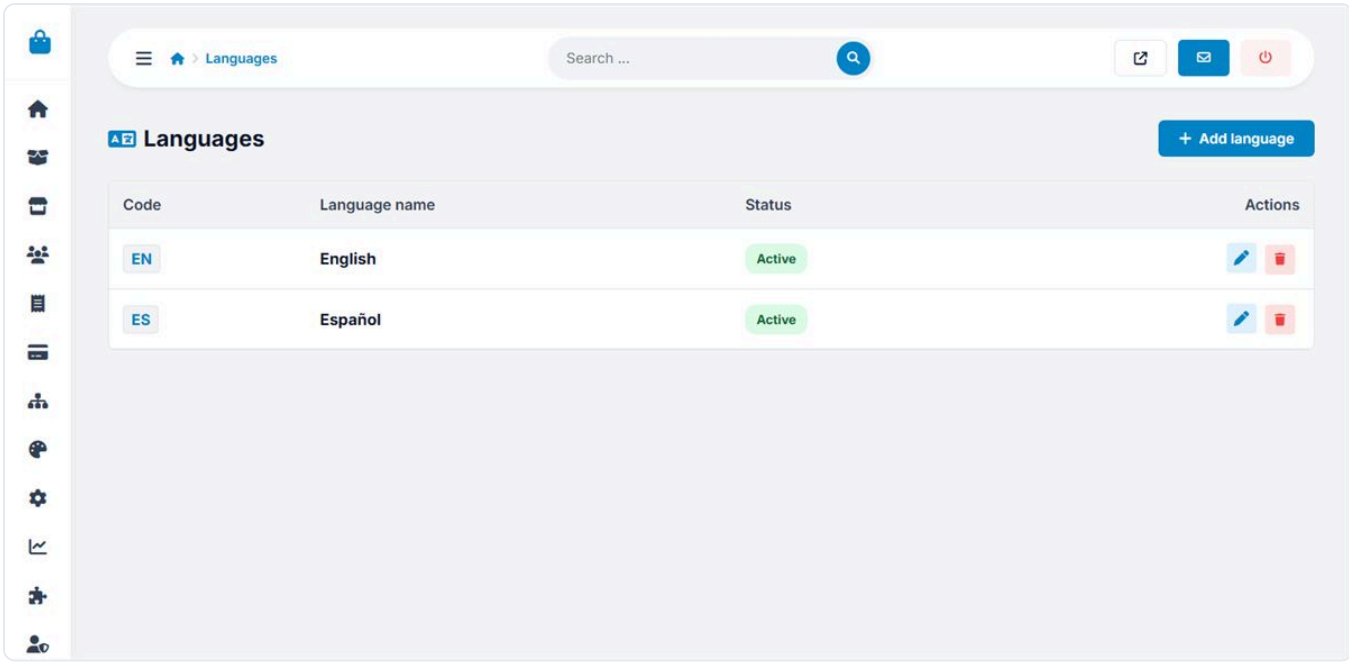
Social media

ADMIN PANEL

Languages

Language files are in the `languages/` folder.

- `en.php` and `es.php` are included
- Add a language by copying a file
- Translate in the admin panel



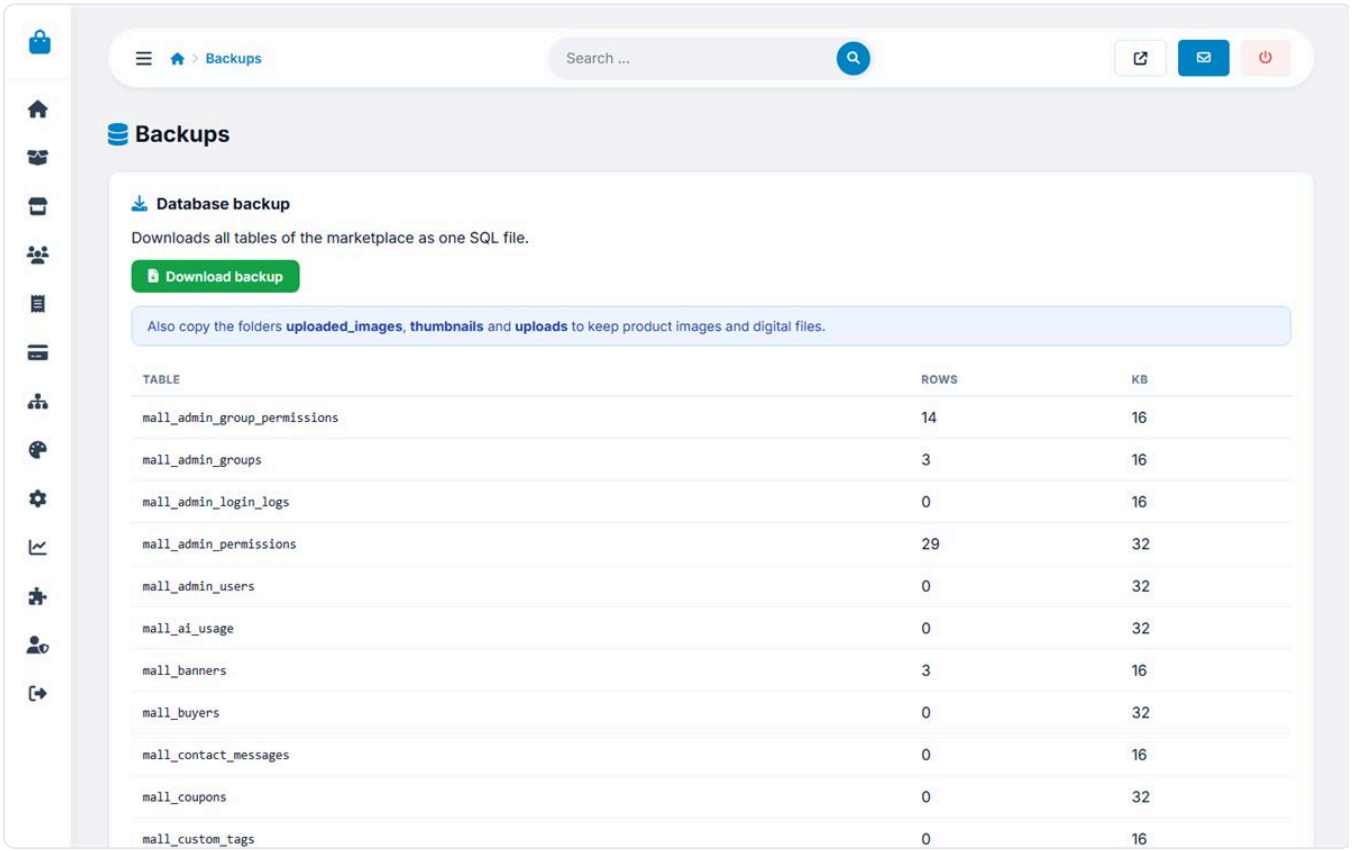
Languages

ADMIN PANEL

Database Backups

Always keep backups.

Menu: Settings → Backups

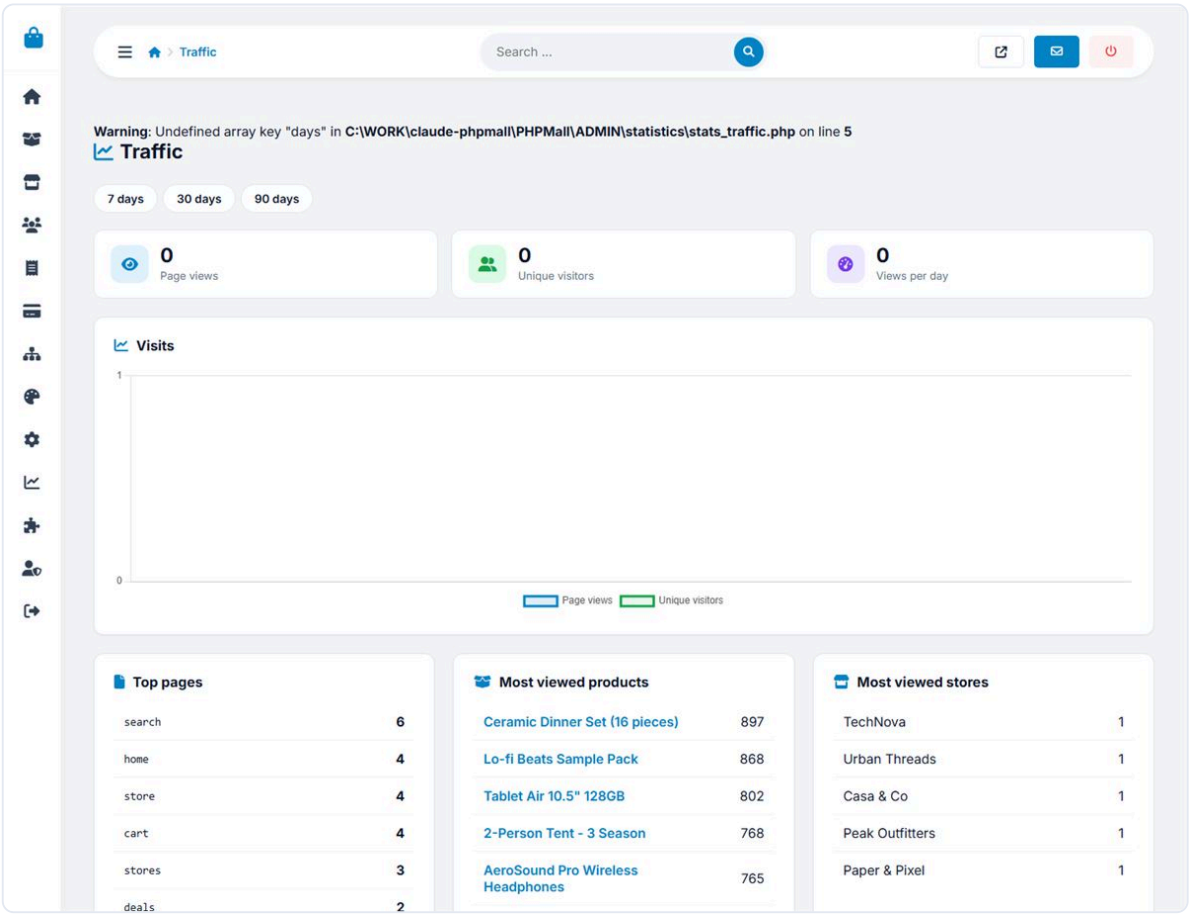


Backups

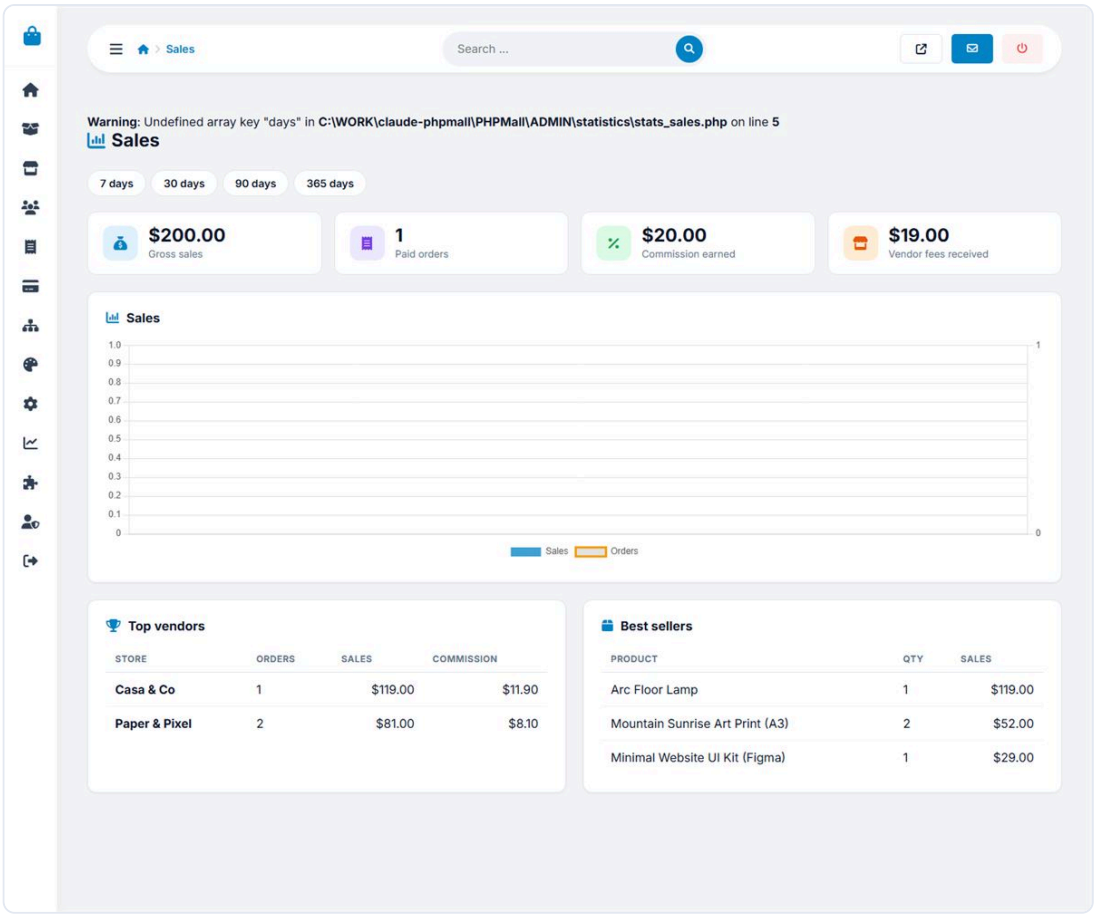
ADMIN PANEL

Statistics

Know how the marketplace performs.



Traffic


Sales
Search ...
Warning: Undefined array key "days" in C:\WORK\claude-phpmall\PHPMall\ADMIN\statistics\stats_sales.php on line 5
Sales
7 days
30 days
90 days
365 days
$200.00
Gross sales
1
Paid orders
$20.00
Commission earned
$19.00
Vendor fees received
Sales
Sales
Orders
Top vendors
STORE
ORDERS
SALES
COMMISSION
Casa & Co
1
$119.00
$11.90
Paper & Pixel
2
$81.00
$8.10
Best sellers
PRODUCT
QTY
SALES
Arc Floor Lamp
1
$119.00
Mountain Sunrise Art Print (A3)
2
$52.00
Minimal Website UI Kit (Figma)
1
$29.00

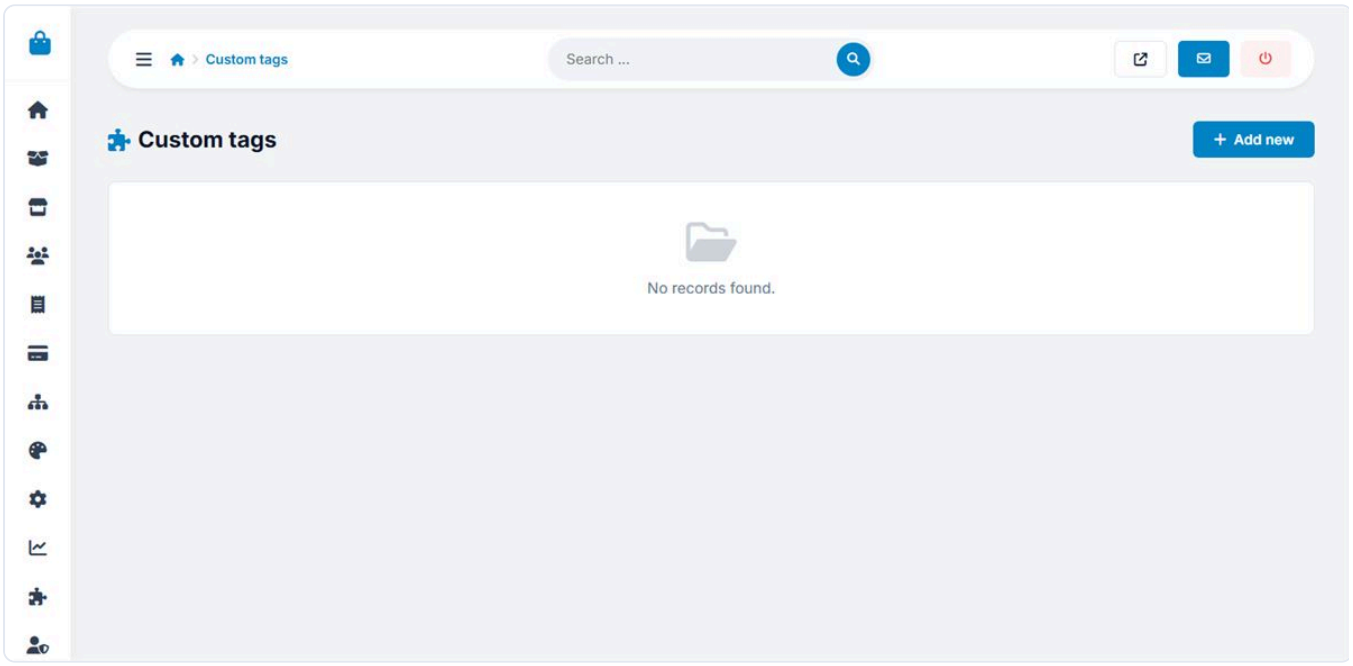
Sales

ADMIN PANEL

Extensions and Custom Tags

PHP Mall is easy to extend.

Templates use tags like `<site xxx/>` and `{{ key }}`. Add your own in the extensions area.

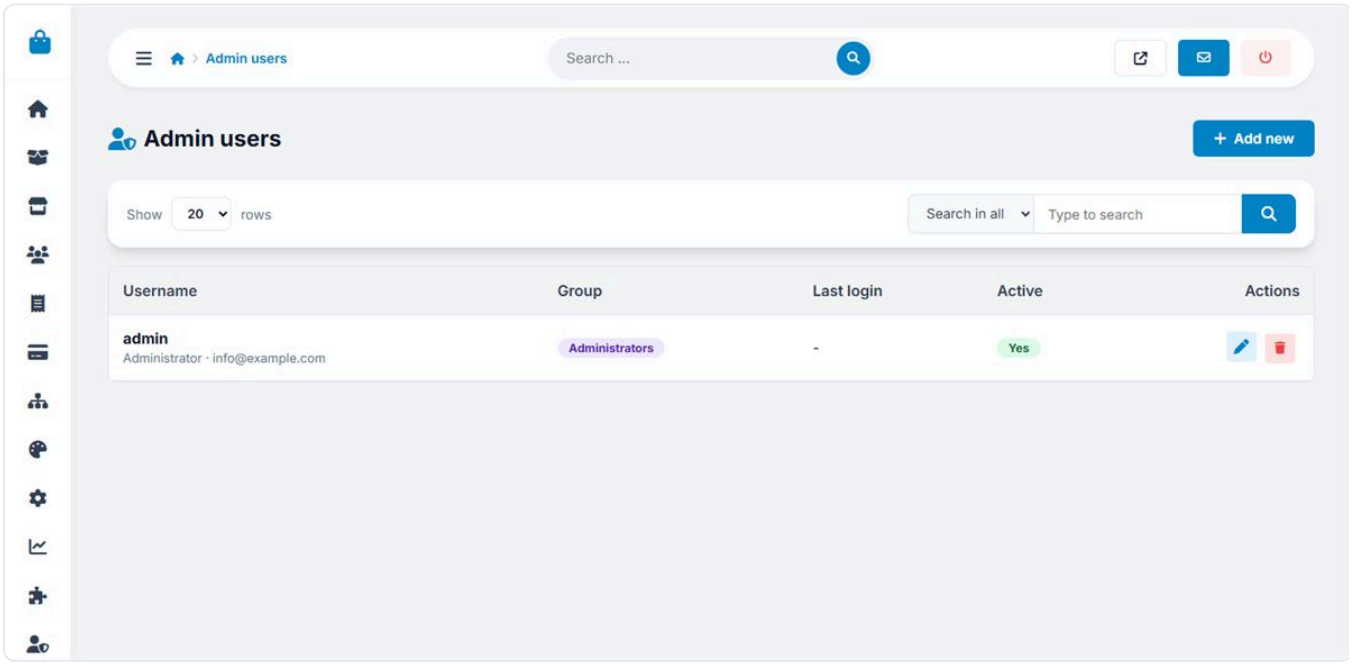


Custom tags

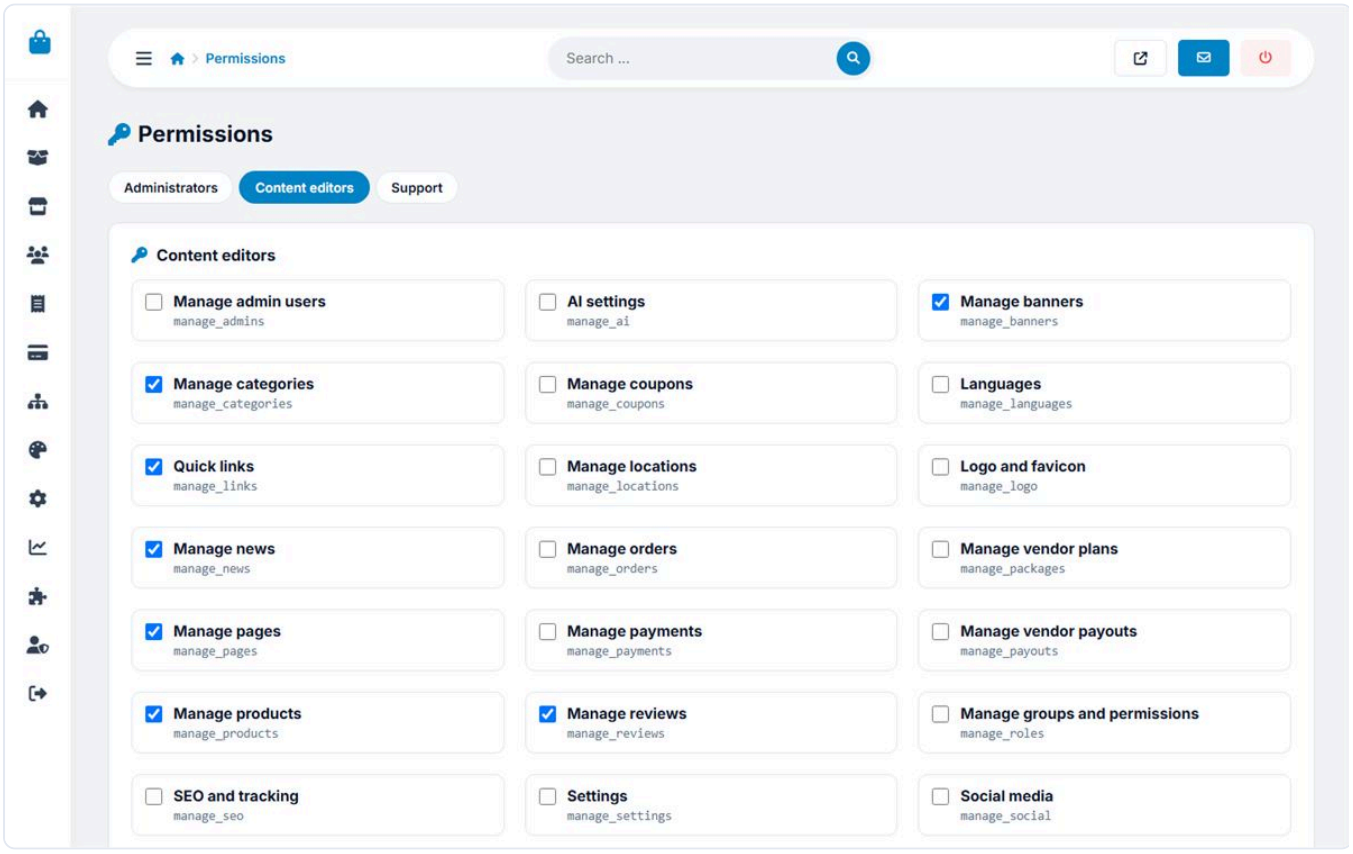
ADMIN PANEL

Admin Users and Permissions

Give staff only the access they need.



Admins

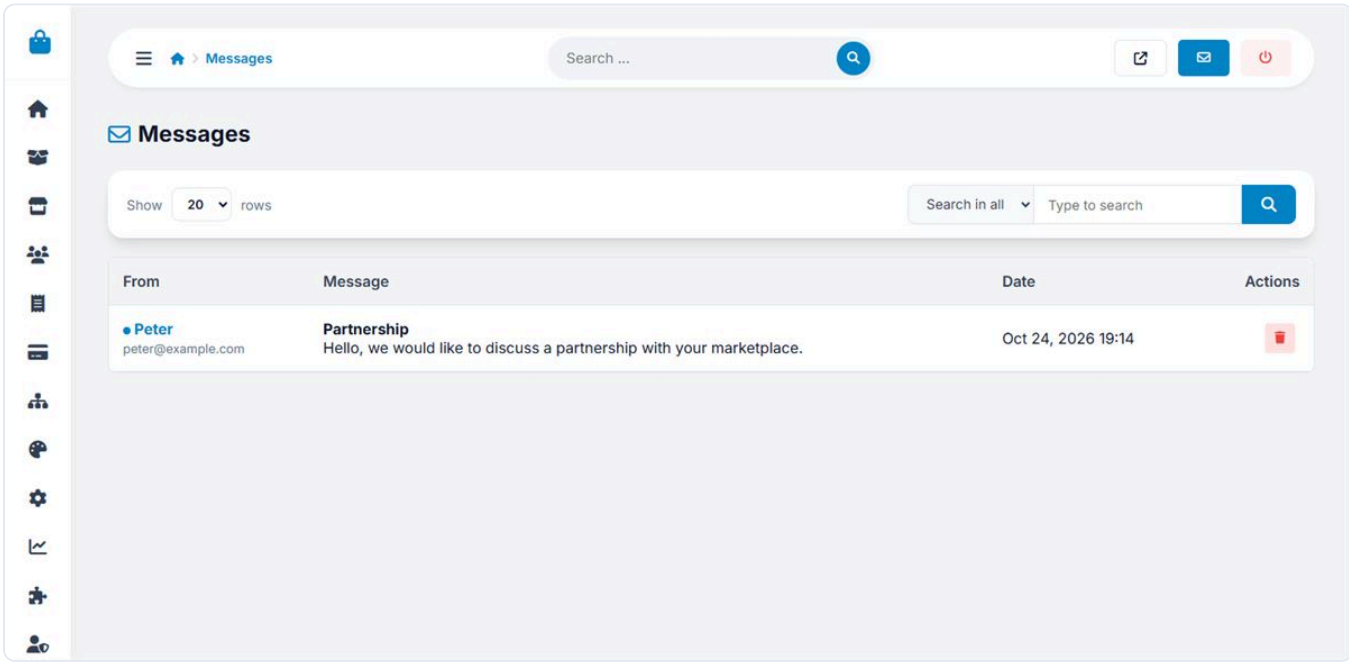


Permissions

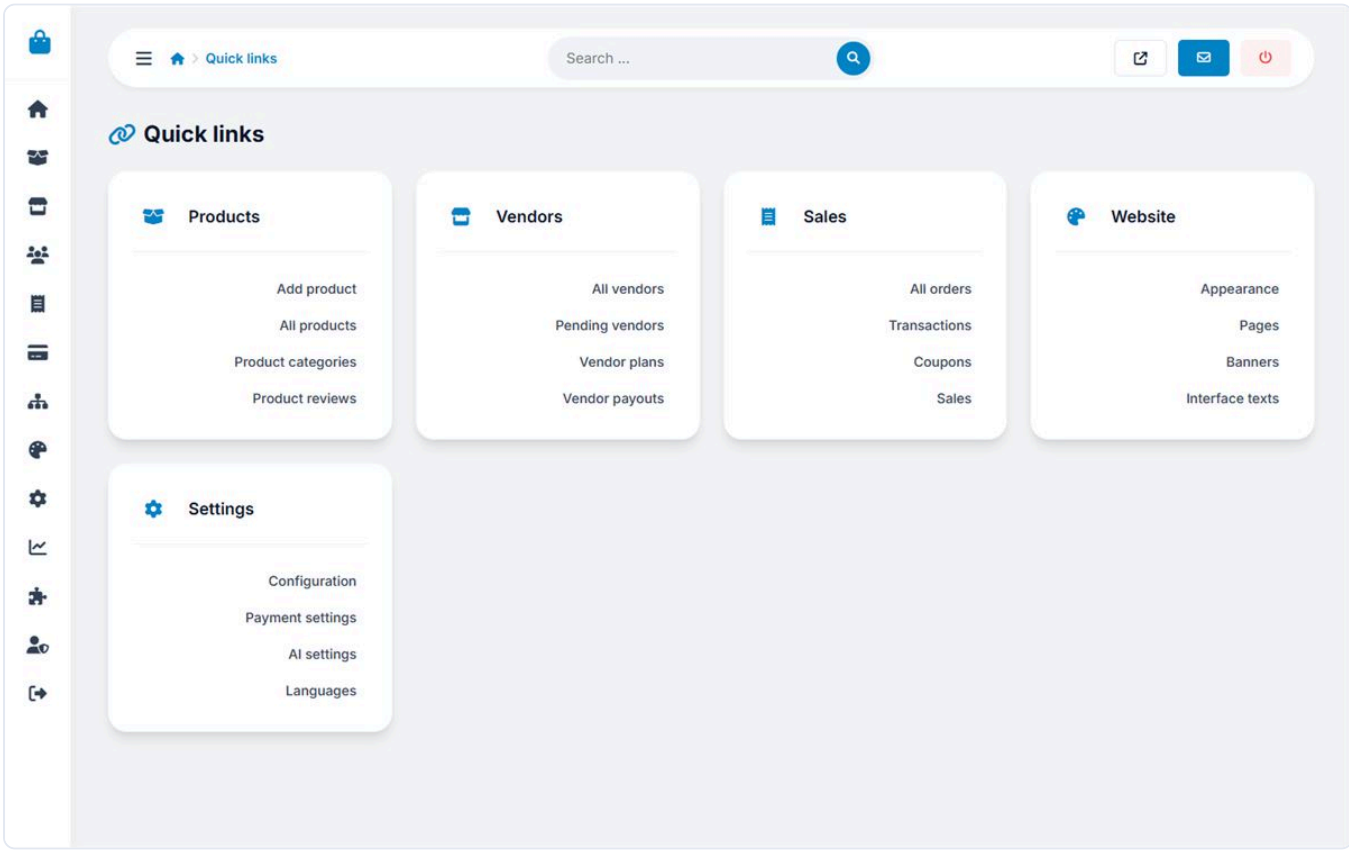
ADMIN PANEL

Messages and Links

Read incoming messages.



Messages



Quick links

PHP Mall User Manual · NetArt Media
https://www.netartmedia.net/manuals/phpmall/