



eBay **Master Class**

25 Original Articles

by

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Contents

1. Why eBay?
2. Abbreviations used on eBay, and in eBay Auction emails
3. Ten Tips for eBay Buyers and Sellers
4. What are the Best Types of Items to Sell on eBay?
5. What Should I Sell on eBay?
6. Why it Makes Sense to be Cool on eBay – Selling the Unusual
7. How to Create the Best Title for your eBay Auction
8. The Secret Power of an eBay Auction Title
9. What is the best Duration for an eBay Auction?
10. Do Pictures Help Your eBay Selling?
11. Can You Sell a Service on eBay?
12. How to Legally Sell an Affiliate Product on eBay
13. Remove These Objections and Watch Your eBay Auctions Fly
14. Why not Sell Internationally on eBay?
15. A Searching Lesson – Use eBay's search facility to your advantage
16. Drive Yourself to More eBay Auction Money – selling cars on eBay
17. Use This Research to Benefit Your eBay Selling
18. Dropshipping - Can you do it in the UK as well as the USA?
19. How to Make Money fast on eBay
20. Here's What I Use to Help my eBay Selling – be more productive
21. Five Top Tips for Successful eBay Selling
22. What NOT to do in eBay Selling
23. How to Kill Your eBay Business – Avoid Doing This!
24. Twenty Six Tips on How to be Safe in Your eBay Selling and Buying
25. Cautionary Tales - eMail scams on eBay

Introduction

eBay is the most incredible opportunity for all of us to find bargains and to make money on the internet.

If you haven't started yet, you need to set up your own eBay account. It's free, and you can register below:

Register for eBay.com at www.ebay.com

Register for eBay.co.uk at www.eBay.co.uk

Another Free Report

Before you start, why not get another free report from Brian McGregor?

***"The Feedback Accelerator"** shows you how you can get 10 positive feedbacks onto your eBay User ID within minutes!*

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1. Why eBay?

If you have a desire to be home based, eBay really is the ultimate new-start opportunity.

I know of no other business format where you can put something up for sale to millions of people without having to invest in a shop, advertising or a web site: and sell it and be paid within days.

I know you have to pay to list your item on eBay, but this starts at 20p (25 cents) for up to ten days exposure to those millions of prospective customers.

You can test a product within days, and there are virtually no limits as to what you can sell on eBay. When selling on eBay you can get involved in any area in which you have an interest or expertise.

The figures regarding the growth of eBay are impressive. As I write this, eBay have just announced their Quarter 3, 2005 results. The figures shown below relate to the 3 months of business from 1 July to 30 September, 2005.

- 458.6.1 million listings in Q3, 2005. Up 32% over Q3, 2004.
- \$10.8 billion value of auctions sales in Q3, 2005. Up 30% over Q3, 2004.
- \$1.1 billion Gross Profit in Q3, 2005. Up 37% over Q3, 2004.
- 168.1 million eBay members as at 30 September, 2005. Up 35% as at 30 September, 2004.
- On average, 117,400 new members joined eBay each day throughout Q3, 2005.
- \$6.7 billion PayPal payments in Q3, 2005. Up 44% over Q3, 2004.
- 86.6 million PayPal accounts as at 30 September, 2005. Up 53% as at 30 September, 2004.

eBay categories with more than \$1 billion in annualized auction sales are:

- eBay Motors - \$14.1 billion
- Clothing & Accessories - \$3.1 billion
- Computers - \$3.0 billion
- Consumer Electronics - \$3.0 billion
- Books/Movies/Music - \$2.5 billion
- Home & Garden - \$2.4 billion
- Collectibles - \$2.1 billion
- Jewelry & Watches - \$1.6 billion
- Sports - \$2.1 billion
- Business & Industrial - \$1.5 billion
- Toys - \$1.5 billion
- Cameras & Photo - \$1.3 billion

All of this is great news for us!

The eBay market place is thriving, and we should all be able to thrive with it.

If you're in the market to make extra money, and you want to do it through online auctions, then I can assure you with eBay you have definitely selected the right partner.

2. Abbreviations used on eBay and in eBay Auction emails

Here are some abbreviations which you may come across in auctions and in auction communications with buyers and sellers:

ADDY: E-mail address

AKA: Also known as

ATM: At the moment

BTW: By the way

DOA: Dead on arrival (the item you bought doesn't work when taken out of the package)

EBOOK: Although represented as a physical book image, an eBook is in digital form and is downloaded onto the users PC for viewing and/printing

FAQ: A list of Frequently Asked Questions and answers

FB: Feedback

FTP: Method for transferring files over the Internet

FVF: Final value fee - the sales commission charged by eBay

Gently Used: Item that has been used but shows little wear

HTML: The language used to create Web pages; Hypertext Mark-up Language

HTTP: The method used to transport

HTML on the Web; Hypertext Transfer Protocol

IE: Internet Explorer

ISP: Internet Service Provider. A company that gives you access to the Internet

JPG: Pronounced J-Peg. Preferred file format for pictures on eBay and QXL

Link: A photo or text on a Web page that, if clicked upon, takes you to another place on the Internet; AKA hyperlink

LOL: Laughing out loud

LTD: Limited edition

Mint: In perfect condition (a subjective term)

MIB: Mint in box

MIMB: Mint in mint box

MIMP: Mint in mint package

MIP: Mint in package

MNB: Mint no box

MOC: Mint on card

MOMC: Mint on mint card

MONMC: Mint on near mint card

MWBT: Mint with both tags

MWMT: Mint with mint tags

NARU: Not a registered user (suspended user)
NBW: Never been worn
NC: No cover
NM: Near mint
NR: No Reserve price on auction - highest bid wins
NO RESERVE: See NR
NRFB: Never removed from box
OEM: Original equipment manufacturer
OOP: Out of print
S/O: Sold out
Sig: Signature
Spam: Unwanted or unrequested e-mail
Spoof: See Spam
TIA: Thanks in advance
URL: Uniform Resource Locator. The address that identifies a Web site
VHTF: Very hard to find
WYSIWYG: What you see is what you get

There are many more abbreviations used in auctions and internet etiquette, but this list should get you started.

3. Ten Tips for eBay Buyers and Sellers

1. Keep secure

Make sure your passwords are really complicated. A mix of upper and lower case letters plus interspersed numbers is best. Use what are termed as "dictionary obscure" names too, not obvious ones such as a Christian name.

2. Save time

Whenever you find you are typing the same thing over and over e.g. usernames, use a lovely piece of software called ShortKeys Lite. It's free, and you can download it from <http://www.shortkeys.com>

3. Get organized

If you use eBay regularly you will already know how quickly the emails mount up. Get your folders in your email program set up properly now! Don't delay, you will save loads of time in the coming months.

4. Squeeze your graphics

Whenever you put a picture on your auction page you add download time. You can make sure your images are compressed to the lowest file size possible by using SmartSaverPro. You can download a free trial version from <http://www.ulead.com>.

5. Quote the auction

Whether buying or selling, always quote the auction number in the subject and body of any emails about that auction. So, whenever you get a query about it from your seller or buyer you can always find the email communications about that auction.

6. Accept credit/debit cards

If you're selling, you WILL attract more bidders if you offer to take credit/debit cards. Fortunately you don't need a merchant account to be able to do this. Just open a free account with PayPal - the most used payment mechanism on internet auctions. With PayPal you can accept all the usual credit cards plus Solo and Switch debit cards. If you don't have a PayPal account, you can instantly create one by going here:-

http://www.workwinners.com/PayPal_application.htm

7. Become a Search expert

When you're looking for items on eBay, don't forget the Advanced Search facility. Next to every search box you will see an Advanced Search link. You can be much more specific, and save yourself hundreds of hits which you have might have to scroll through to find the one item that you really wanted in the first place.

8. Be polite

Whether buying or selling, always try and be polite. As a priority, you want to avoid any negative feedback. Although it might appear that feedback is more important to sellers than buyers, this isn't necessarily the case. Even if you're only a buyer at the moment, you might find sellers exclude you from bidding if your negative ratio is poor. Also, even though you might only buy on eBay at the moment, you could decide to try selling in the future. Your eBay feedback rating remains with you whether buying or selling.

9. Become a Help expert

I recommend you spend some time on eBay Help pages. Hidden in there are jewels like Proxy Bidding. No, I'm not going to explain this for you - have a look in Help!

Finally, the mathematicians amongst you will have noted this is only nine tips, and I promised you ten! Well, my tenth is, if you're looking to sell professionally on eBay you should read my ebook '[The eBay Formula](#)'. This shows you how to create successful auctions on eBay time, after time, after time. You can find out about 'The eBay Formula' at <http://www.more-auction-sales.com>

4. What are the Best Types of Items to Sell on eBay?

One of the most asked questions I get is, "What are the best products to sell on eBay?"

The truth is that virtually anything will sell on eBay, but it must first of all be realized that nothing can be guaranteed - eBay is after all an open market place.

Here are some pointers which will lead you in the direction of finding the right type of products for you to sell:

a) Before we talk about actual products, at all times try and appear as if you know about what you're selling. You will look more professional as a seller, and sell more if you give good, authoritative auction descriptions. This is just another way of saying ideally you should be selling things about which you have knowledge - indeed a hobby can be the basis of a successful selling business on eBay.

b) Some items are much easier to mail than others. So, think about small, lightweight items - these are easier to store, pack and post. Jewelry fits the bill neatly.

c) The items need to be robust enough to survive the handling they will get in the mail service. This also means they must be able to be well packaged. (Dropshipping is an alternative here, where someone else has the responsibility for packing and posting.)

d) Consider the debate between volume and value. Some items require volume sales to make reasonable profits. At the other end of the scale, expensive items could require a high investment but may return acceptable profits on low volumes of sales.

You can see this better perhaps with an example - let's consider DVDs and cars. Selling DVDs on eBay is a highly competitive market, often with narrow profit margins per item. You can make good money selling DVDs, particularly in specialist niche markets, but it will pay to plan along the volume route. By contrast, if you could sell one car per week with say £500 (\$1,000) profit each time, this may be where you want to be. But if you've only got one car, how can you make a business out of selling one car? Easy, go and visit your nearest car dealer, preferably one who sells above average vehicles or even classic cars, and offer to put one of those cars in front of millions of eBay members on his behalf. Ask how much he wants for the car, and then put it on

eBay with a Reserve Price of his figure, plus your profit! If you need convincing of this opportunity, go and have a look at eBay Motors and see what buying traffic is generated there!

One final tip. Information and computer products are also good to sell on eBay. Why is this? Because everyone looking on eBay has automatically qualified themselves as a prospect for both of these types of products. They're using a computer to access eBay, and they're also using the information superhighway.

5. What Should I Sell on eBay?

If you are a new seller, my initial advice would be to gain experience of eBay selling by cleaning out your garage or attic.

Start by selling used goods, small appliances, wedding gifts you never use, old books (non-fiction ones are best), used sporting goods and clothing items. Like that leather jacket that doesn't fit you any more!

The experience you gain will be invaluable, there's no cost involved other than eBay fees which aren't too heavy.

The next step is to sell items about which you know something. It might be related to your hobby or interests.

If you are knowledgeable about a collectable or an art object, then you have the ability to do the research to find the products at prices you can resell.

On eBay, anything will sell. It doesn't matter how obscure your item might be, eBay buyers will find your auction.

Once you gain experience try to focus on larger value items. If you only make £2 (\$4) profit per sale, you have to close and ship 1000 items per month to make £2,000 (\$4,100).

Too many sellers think the way to make a fortune on eBay is to buy hundreds of the latest hot selling items and put up dozens of auctions. The problem here is that hundreds of other sellers are doing the same thing. (If you don't believe me do a search for diet pills, or DVDs) There are plenty of companies with enough money to import these items directly by the thousands and undersell anyone who buys through a distributor or wholesaler.

Another technique is to sell items in bulk. If you bought a large box of videotapes at a car boot or garage sale, separate them into categories and sell them as a lot. You will often make more money than selling them individually. This can also work for clothing. There are sellers that buy children's clothing from car boot or garage sales, sort it by size and gender and sell it in lots.

One eBay seller I know purchases large lots of the fast selling items on eBay (lighters, pocket knives, etc.) and turns around and sells them in lots of 10 or 25 to other eBayers who want to buy for resale. I know

an eBay seller who recently imported 50,000 disposable cigarette lighters from Korea that he bought for about 6p (10 cents) each. He sold them on eBay in lots of 500 for 19p (38 cents) each. He made £65 (\$140) on each lot less his eBay fees.

It seems everyone wants to sell computers, software, movies, DVD's, digital cameras and all sorts of consumer electronics. The sad fact is that SONY, Panasonic, Canon, and others don't sell their latest hottest products to small dealers who work out of their home. (In fact they don't sell anything except through their distributors) Even the big stores have trouble getting a large allocation of really hot electronics products.

It is possible to get into this business if you have a lot of market and product knowledge. You might work in a computer store, and have the contacts to buy the merchandise. The problem is that you are competing with major retailers. One way you can succeed selling consumer electronics is with overstock and returns products. The trick is to really know what you are buying and to be able to work on small margins and turn your inventory over often. It takes quite a bit of capital investment to compete in this sector.

There is also a huge market on eBay for "vintage" hi-fi equipment, cameras, old computers and computer hardware and so on. I heard of a guy who found an Akai reel-to-reel tape deck at a car boot sale for £15 (\$32). He also got 10 reels of tape for nothing. He sold the deck on eBay for just under £100 (\$220) and sold the 10 reels of tape separately in another auction for £15 (\$32).

One of eBay's own product managers sells vintage Apple computers, parts and software. She buys almost all of it at car boot or garage sales, second hand shops and auctions.

When I am asked about what should they sell, I am usually also asked what are the best selling items on eBay.

Here is a list of the currently hot selling items on eBay. Note that this is not a recommendation of what to sell, as each of these product areas requires the seller to have relevant knowledge and expertise.

- Diet Pills
- Nutritional Sex Enhancers
- Pheromone scents
- Glass chess sets

- Low cost jewelry
- Expensive watches and jewelry
- Heirloom jewelry
- Used toys in good condition
- New and used clothing for children and plus-sized clothing for women
- Software (including closed-out or last year's software programs and games)
- Strobe pens
- Tools (power and hand tools)
- Perfume (including perfume samples and opened expensive perfumes that are at least over one-half full)
- Perfume bottles (some with or without perfume)
- Religious books and Bibles (Bibles are always a perennial seller)
- Non-fiction books on hobbies, sports, nautical subjects, history, military science, popular textbooks, and art & photography. Also books containing maps and art prints that can be broken and sold individually
- Maps and old prints of ships, flowers, animals (horses and dogs are good)
- Used parts for speciality cars (Porsche, BMW, MG, etc.)
- Car models and car collectables
- Signed sports collectables

If you want to know what to sell on eBay, probably the single best piece of advice I can give is to be unique and to specialize.

Find a niche market, learn about it, become an expert in it, and work hard at building your reputation in that market. eBay buyers are intelligent, and they like to deal with a knowledgeable and responsive professional seller.

If you can become that seller, you have a good chance of making significant money on eBay.

6. Why it Makes Sense to be Cool on eBay – Selling the Unusual

Have you noticed how many people - and I have to admit that includes me - suggest that sellers offer hot selling products on eBay.

It's undeniably true, selling a product that is in demand can be a sensible commercial strategy.

However, there are some potential downsides in concentrating on "hot selling" products.

You could be left with stock on your hands, as your hot selling items move out of fashion.

You could find it difficult to shift stock at a profit, as the number of sellers offering identical hot selling products increases.

Now, this may not happen to you. You might find you can make a good living listing "hot sellers".

But here's an alternative, or an additional, strategy for you to consider.

We all know that virtually anything will sell on eBay. In other words, you don't necessarily have to offer hot selling products.

Instead of looking for the best selling items, why not study some PowerSellers and see what they offer? You might be surprised.

As an example, there's a PowerSeller who makes an excellent living selling magnets.

Another PowerSeller sells CDs which he creates for specific markets.

There are several who concentrate on selling Public Domain information. One offers prints of house plans from very old properties.

Then there's the seller who specializes in greetings cards of days gone by.

What I find intriguing is that items which I might consider to be uninteresting always seem to have a group of buyers who will bid on eBay.

The message here is that the most successful sellers may just give you an idea of a new market for you.

Don't be afraid to try the less obvious. The hottest items may not always be the best strategy.

Be cool!

7. How to Create the Best Title for your eBay Auction

The auction title you use is vital, and you only have 55 characters to play with.

In these 55 characters you have to include strong keywords to make sure you are returned in as many relevant searches as possible. Plus you want to persuade prospective bidders to click through to read your auction page.

In effect the title is the heading of your advertisement.

Fifty five characters isn't much when you consider what the title has to achieve.

1. Bidders will use eBay search to find auctions matching their requirements. As you may know, by default eBay's search facility only checks auction titles for the presence of the keywords input by the searcher.

So, the title has to contain keywords which bidders might use to locate auction items such as yours.

(Just in case you weren't aware, eBay's auction search takes no account of capitalization. So a search for madonna would return titles which included madonna and Madonna - and indeed mAdonna, if someone's finger had slipped when typing the title in.)

2. And, assuming as a result of the search your auction has been returned in the list along with many others, the title now has to persuade the searcher to click through onto YOUR auction description page - your sales pitch.

So, in your 55 character title what you're looking for is a mixture of:-

- a) Keywords
- b) Powerful influencing words
- c) An outline of your item.

Well, that sounds easy, doesn't it?

One of the determining factors in assessing the weight to give to each of those three elements is the item itself.

Branded item with model ID

In this instance the title is all about the specific item. Bidders who will be interested in this item will know the make and model they're after.

For example:

Aiwa HV-FX5850 6 Head Nicam Hi-Fi Stereo VCR

There is no need to expand on this title, unless to add the word NEW as appropriate.

Unbranded item with no obvious model ID

The vast majority of auctions will be like this. There is no standard brand, model or reference number, so you need to describe the item yourself.

As an example, I was recently selling a tool set for use on mobile phones. This is the title I went with:

Torx Hex Mobile Cell Phone Tool Set - NEW

Mobile cell phones is a "hot topic". To work on a Nokia (the most popular make) mobile phone requires a torx screwdriver.

I added NEW, as it is still one of the most persuasive marketing words you can use.

Named item

If you have a name to latch onto, this can bring plenty of keyword hits. For example, anyone interested in Hank Marvin and his musical instruments would find this auction through eBay's search.

Rare Hank Marvin autographed guitar STUNNING

Note the use of a couple of power words to encourage the viewer to click through to the auction page.

Additional tips on auction titles

1. Capital letters

Many people on eBay now create their full auction title in capital letters. This advice is given in several of the established "how to sell on eBay" books. Capital letters do have one significant advantage over lower case - they're larger and therefore take up more line space. So,

with all capitals, your auction title is more likely to run to two lines on search returns, giving your entry a bigger physical presence on the screen.

My own opinion is that a mix of capital letters and lower case is a slightly better option. Your auction title will take up more space than all lower case, but it allows you to give emphasis to selected words.

2. Use of underscore

If you use underscore between words, rather than spaces, this will make your title physically longer - and therefore look bigger than other peoples'. This is because eBay uses a PostScript font where the underscore character is longer than a space.

3. Power words to optionally use sparingly in titles

Be aware that searchers will not normally key in words such as those in the list below. But where a title is returned in a keyword search results list, and it contains one of these influencing words, you could get more click-throughs to your auction description page. Here are some of the words that can help in this respect:

Stunning
Limited edition
Unique
Rare
New
One-off
Exclusive
Distinctive
Dramatic
Striking
Vivid
Unusual
Handsome
Beautiful
Vibrant
Brilliant
Mint
Exquisite
Perfect
Quality

Use power words selectively and appropriately in your title, bearing in mind your item.

4. Unusual characters

Don't be tempted to use characters in words such as L@@K or save \$\$\$\$ or **** see here ****. First of all, it's usually a waste of your precious 55 characters limit and conveys nothing. Second, who searches on 4 \$ signs or 4 asterisks? Also, in my mind it portrays the seller as someone slightly suspicious, perhaps unprofessional, who isn't confident enough to let their words do the talking. Finally, think now as a bidder, do you react positively to this kind of device or not? I know I don't.

5. Be creative

There are opportunities to think creatively about your item. For example, if you're selling a device which is a nasal hair trimmer, there's not much more you can put in the title is there? Well, whilst the item is primarily advertised as a nasal hair trimmer, it is also useful for trimming ear and eyebrow hair.

So the title could include the words "nasal hair, ear and eyebrow trimmer". This way your entry will be in the results of people searching for nasal hair trimmer, ear hair trimmer and eyebrow trimmer.

If you've room in your 55 characters therefore, think "outside the square" and try and appeal to groups of potential buyers who may not necessarily have been the immediate target for your item. (The torx hex tool set mentioned earlier is another example of this)

6. It's not an English exam

Writing titles is difficult enough without having to worry about grammar. Don't be too concerned that your title doesn't "scan", or tell a story. Remember the objective with titles is to be returned on searches, and then to induce a click-through to the auction description page.

Here's an excellent example of an auction title - it contains strong keywords, and also uses humor to tempt the reader onto the auction page.

ANTIQUUE BRASS BELL-PULL "You rang m'Lord?"

By the way, it worked well. At the time of writing the auction was still open. The item had a starting price of 99p (50c), and is now at £117 (\$240), having had 18 bids and 240 auction page views.

Spend as much time as you can on your auction titles. It is your best chance of being found by bidders amongst those 1 million other items on eBay.co.uk or 10 million items on eBay.com.

Having decided on your title, the next element is a sub-title.

This is an optional facility which allows you to show more information about your item. If you use it, whenever your auction is returned in searches or is listed via a category listing, your sub-title appears directly under the auction title.

As the name implies, sub-title provides you with a special area to add information about your auction item. You can use this in any way e.g. to mention some specific term or condition such as a moneyback guarantee, or to add further details about the item itself.

Within sub-title, you have the same size limit as the item title i.e. 55 characters.

The downside of sub-title is that it is not searched when a bidder enters keywords into eBay's standard Search Box. For searching purposes, eBay treats sub-title as being part of the auction description.

Also, it is a fixed fee facility. This makes it a more attractive option the higher the value of your auction item. For low value items you will need to weigh up carefully the additional cost of this facility against the likely increased exposure i.e. click-throughs to your auction page.

I hope this article outlining the considerations for auction title creation proves useful to you.

It is based upon an extract from my best selling ebook, ['The eBay Formula'](#).

8. The Secret Power of an eBay Auction Title

I get frequent emails from my newsletter readers wondering why their eBay auctions aren't working.

You might have the most brilliant auction description page with a fantastic set of pictures offering a superb item at an incredible price. But the page counter shows after seven days of your auction that it's only been seen by 3 people. Has that happened to any of your auctions?

If it has, I always start at the same point. The auction title.

In 99% of cases, the reason for low viewing figures is that your auction title isn't smart enough.

Here are a few facts. At the end of this small list you'll understand the secret power of eBay auction titles:

a) 79 million times each day buyers use eBay's search box to locate items in which they are interested.

b) eBay's standard search system takes the search words keyed in, and compares them with the titles in its database of 10 million auctions. (Note it doesn't compare them with sub-titles, or auction descriptions)

c) If an auction title doesn't contain the words keyed into the search box, the auction won't get returned in the search results list. And that's another of the 79 million searches you've missed out on!

d) If an auction isn't returned in a search list, it can't be clicked on to have the auction description viewed.

So, the whole of eBay's default search system relies on matching keywords with auction titles. And that's the secret power of auction titles. If your title contains words which buyers are searching upon, your auction will be returned time and again in search return lists.

Let's say you want to create a new auction. Remember, your auction title has three functions:

1) To contain keywords. (Number one on this list for the reason you now know!)

2) To persuade buyers to click through to your auction description page

3) To convey what the item is

To decide on the keywords to use, you have to think like a buyer. What words would be used by a person interested in searching for an item like yours?

At this stage, just list them. Don't put the words into a sentence yet. Spend as long as you like on this exercise. The more effective you are with this, the less likely you are to have one of those sleepy auctions that rarely gets a visitor.

Having listed as many keywords as you can think of, you have to decide which are the strongest. Remember, you only have 55 precious characters for your auction title.

Taking your best keywords, you now create your auction title. It's not an English exam, so it doesn't matter if it doesn't scan like a sentence.

You can add a power word or two if you've space. By this I mean words like stunning, limited edition, unique, rare, new, one-off, exclusive, distinctive, dramatic etc. These are words which can influence buyers to click through to your auction description. They won't be searched on by buyers, so use them sparingly. For the same reason, I don't advocate the use of "clever" words like l@@k or w0w!

Finally, do the words in your title convey what the item is? If so, that's it. You've created a powerful and compelling auction title. And your title will appear more often in search return lists. And, as you know, that's the key!

If you can get your auction to appear more often in search return lists, more buyers will view your auction description page. The more people that visit your auction description page, the more likely you are to make a sale at an acceptable price.

Now you know the secret power, why not create a new title today for one of your auctions? If you do, believe me you'll get your fair share of the 79 million eBay daily searchers.

9. What is the best Duration for an eBay Auction?

On eBay you run your auction for a specific duration. Currently, the options are 1, 3, 5, 7 or 10 days.

But which duration is best for your auction?

In this article, I'll give you some pointers designed to assist in answering the question.

You might wonder why you would ever wish to have less than the maximum exposure i.e. 10 days? Surely running your auction for the longest time would give bidders more opportunity, and therefore a higher sale price would result? Certainly eBay.com would appear to think so, as they currently charge a fee of \$0.20 for the privilege of operating a 10 day auction.

However, if you have a very popular item or if you have many identical items to sell, it may pay you to have a shorter auction duration. Also, it pays to consider the end point of your auction very carefully. In addition, if you are running a Fixed Price auction, there's a little trick you can employ to give you extra exposure.

So, let's review the elements to consider in the setting of your auction duration.

a) Start/end day of auction

In my experience, for most categories, the weekend is by far the busiest viewing period on eBay. I would estimate that around 50% of views of my auctions take place on Saturday and Sunday. In setting auction duration, therefore, the weekend peak could be important to your success.

If you can arrange to end an auction on Sunday night, you get the benefit of those who wait until the end of the auction to bid, plus the enhanced viewing traffic numbers which appear during the weekend.

This means if you're posting an auction on Tuesday night, a 5 day auction could be good.

Having said that the weekend is the busiest for most categories, some could benefit from a midweek closing date. Items in this category would include those in which goods are offered for business users.

If your item is targeted at businesses, you want people to bid for your item while they are at work. In these instances, make sure your auction covers working days, and concludes during work time. It has also been found that office equipment and supplies sell well in the morning.

Be conscious of the time when you post your auction, as this is the exact time it will finish a number of days ahead. There's potentially a great deal of difference between an auction closing at 10 o'clock on Sunday night, and 10 o'clock on Sunday morning. If you can pitch your auction to be the former, you could benefit significantly from those extra weekend viewers. (Note the section on Time Zones later.)

b) Known popularity of the item

If you know your item is very popular, and your past experience shows that you will always sell at or more than the price you want, even outside of normal peak periods, then a 1 or 3 day auction could be appropriate. The benefit of a 1 or 3 day sale is that you can sell more items, more quickly.

c) Awareness of eBay sort facilities after searching

Whenever eBay's search is used by an eBay user, the default is that it returns auction titles in the order of how long auctions have left to run. Auctions which have minutes, or seconds to run, will appear first in the returned list. Auctions which have 9+ days to run will be at the end. And the list may run to many, many pages.

Experience has shown that eBay users tend to look only at one or two pages in returned lists. This means it is important you get your auction onto these first two pages at some point in its life - another reason why a 1 or 3 day auction might be better than a 7 or 10 day duration.

Be aware too that a high proportion of bidding activity takes place towards the end of an auction. This is natural. Buyers are on the lookout for bargains. If they can nip in with a bid at the end of the auction, they might get the item at a good price and there may not be time for others to top their bid. (Buyers can also use "sniping" software, designed to place a bid at the latest possible time on auctions which are of interest to them.)

However, the searcher can easily re-order the returned titles list. A popular option is to re-order the list into "newly listed" sequence. The

top of the list will now show auctions which have been newly added to eBay. This is why there is sometimes a blip of bidding activity at the beginning of an auction as well as at the end.

d) Time Zones

eBay's default is to commence your auction from the time you submit it. As you know, this means it will terminate at that exact time, the number of days ahead that you select as the duration. However, if you're offering your item internationally you should give consideration to the time zone you're aiming for in terms of auction finish point.

For example, in the USA half of all eBay members reside in the Eastern Time Zone. So an auction ending at 10pm Pacific Time is fine for west coast eBay members, but over on the east coast this is 1am! So you're effectively losing around 50% of potential bidders at a critical point in your auction.

eBay does provide an option whereby you can schedule your auction to commence at a specific time (and on another day). In fact you can set your auction to start at any time and day up to 21 days ahead. This means you can commence your auction according to the timing you believe will attract the most viewers. There is a small fee for using this feature.

This is a useful capability if you want to create your listings in advance, and then have them released onto eBay in a phased sequence.

e) Fixed Price auctions - Single Item

I mentioned a little trick earlier. Well, here it is. With a Fixed Price auction for a single item you could consider managing your auction duration dynamically. You need to be monitoring your auctions closely i.e. throughout the day, to undertake this technique.

When bidders do a search on eBay, you know the auctions with the least amount of time left appear at the top of the returned list. So it is advantageous to keep the remaining time on your auction as short as possible. This is a way in which you get four bites of that cherry for a single listing fee.

1. Start your Fixed Price single item auction off with 1 day duration. Wait for someone to buy.

2. When the auction has just over 12 hours left, go in to the auction and revise the auction duration to 3 days. Yes, you can do this - as long as there is at least 12 hours left. Wait for someone to buy.
3. When the auction has just over 12 hours left, go in to the auction and revise the auction duration to 5 days. Wait for someone to buy.
4. When the auction has just over 12 hours left, go in to the auction and revise the auction duration to 7 days. Wait for someone to buy.
5. When the auction has just over 12 hours left, go in to the auction and revise the auction duration to 10 days. (Don't forget this will cost you a small fee on eBay.com) Wait for someone to buy.
6. The auction concludes naturally.

This might look complicated, but it isn't really once you get the hang of it. Of course, at any point during the above process someone could buy your item and your auction closes automatically. If you have another of the same or similar item to sell, you can re-list it.

f) Fixed Price auctions - Multiple Items

With a Fixed Price auction for multiple items, I would recommend you set the auction duration to the maximum - 10 days, or 7 days if you're not prepared to absorb the extra fee on eBay.com.

When you have multiple items it is not advisable to use the ploy described above for Fixed Price single item auctions. This is because as soon as you receive a bid (in this case it would be a Fixed Price sale), you are unable to modify the auction duration even though you may have many of the multiple items still to sell.

If you sell all your items within your chosen 7 or 10 days, then the auction closes automatically anyway.

g) Value Based Formula

If you are happier using a value based formula in setting your auction duration, here is my rule of thumb for items that I have not tried to sell before:

<u>Min Bid amounts</u>	<u>Set auction duration to</u>
£5 - £25 (\$10 - \$50)	5 days
£25 - £100 (\$50 - \$200)	7 days
Over £100 (Over \$200)	7 - 10 days

If you're selling items which from experience you know will definitely be bought at acceptable prices, then you can reduce the duration.

I hope this outline of selecting the best auction duration proves useful to you.

10. Do Pictures Help Your eBay Selling?

I have to admit this is a rhetorical question. There is no question that the vast majority of items **will** sell better if they are shown in all their glory in the form of a picture or pictures.

There are exceptions of course, but in general I find a picture **is** worth a thousand words on eBay.

Having established the case, how do you get pictures onto your auctions?

Let's first of all consider how and where to get a picture of your item. There are three options:

- a) Use a digital camera
- b) Use a scanned image
- c) Use a "library" photo

- a) Use a digital camera

If you have a digital camera, you can photograph your items for auction. You will know that pictures taken by your digital camera can be loaded onto your PC.

- b) Use a scanned image

If you have a scanner, or access to one, you can take an "old fashioned" photo of your item, and scan it into your computer. You may be able to scan the item itself if it is of a certain shape and size eg book, card etc.

- c) Use a "library" photo

If your item is a standard branded product you may be able to search the internet and find images of the product. If you find one that is appropriate, place your mouse pointer over the picture and right click. In most cases you will be able to "Save Picture As..", and thus save it on your PC. Be aware that copyright laws apply here, and you mustn't copy any pictures from the internet unless you have the rights or permission to do so.

Having now got a picture of your item on your PC, whether by a digital camera, a scanner or a library shot, you can usually improve it by using photo-editing software. You probably already have this software if you have a digital camera or a scanner. If you don't have such

software, you can find shareware or freeware versions at sites such as these:

<http://www.freewarehome.com>

<http://freeware.intrastar.net>

<http://www.tucows.com>

<http://shareware.cnet.com>

PaintShopPro is a popular option. It has just the right balance of "ease of use" versus clever features.

You need this type of software to achieve a couple of things. First, to get your picture into JPEG or GIF file format - these are the only two image formats accepted by eBay. Next, to make sure the file size of the image is less than 50Kb - anything larger will result in your image taking an unacceptable length of time to load onto your auction page.

Once you have your picture ready, and stored on your own PC, you can now include it in your eBay listings.

For many items a single picture is fine. If, however, you want to add further pictures to your auction listing, there are two options.

You can DIY multiple pictures onto your auction page by having your images hosted on the internet, somewhere. Your own ISP has probably given you an amount of free web space - you can use this to host pictures for your auctions. Wherever you store them, each picture has its own unique address (URL) and this is the reference you use in your auction description to access your images.

For ultimate flexibility, if you do have web space available to you, and you place some images in this space, you can show these photos anywhere on your auction page. You will need to know HTML coding to achieve this, but it is well worth the effort.

The other option is to use eBay's Picture Service. This is very easy to use, and lets you add multiple pictures to your auction page - for a price.

It's worth learning how to include images in your eBay auctions. It will repay you a thousand times!

11. Can You Sell a Service on eBay?

Most people think of eBay as a place where you sell physical items. They often start by selling unwanted bits and pieces from the attic, moving on to other things in the garage and, if it takes a hold, venturing into the market of buying items to sell.

Not many people associate eBay as a place where you can sell a service.

Let's imagine I want to offer my services as a French language teacher. Where else do you know that you can advertise for 10 days, reach an audience of millions and only pay a few pounds or dollars in fees?

I can easily create an auction with my language services such as teaching, proofreading, editing etc. I list my qualifications and any appropriate memberships I have. I also include a photo of myself - making it personal.

What I am really doing with this auction is selling myself.

I would start the auction at a minimum hourly rate, and probably have a Buy it Now hourly rate too.

I know of a guy who lives in Germany and offered English language services on eBay.de. Within days he received work, and had to re-list many times as his Buy it Now rate was being taken up regularly. He gained commercial and private customers alike.

I also heard of a group of computer programmers who were made redundant after their jobs went "offshore". Having found it difficult to find new jobs, they decided to turn to eBay. Their ideal was to stay together as a team of software developers. So they created an auction to give the winning bidder the rights to negotiate exclusively for their services. The winning bid amount would go to a charity.

They started the bidding at \$250, and the auction went well. They did indeed find an employer who wanted to take the whole team. And the group made several hundred dollars for their charity. A highly satisfactory outcome!

If you have a skill, expertise and qualification, why not enlist the power of eBay to sell yourself?

12. How to Legally Sell an Affiliate Product on eBay

If you're involved as an affiliate for any product, you've probably wrestled with how you can sell the product on eBay.

After all, eBay offers you a massive potential audience of 168 million members. And people who read about your product will likely have found it by searching, thus saying they are interested in the product area in which your product resides.

The bad news, however, is that there is no easy way to market affiliate products on eBay!

First of all, if you haven't heard of affiliate selling, here's a very quick description of how it works.

Fundamentally, selling an affiliate product requires that you get interested buyers to click on a special link. This link takes the person to the product owner's sales page. More importantly, the link also contains your unique affiliate code. It is this code which ensures that sales made from your introductions are recorded in your affiliate account. Finally, if your prospect purchases the product, it is the owner who handles product delivery and who also pays you your sales commission payment.

On eBay, you could easily set up an auction saying how marvelous your affiliate product is. You will certainly attract a number of people who would be interested in buying. The problem is, you have no legitimate way of selling it to eBay members!

This is because it's against eBay's rules to have a link in your auction page which takes your readers away to another website to make a sale. So, you can't just create a sales page with your affiliate link.

Also, if you think about it, you don't even have the affiliate product to deliver. There's no mechanism for you to make the sale on eBay, and deliver the product. If you recall, this is handled automatically by the product owner.

So here are two ways in which you can tap into the eBay market with your affiliate products.

1. The Simple System

You create an auction which explains the benefits of the affiliate product you're promoting. This would be the normal sales page for the product you're promoting.

But what do you offer on your eBay auction?

What you sell is the information on where to get hold of this superb product. And you "sell" this knowledge for just one penny.

Whenever someone "buys" your information, you send them an email saying thank you for your purchase. You then explain they don't really need to send you a penny, and you give them the link to the fantastic product in which they've expressed an interest.

Of course, the link is YOUR affiliate link.

By the way, in your auction description page please think of a new angle for the product. You'll find almost everybody who is an affiliate for any popular product will be using the suggested sales material supplied by the product owner.

If you use the standard sales pitch, you will just appear to be one of many. Your interested purchaser has probably seen some of these already. Why should they take notice of you?

Lace your auction description with personal and credible information about the product, and you will get some of those prospective buyers to go with you.

Incidentally, you could find that your one penny auctions are removed by eBay. After all, a one penny auction doesn't bring eBay very much by way of listing or final value fee.

If this happens to you, you could try system 2 below, and you can also place your one penny auction on other auction sites such as Yahoo, Amazon, QXL etc

2. The Not as Simple System

With this system, you need to do a little research before you launch your eBay auction for your affiliate product.

The objective here is to create a package of items which are related to your affiliate products, and which you auction at 99 cents or 99 pence.

First off, you need to create a 2 or 3 page report about your affiliate product. Ideally this should be based on your personal experience with the product. Failing that, it should be written in your own personal style. The key points are that these are your own words, and the report includes your affiliate link to the product.

The next step is to find other items for your "package". You do this by using Google search to locate related free products.

Let's suppose you're an affiliate for an ebook which teaches how to paint and draw figures. On Google you would search for something like - figure drawing free.

It took me under 10 minutes to locate the following freebies:

Photographing Your Artwork (free ebook)
3D Figure Drawing Studio software (free trial)
How to Sell Your Art (free newsletter)

And there are many more you could unearth given a little more research time. Be a little careful in your selection - you don't want to give away something which will compete with your affiliate ebook.

Having found your items, what you now do is bundle them up and add them to your 2/3 page report. You then create an auction which offers the whole package for 99 cents or pence.

There's no way eBay can possibly object to this auction.

As you can see, all it really takes to get your affiliate product in front of eBay's massive market place is a little creativity.

13. Remove These Objections and Watch Your eBay Auctions Fly

"Objection" is a term taken directly from sales and marketing training, and it is important you understand the significance of objections to your eBay sales process.

Objections are those points, sometimes small issues, which make a bidder or a buyer think again about going for your offering.

In your auction description you need to remove as many of these objections as you can.

These are the kind of objections which your prospective buyers will have.

Objection 1

Is the seller trustworthy?

The buyer usually doesn't know you. If they're serious bidders they will check you out. How will they do this?

a) A good Feedback Rating will be one way they assess you. Be determined in getting your feedback up, and making it all positive.

b) They might also click through to your About Me page. This page gives you the opportunity to convey your personality and your honesty.

One of eBay's standard About Me page formats lets you display your recent feedbacks - always useful - and also your other auctions, again useful. This is in addition to anything about yourself which helps to show what a sincere and genuine person you are.

And finally, if you have a web site from which you sell products or services, you are allowed to place a direct link to it from the About Me page. (This is in marked contrast to your auction description page, where eBay does not allow direct links to web pages.) So, create an About Me page and incorporate the points mentioned.

c) A prospective bidder may wish to ask you a question. As you will know, there is a standard eBay facility whereby a bidder can ask a seller a question. You should really welcome questions. Why do I say this?

Well, if a bidder asks you a question, first of all you know they are interested in your offering. They wouldn't have wasted their time on typing out their question to you if they weren't. Also, by asking you a question they are qualifying themselves in as a real prospect. And you now have the chance in your reply to directly influence them. Depending on the nature of their enquiry, you have the opportunity to convey your integrity, honesty, credibility, fair mindedness, helpfulness, expertise, knowledge, other appropriate products etc.

So, if questions are such good things, why not make it easy for the bidder to ask one? Always have some text in your auction description offering to answer any questions, with a link to your email address. If you have a little knowledge of HTML coding you will know how easy this is to do. It is far better than simply relying on buyers finding the standard "Ask the seller a question" link provided by eBay.

d) You might consider a moneyback guarantee, if it's appropriate and you can "afford" it.

Why would you or should you do this?

Well, when you think about it, in online auctions, the buyer is normally asked to take all the risk. They usually pay the seller up front - before the item is delivered to them. The risk is all theirs that the seller doesn't perform.

To some buyers, particularly on higher value items, this risk is so high that it can cause them to have second thoughts about bidding. You know you are trustworthy, but they don't. By offering a moneyback guarantee you are offering what is known as "risk reversal". You are taking the risk off your buyer. In effect you shoulder the risk.

I know this works, because I use it myself. In thousands of auctions I've run, I can count on one hand the number of people who have invoked my moneyback guarantee.

If you can practice "risk reversal", it will help your auction success rate, and it is vital on Dutch auctions.

Objection 2

How do I pay?

Always maximize the number of payment options you will accept.

You should provide different types of payment options for your buyers:

- PayPal
- Nochex
- Cheque
- Postal Order
- Banker's Draft
- Bank Transfer
- Cash

You can accept credit/debit cards on your auctions if you open accounts with relevant payment processors like PayPal and Nochex. These enable buyers to pay you with a credit/debit card even though you aren't a business, and you don't have what is known as a Merchant Account.

As you probably know, PayPal is owned by eBay. Therefore eBay make it really easy for you to take PayPal payments from your buyers. But don't forget other payment processors, like Nochex. It might just be that your interested buyer only has a Nochex account.

Opening accounts is free. Paying anyone via PayPal or Nochex is also free - which is why so many auction bidders and buyers use them.

There are charges for you as a seller, however, and these are incurred when you receive money and/or when you transfer money from/to your PayPal or Nochex accounts from/to your own bank account. Check out the respective fees via their web sites.

In my experience, the rates of charges are reasonable for giving you the significant advantage of being able to accept credit/debit card payments on your auctions.

If you are selling low value items, say less than £3 (\$6), it may be prudent to add a small sum or percentage to the final sale value to cover this.

Speaking personally, I never ask the buyer to incur additional charges for using PayPal or Nochex. By now, you should have realized why - it's called removing an objection! I take the view that buyers who wish to pay by credit/debit card should not be discouraged in any way - and a surcharge of this nature might just prevent them from bidding or buying.

If you don't have PayPal account and you'd like to create one, go here:
<http://www.paypal.com>

If you don't have Nochex account and you'd like to create one, go here:
<http://www.nochex.com>

As I mentioned, they're free to set up.

Objection 3

Is delivery expensive?

Always fully describe your delivery details within your auction description. Be up front about shipping costs.

If bidders or buyers aren't given this detail within the auction description, they may become suspicious that the seller is hiding something, and therefore decide not to bid.

There is no reason why you cannot say up front how much P&P will be. You can find out the real delivery costs of the company you plan to use. You can get these details from their website.

Once you have the postal costs you can add the appropriate handling and packaging costs, and there you have the figure to let your buyers know in advance that you're not hiding anything.

You have just removed another doubt in your prospective buyer's mind.

Incidentally, there have also been occasions where sellers have sold items at what appear to be cheap prices, but have inflated delivery costs to compensate, or even over compensate. Never do this!

Objection 4

What happens if the item arrives damaged?

In your auction description you should cover your policy in relation to damages and insurance.

If you're selling higher value items you may wish to consider using a delivery service which includes insurance. Remember, even though the buyer has paid for it, the item is your property until it is accepted by the buyer. So if it is damaged in transit, this is your responsibility. You

will have to arrange a replacement or a refund, and claim your costs back via your insurance.

Don't forget, if you do need to have enhanced insurance cover, it is perfectly reasonable to include this in your delivery costs as shown in your auction description.

Objection 5

How professional is someone who has multiple spelling errors?

You might consider it to be very unreasonable for any bidder to pass by your auction just because you have spelling errors.

However, they may believe someone who won't take the trouble to get their spelling correct might be equally unprofessional elsewhere.

You and I might feel their stance to be unreasonable. With spell checkers available, however, there's no reason to have any spelling errors creeping through on your auction page.

So, spell check your auction description page - please.

Objection 6

What do I do now?

It's all very well describing your auction in full detail, but you should always "ask for the order". Tell them what to do now. In other words, don't forget to suggest to your prospective buyer that they make a bid today for this valuable, rare, stunning, limited edition item!

And remind them that when they win the item they will be enriched by the strongest benefit you have already identified to them in your auction description.

Objections - Summary

If you spend time removing these objections, you will be repaid handsomely. I can guarantee you will receive more genuine bids for each of your auctions than if you had left these points hanging for the bidder to ponder and make assumptions.

14. Why not Sell Internationally on eBay?

One of the incredible aspects about eBay can be demonstrated by the volumes involved.

Currently, there are 168 million eBay members - people who have registered to buy and/or sell. eBay.com is the 10th most visited site on the internet as measured by <http://www.alexacom.com>.
www.eBay.co.uk is 102 on the alexa list.

The USA auction market is around ten times the size of the UK market. (Based on the number of items on auction at the time of writing - 1,105,667 on UK eBay and 11,025,326 on eBay.com)

In fact eBay has 27 different country sites.

If you're a seller, it may pay you to consider making your items available to the wider eBay market. Of course you need to consider issues such as delivery costs, export and import regulations and other matters. But if your items can be easily packaged, or are digital, and if the winners anyway are paying for the postage, you really should consider making them available to eBay bidders world-wide.

The way you do this is relatively easy. When completing the Sell pages to create an auction, on the Shipping page, either tick the box that says "Will post worldwide", or check the countries to whom you wish your item to be made available.

You should also give an idea in your auction description of the shipping costs relating to the countries you are willing to post to.

Selling internationally doesn't cost any more in terms of fees, and it exposes your item to a massive new market.

Definitely worth a try with the right items.

15. A Searching Lesson – Take advantage of eBay's searching

76 million times each day, members use eBay's search box when they're looking for items that are of interest to them.

It occurred to me that very few of these members would know how eBay's search worked. Put another way, knowing how eBay's search system operates might help you in finding bargains.

For a start, words keyed into the standard search box are only matched against auction titles, and not against the contents of auction descriptions.

eBay's searching defaults to an "all present" style of search. This means if you key in two words such as 'finding nemo', the search will return auctions where the title contains both words in any order. It won't bring back auctions if the auction title contains only one of the words.

If you want to do a search of an "either or" style, you place parentheses around the words and separate them with a comma and no spaces. So, if you key in (finding,nemo) your search will return auctions with either finding or nemo in the auction title.

Of course, with the finding nemo example, what you really want to do is find auctions where finding nemo occurs as a phrase. To do this, you place quotation marks before and after. So, if you key in "finding nemo" your search will return auctions where the titles contain the exact phrase finding nemo.

If you're not sure of the spelling of a particular word, or if the word you want to search on is a preface with several endings, you can use an asterisk as a "wild card". For example if you're interested in a Vuitton handbag, some sellers misspell vuitton or type it in incorrectly. You could search on vui*, and this will bring back auctions with vuitton or vuiton in the title, or indeed vui followed by any other combination of letters.

These are probably the main search weapons you need to save you time, and to help you home in on the items you want to find. If you wish to explore eBay searching in even more depth, you will find a useful description of the process here:

http://pages.ebay.co.uk/help/buy/search_commands.html

16. Drive Yourself to More eBay Auction Money – Selling Cars on eBay

Big ticket items are increasingly popular on eBay, and cars are probably one of the best examples of this.

In fact, eBay is the largest dealer of used cars in the USA. And eBay's car sales in the UK is also growing significantly. Every 16 seconds, a car is sold on eBay!

If you're an eBay seller, here's an idea you might like to consider to make extra cash.

The vast majority of car dealers don't use eBay. They advertise in the press, usually locally, and their customers likewise usually live within reach of the car dealer.

What eBay Motors has successfully proved is that people will bid on cars from owners hundreds or even thousands of miles away.

Why not take your eBay selling expertise, and offer your services to car dealers in your area?

You know how to create auctions, take and upload photos, and manage auctions. The dealers have vehicles which are getting a tiny fraction of the exposure which eBay could offer.

You might decide to offer this to dealers on a no-cost basis. In other words, you bear the cost of eBay's listing and selling fees. The benefit here is that there is no reason why the dealer shouldn't give you the go-ahead. They could get a sale without cost to them and no extra effort on their behalf. That's what I call a no-brainer!

Alternatively, you could pass on the fees to the dealer on the basis that they would be spending money anyway on press advertising.

The other commercial arrangements are simple. You could work on a commission, where you get a percentage of the sale price. Or you could agree a price which the dealer will accept for the sale of the car, and anything you can get above that price is your profit. This would work particularly well if the dealer has had a vehicle for some time, and is losing interest in it!

The best types of cars to sell on eBay are those that are unusual for

one reason or another. It might be vintage or classic vehicles, sports cars or high value models. You're best to avoid what might be termed "normal" cars.

One of the major potential problems is easily handled. You can't expect the dealer to cease trying to sell a vehicle which you have on eBay auction. In every auction you run for a car, you state that the vehicle is also on sale in other ways, and that you reserve the right to withdraw it before the end of the auction period. You will see such statements on many eBay car auctions.

Incidentally, this idea doesn't have to be limited to cars. There are big ticket item opportunities in several categories. You're looking for retail outlets which tend to concentrate on local advertising and local trade. Examples of this would be jewelers, antique traders and real estate operations.

With big ticket items, just one or two sales per week could make a significant difference to you.

Worth thinking about!

17. Use This Research to Benefit Your eBay Selling

Some highly useful research has just been published. The information comes from Sellathon, the company who produce the new auction tracking and analysis software called ViewTracker.

They used ViewTracker on 100,000 eBay auctions to come up with the findings. So it's a pretty good sample.

Some of the results raise important questions if you're serious about selling on eBay.

Here are a few of the key findings from their analysis of these 100,000 auctions:

a) Hardly any eBayers search auction descriptions.

It was found that around 92% of eBay searches were conducted on titles only. Indeed, overwhelmingly, searches were for titles in 'all categories'. In other words, the vast majority of people use eBay's search box which appears on most pages on the site. Only a small number select a category first to browse through.

This research confirms how fundamental the title is to your auction success.

Also, the research showed that people NEVER search on superlatives. These are words which many sellers use in their auction titles, such as beautiful, stunning or amazing.

b) eBayers tend to search all of eBay, not by category.

The majority of eBay users who search for items do so from eBay's home page or eBay's main Search page. This means they are including items from any category. While some people DO search within a specific category, it's far more common for them to search the entire eBay site.

This raises the question when selling on eBay as to the value of placing your auction in more than one category. You need to decide how likely it is that your buyers will search for your item by a standard search, compared to selecting a category first to browse through and then search on.

c) Searchers rarely view more than 2 pages of results.

The research found that viewers rarely go beyond page one or two in the auction listings. Some people will browse a category listing all the way to the end. But the vast majority either find what they're looking for on the first 2 pages, or they move on to something else.

This means that it would be helpful if you thought of eBay as a search engine. Like all search engines, you need to optimize your auctions so they stand the best chance of appearing on the first two pages.

Once a viewer gets a results page of auction listings, it is usually presented by default in the sequence of time remaining. But they can also sort it in a variety of ways. These include newly listed, lowest price, highest price etc. Price and date sorting by viewers is extremely common. On pricing, 4 times as many people sort high price to low, than low price to high.

d) Minimum bid auctions are better than Reserve auctions.

The sample showed that Reserve auctions are unpopular. It seems it is almost always better to have a high minimum bid, than have a low minimum bid with a secret Reserve Price.

eBay knows this, and actively tries to discourage sellers from using Reserve Prices. In eBay Australia, they've gone one step further. They have removed the Reserve Pricing feature altogether.

So, not only would it seem prudent to avoid using Reserve Prices in eBay selling, they may be for the chop at some point anyway!

e) Auctions with bids get 1,000% more clicks.

The research confirms that there really is a "snowball effect" when it comes to bids. The more bids an item has, the more likely is the viewer to click through to the auction. And the more people that click through to the auction, the more bids it attracts.

The best known way to encourage bidders is to run auctions which have very low a starting price. So, if you can take the risk in your eBay selling, it could well be worth taking a risk and testing out the theory.

f) Negative feedback has a substantial impact on bids.

The research showed that sellers' positive feedback record was far less important to buyers than their negative feedback record.

The researchers took similar items and correlated the final price with the seller's feedback. For every 1% increase in positive feedback, the final price of the item went up by 0.03%. Let's assume seller A has 50 positive feedbacks, and seller B has 5,000 positive feedbacks. The final price seller B would realize is just 3% more than seller A. In money terms, an item of approximately £100 (\$200) value would only realize £3 (\$6) more for seller B than seller A. This is despite the fact that seller B's positive feedback record is 100 times greater than that of seller A. This is probably due to the fact that people expect eBayers to generally have positive feedback ratings. So the impact of having a huge positive feedback rating is minimal.

Let's turn now to the evidence in relation to negative feedback. For every 1% increase in negative feedback, the final price of the item was seen to go down by 0.11%.

If we take our previous sellers, let's say seller A has one negative feedback, and seller B has 100 negative feedbacks. Seller B will experience an 11% decrease in the final price of each item. In money terms, an item of approximately £100 (\$200) in value will only realize £89 (\$180) for seller B. Plus, this negative feedback effect will reduce every final price on every auction which seller B runs.

What we take away from this part of the research is that it pays to work extremely hard to avoid negative feedback!

I hope this has proved useful. Remember it's all based on data collected from 100,000 eBay auctions analyzed by ViewTracker. It may or may not reflect your auction business.

18. Dropshipping - Can you do it in the UK as well as the USA?

If you are interested in selling on eBay, you might wonder where you can get items to sell. I'm talking about after you've exhausted the logical first places, such as items in your garage or loft or spare bedroom!

One of the drawbacks for anyone wishing to expand an interest in auctions into a business – be it part or full time – is the need to have stock to sell. Here are some of the issues you face:

- Locating suppliers of stock at affordable prices
- Somewhere to store your stock
- The means and space to wrap the items
- The time to take them to a Post Office

One of the ways around all of these problems is to use dropshipping. There are many people in the USA making extra cash, and in some cases making a living, by selling items on auctions on a dropship basis.

Dropshipping has arrived in the UK, and you may want to consider it further. You might be asking, "What on earth is dropshipping?"

Dropshipping is a system of trading offered by certain suppliers. These suppliers have stocks of goods, normally products which will sell well on auctions, and which they are willing to package and forward to your customers DIRECTLY.

This is how it works. Let's imagine you are a seller on eBay. You join a dropship company. You then get access to the company's online catalogue, which will usually have hundreds of items at discounted prices. It will also explain to you how much they charge you for P&P to your customer.

You select an item, create an auction listing and list it. The auction finishes, and your winner pays you.

All you now do is send the winner's name and address, and the payment, to the dropship company. The payment is the cost price, plus the agreed shipping cost. The dropship company then packages and send out the goods to your winner. Your profit is the difference between the discounted catalogue price you pay, and the winning bid.

The system has some great plus points - you've made zero outlay upfront for stock, and you are alleviated of all stock storage, packaging and mailing problems. And you have a ready made supply of new and different product lines.

On the flip side, you need to be careful you can make enough margin - don't forget you pay any auction fees incurred. And if you accept PayPal or any other online credit card payment system, you will have to pay their percentage too.

However, with the right product, at the right price, dropshipping might be a useful addition to any seller's armoury.

If you sell in the UK, you might like to look at my own ebook on Dropshipping. You can read about it here: <http://www.uk-dropship.co.uk>

If you're in the USA, the very best dropship directory in the world can be found here: <http://www.worldwidebrands.com>

19. How to Make Money Fast on eBay

I guess you might have seen those adverts where people offer to show you how to make oodles of money online. I know I have.

You might have tried things yourself, but not yet come up with a solution that works for you.

Well, here is a formula to make some quick money online. It may not be a fortune, but it costs you nothing and it should help to pay the bills.

In brief, with this formula you'll be finding out the most popular searches being made on Google. Then you'll generate a short report on that subject. And then you'll sell the report on eBay - hopefully many times over.

Here's the formula:

1. Visit <http://www.google.com/press/zeitgeist.html> and see what are the hot searches at this moment in time.
2. Select one of them, ideally one in which you are interested or at least curious about.
3. Research that topic online, and gather information on the subject. This will be the basis for your e-report. What you need to do is develop something which will be wanted by people searching for this topic. (Some examples are shown later)
4. List your e-report on eBay. And keep re-listing it as long as it is selling.
5. Do it again, with another subject.

What you're doing here is riding on the crest of a wave of public interest, and this is a tried and tested way of making money!

I know of one person who produced a report with questions and answers about the film, "The Passion of the Christ". The report came out around Easter to coincide with the launch of the movie when there was a frenzy of interest in it and in Mel Gibson.

Another timely report was produced based on the Donald Trump TV program "The Apprentice". It was called "You're fired!", and did great business especially when the program became highly popular.

A top 10 gainer this week on Google Zeitgeist is Emma Watson. For the oldies amongst us, Emma is a star of Harry Potter films. You could compile a directory of the main websites showing pictures of her. Or you could create an Emma Watson cookbook, beauty tips, joke book or anything else depending on what your web searching turns up. Or you could be contentious, and produce a report on "Why I Hate Emma Watson!".

I hope you get the idea.

Your report can simply be a Word document, which you attach to an email to your eBay buyers.

Now I know that not everyone reading this will act on the idea. But those who do have a good chance of making some quick eBay money!

20. Here's What I Use to Help my eBay Selling

I get many requests about the systems I use in running my own eBay and internet business.

To give you the answer in one place, here is the software which I use daily in my own business.

I should point out that much of my own activity is now to do with selling digital information via eBay and from websites i.e. ebooks and software, which is why some of the software programs I use are concerned with this activity.

General productivity

1. Shortkeys

This is lovely utility which saves me hours of time each week. It is perfect for those occasions when you are required to key in information to websites. For example, how often do you key in your name and address, or a username and password, or an email address?

With Shortkeys, you associate 3 or 4 unique keystrokes with a string of frequently used information. Let's suppose I want to have a shortcut for my email address, and I set this as ##z1 in Shortkeys. Whenever I am required to key in my email address, in Outlook, on web forms, in Word documents etc, I just type in ##z1 and Shortkeys instantly replaces that with my email address.

There is a free version called Shortkeys Lite which has a limit of 30 items. The full version of Shortkeys allows you an unlimited number of items.

You can get it here: <http://www.shortkeys.com>

2. Download Accelerator

If you regularly download ebooks or software, and it seems to take forever, you will find Download Accelerator is a useful addition to your portfolio. Download Accelerator increases download speeds by up to 300%, regardless of the speed of your internet connection. I don't know how it does it, but I guess 110 million users can't be wrong!

You can get Download Accelerator here:

<http://www.download-accelerator.com>

eBook production

1. Adobe Acrobat

I use Adobe Acrobat to create all my ebooks in pdf format as this file can be read by anyone with the free software Acrobat Reader - and this includes Mac users too. The way I create an ebook is to write it in Microsoft Word first. Once I'm happy that the Word version is exactly how I want it, I use an integrated converter which takes the Word file and converts it automatically into a pdf file. This conversion preserves everything which appeared in the Word document, including headers/footers, page numbers and web links.

Whilst I use the full Adobe Acrobat product, there are several free services and software which enable you to convert documents into pdf format.

<http://www.pdfonline.com>

<http://www.primopdf.com>

<http://www.fastpdf.com>

If you are considering developing your own ebooks using Acrobat, and want to be able to use all the facilities which are available, you can see if Adobe Acrobat is for you here:

<http://www.adobe.com>

2. ebook Covers

It is a fact that showing your ebook in 3D form so it looks like a physical book really helps to boost sales. Compact Draw is the software I use to create my ebook covers. You can try it for 30 days here:

<http://www.compactdraw.com>

Website creation and maintenance

1. Website design

I use Macromedia's Dreamweaver to design websites, and indeed to create eBay auction description pages. Dreamweaver is a premium web design product, and unless you're going to do serious website design I wouldn't advise you to acquire it.

You can learn about Dreamweaver here:

<http://www.dreamweaver.com>

As an alternative, you could consider using this free option. NVU is a free web design software package. You can get it from here:

<http://www.nvu.com>

2. Image Manipulation & Optimizing

I use Paint Shop Pro for picture manipulation and for optimizing. This is important for auction pictures, as eBay have a size limit of 50KB on any pictures which you want to upload to their Picture Service.

Now owned by Corel, PaintShopPro is relatively expensive.

Alternative free image editors include:

<http://www.irfanview.com>

<http://www.drawplus.com>

3. Website upload

Cute FTP is probably the best known FTP software. I have used it for several years and have been very satisfied with the software. You can find out about Cute FTP here:

<http://www.cuteftp.com>

4. Website hosting

ProWebSpace are excellent and reasonable web hosts which I have now been using for over a year. I transferred to them from another host with whom I was having lots of problems. Now, I have a better service, and it's at one third the price! You can get web space for nothing from a variety of ISPs. Take a look at <http://www.freeisp.com>

You only need companies like ProWebSpace if you intend to "go commercial" in your internet activities. If you do, it's important to have a paid service as this gives you the right to kick b**t if ever you experience hosting problems. If you're looking for professional hosting at a very reasonable price, this is definitely where I would start.

<http://www.prowebpace.com>

If you'd like to get free web hosting, you can get web space for nothing from a variety of ISPs. Take a look at:

<http://www.freeisp.com>

Newsletter and other Mailings

1. Newsletter Management

As my [newsletter](#) has grown, I've tried various ways of managing my mailing lists. I currently use Press-Manager, and have found their service to be very easy to set-up and to use. It's a web based service, and all mailings are performed from their site. This means there's no software to be installed, I can manage my mailings from any PC and my ISP no longer bears the mailing load of my newsletter.

<http://www.press-manager.com>

2. Autoresponding You may know that the use of autoresponders is one of the keys to marketing on the internet. I use Promasoft, and have found it can easily handle everything I want.

<http://www.autoreplying.com>

21. Five Top Tips for Successful eBay Selling

Here are five of the best tips I've come across when you're selling on eBay:

1. Keywords in titles and descriptions

When creating an auction for an item, try and catch a bigger audience by including related popular words in your title or description. For example if you're selling an XYZ make of DVD player, in your description you could say something like "it doesn't matter if you're looking for a Sony, Panasonic, Philips etc, you will find the XYZ competes on all features." So when people search for a Sony in the description, your auction will be returned in the list.

2. See my other auctions

Although your auction page on eBay provides a facility which lets people click over to see your other auctions, always include a link within your auction description. Many people don't know of the standard links which are at the top of the page, or they immediately click down the auction page to get to the item description.

3. Shoulder the risk

If you think about it, buyers bear all the risk in an auction transaction. They will probably have to pay the seller before the item is dispatched. This risk could be the final reason why someone may not bid on your auction. Think about removing the risk, and see if you can "afford" to offer a moneyback guarantee in your auction description. If you are honest and your item is as described, this tactic could be a win/win for you.

4. Save time on repetitive keying

You may have noticed during your auction activity how often you key in the same words or phrases over and over again. You can use a lovely little piece of software called Shortkeys which will reduce this keying by around 95%. You can find out about Shortkeys here:-

<http://www.shortkeys.com>

5. Feedback promotion

If you have a web site, include its address in every feedback you give to your buyers. It's free advertising for you which will grow and grow as your auction business develops. For example, here is one of the feedbacks I give to my buyers:

Excellent buyer. Prompt payment. A1 recommended www.more-auction-sales.com

22. What NOT to do in eBay Selling

There are many places on the internet where you can find out recommended ways to sell on eBay.

I thought it might be useful if I presented some thoughts about what doesn't work, what won't succeed and what to avoid doing.

1. Don't time your auctions so they end on a Bank Holiday.
2. Don't use a negative tone in your listing.
3. Don't waste any of your 55 characters of auction title on words or symbols like "L@@k", "Wow" or "Nice".
4. Don't worry about accepting international buyers.
5. Don't use music, animations, or multicolored background in your auction description.
6. Don't use the term "As is" in your listings.
7. Don't try to make a profit out of P&P.
8. Don't fail to identify defects in your item.
9. Don't delay in shipping your item.
10. Don't wait for the buyer to leave feedback first.
11. Don't rush to leave negative feedback for a non-paying bidder.

I'm sure there are plenty more where these came from. Just make sure you're not guilty of any of them!

23. How to Kill Your eBay Business – Avoid Doing This!

It's surprisingly easy to virtually kill your eBay business, if you're not careful.

Yes, I know, you can probably start over again from scratch without it costing you anything, but do you really want to?

So, if you want your business to end up dead in the water, here are some simple ways to do it.

1. Lie about an item

Say it works fine when it sometimes doesn't work. Say it's in perfect condition when it has a scratch. Your customers will hate you!

2. Mail your item whenever you feel like it

Make sure to leave your customers hanging around, wondering when their item is going to turn up. This makes sure they buy from someone else next time.

3. Let items end anytime

Few people will be around to care about your auction if it ends in the middle of the night. Why go to the trouble of working out whether auctions will end at a good time?

4. Don't bother with email

Customers are just time wasters anyway. eBay businesses are supposed to run themselves! Never give informed responses to questions about your item.

5. Sell rubbish

Really, it's just eBay. You can just sell any old tat from the market for a 200% profit. Let quality be someone else's concern – I mean, really, what do they expect for that price?

6. Refuse to give discounts

You know what your items cost, you know what your profit margin is going to be, and you're not going to negotiate. Remember that giving

customers special deals might make them feel good and come back to you again.

7. Make your listings ugly

As many colors, flashing lights and animations as possible will really give those customers a headache. Write as much in CAPITALS!!!! as you can. Preferably big, red capitals. Be sure to use the fonts Impact and Comic Sans. For an extra special touch, see if you can figure out a way to add some music.

8. Don't take photos

It's such trouble, after all. If buyers are picky enough to actually want to see items before they bid on them, then screw 'em, that's what I say.

9. Write short descriptions

Be as brief as possible, and use lots of mysterious abbreviations. This obviously makes you look very cool. You can even just write the title again in the description box. Think of the effort you'll save!

10. Use reserve auctions

Now, this is a fairly controversial final choice, but it really is one of the best ways to scare away your customers. They'll see 'reserve not yet met', and click that 'back' button before you know it. Luckily, they can always bid in a normal auction for the item somewhere else.

Well, there you are. How to close your eBay business in 10 easy steps.

I know you're not guilty of any of those.

Are you???

24. Twenty Six Tips on How to be Safe in Your eBay Selling and Buying

The irony of eBay is that as it grows to be ever more successful, it draws the unsavoury element of the internet towards it. I'm talking about people who make it their business to attempt to defraud you and I in our eBay and PayPal transactions.

Of course, not all dodgy dealings on eBay are fraudulent. Some are just mischievous. Others are by chancers, who perhaps reckon their victims won't be bothered to pursue them.

Whoever causes it, it's left to the targeted buyer or seller to try and sort out the problem. All that we as users can do is to be extremely vigilant and cautious in all our eBay and PayPal activities.

Here is a list of practical steps, in no particular order, which buyers and sellers can take to help avoid becoming the next victim.

Hopefully you are already aware of some of these. It doesn't necessarily follow that if one of these applies, the auction or person is fraudulent. But if you use your head, and build up a view of the overall transaction based upon a number of these factors, you will reduce your chances of getting conned.

a) Stock photos and descriptions

Because they don't have the item they are "selling", some fraudsters use a stock photograph of the item. And they will probably use the manufacturer's product description too. So, stock photos and no original description might be a sign. Search for other auctions by the same seller, and see if they are brazen enough to advertise the same item more than once.

b) A price too good to be true often isn't true

A fraudster wants your money quickly, so you may find they offer to close their auction early with you as the "winner" having bid a price which you know to be somewhat of a bargain. Why would anyone close their auction early if the price hadn't reached market levels? I'll give you one guess.

c) High value or high volume, newly registered sellers

Although the vast majority of new sellers are genuine and honest, be cautious of buying from people selling high value items in bulk, very early on in their eBay career. This pattern isn't quite normal. Think back to your own first sales. You would have been tentative, and probably have tried single, low value items initially. So, a new seller fitting this profile may be someone who has perhaps been previously suspended and has registered another ID.

d) 1 day listings

Although 1 day listing are used by genuine sellers who have more than one item or who want a quick sale, unfortunately this duration is attractive to fraudsters too. They sometimes use the 1 day auction duration to gain a quick sale before their actions can be reported and acted upon. So, be extra wary on auctions with 1 day listing.

e) Invitations to trade off-eBay

This is a classic ploy of fraudsters. Having made some kind of contact with you, or you with them, they will invite you to purchase or to sell off-eBay i.e. without using eBay's auction services. The attraction here to the fraudster is that they can drive the transaction along the lines they prefer, whether that be escrow, PayPal etc. Another reason why trading off-eBay is not a good idea is that you have to keep your own formal records of the transaction, and you forfeit any cover from eBay buyer protection and PayPal buyer protection. Plus, you will not be able to leave feedback to let others know your experience as this is now not an eBay transaction.

f) Payment methods with no recourse

Fraudsters prefer to choose payment methods in which the buyer has no protection, like wire transfers where the buyer has no way of tracing where the money is going. Western Union Money Transfers and BidPay are favorites and should be totally avoided. Bank transfers and checks can only provide the possibility of your bank investigating the details of the account the money was transferred into. For the best protection use Paypal and fund with a Credit Card. Note there are limits on eBay and PayPal protection, and you should make yourself aware of these limitations.

g) Unusual sales pattern

If your seller's feedback indicates that they normally deal in

collectables, DVDs or other specific items, be suspicious if they are suddenly listing laptops, plasma TVs or other high value items. The change may indicate that this seller's account has been hijacked.

h) Bad English gives you a pointer

Some fraudsters operate from abroad but pretend to be in UK or USA. As they aren't particularly adept at the English language they might use a translation tool like Babelfish to create their emails to you. So, watch out for emails that are not good English. In itself, it doesn't prove anything, there are plenty of genuine eBay sellers for whom English is not their first language. But it might add to further evidence you have.

i) Location Location Location

In the case of lazy fraudsters you might find their locations don't match up. By that I mean the auction says the goods are in the USA, but the seller's ID details show their location to be, say, Ukraine. This is not a good sign. Often in these cases if you contact these sellers you will receive an excuse as to why the item is not in the USA, and therefore can't be collected in person. In short, if an auction says the item is in the US and the seller ID details says that it is not, I would avoid the auction. And don't forget to cross check with their PayPal account, and see in which country this resides.

j) Ask questions

Always, always ask your seller a question. Any question. Their response, if you receive one, will help you judge how genuine the seller is. Beware auctions that carry a message asking you to contact the seller via a given email address as opposed to via the 'Ask seller a question' link. This could be an account hijacker trying to prevent buyers from 'Asking the seller a question'. They want to stop this from happening because such questions could be routed to the real account owner.

k) "eBay can vouch for me" email

A warning about a relatively new tactic used by fraudsters. If you are proving hard to land as a buyer/seller, they may claim they can get eBay to email you proof of their validity so that you can trust them. eBay, of course, will NEVER do this. The email sent out, however authentic looking, is fake and is designed to get you to part with your

money or your goods. This applies equally to Square Trade and PayPal. They will never email you certifying the genuineness of any member of account holder.

l) A PayPal warning

There are fraudsters who use stolen PayPal accounts to accept payments. To lower the possibility of this, check your seller's location as shown in eBay, and then see if it is one of PayPal's permitted countries by checking here: <http://www.paypal.com>. If PayPal don't offer their service in the country that the seller resides, be very wary.

m) Passwords

Never have the same password on your eBay and PayPal accounts. Or indeed on any other financial or personal site. Change your passwords every 30-60 days on both eBay and PayPal.

n) Escrow

If your seller asks you to use escrow, and proposes an escrow company they've used before, this is a clear indication they are fraudulent. There are many fake escrow sites which will take your money fraudulently. The only escrow site recommended by eBay is <http://www.escrow.com>. An alternative in the UK is <http://www.auctionpix.co.uk>. Please don't be tempted to use any other escrow company, however professional looking their websites might be. It is a fact that 99.9% of escrow companies on the internet are fraudulent. They are set up solely to defraud money out of unsuspecting buyers, and to get goods without paying for them from unsuspecting sellers.

o) Pointers in feedback

Try to read the positive feedback as well as the negative. Read the way your seller responds to negative feedback as this will often give you an idea of how the seller will react if something goes badly wrong. If the seller you're thinking of buying from is offering high value goods, be wary if their feedback has been built up quickly from low value purchases. Feedback can easily be manufactured. Also, if the overall rating is good, but there are a disproportionate number of negatives in recent days/weeks, this might indicate the account has been taken over. Finally, be aware that feedback is not the guarantee

it once was. Also, if the user ID has been hijacked, you'll be reading the feedback of the original account owner, not the person with whom you're currently dealing!

p) Credit Card payment

For high value items, or for amounts of money you can't afford to lose, make sure you pay by a credit card which has online fraud protection. This will give you some recourse if the seller is fraudulent. In this context, paying via PayPal is not the same. PayPal do have a buyer protection scheme, but there are criteria which the eBay auction has to satisfy in order to qualify. Even if the transaction qualifies, PayPal's standard protection currently has a maximum value of \$1,000. Note that payments by debit card provides no protection.

q) Address and Telephone check

Use the 'Ask the seller a question' link, and request they email you with their address and telephone number. Any reputable seller will give you their address and telephone number. When you get the number, call it, and see if you get through to the genuine seller.

r) Keystroke capturing virus

This is a computer virus which you inadvertently download onto your PC. Its task is to capture the keystrokes you make, and to send them to the virus placer. The fraudster then uses pattern recognition software to identify and extract personal information, like eBay username, password, credit card numbers etc. To avoid this happening to you, it is wise to have good, up-to-date virus, firewall and spyware checking software on your PC. Here is where you can get free software for each of these functions:

Virus protection - <http://free.grisoft.com/freeweb.php/doc/2/>

Firewall - <http://www.zonelabs.com>

Spyware checking - <http://www.lavasoft.com>

s) Shill bidding

Shill bidding is where people work in cahoots to inflate the bidding on an item. A seller has a "partner" who makes bids on the seller's items with a view to bumping up the bid price. They have no intention of

buying the item. Fortunately, shill bidders and their associated seller can be stupid. The shill bidder will usually make bids on other items from the same seller. Here's how to check to see if shill bidding is a feature of a particular seller. First, look at the seller's closed auctions over the last 30 days. If most of the closed auctions have no bids, it is unlikely the seller has shill bidders working with them. If all of the closed auctions have bids, take a look at the bid history on some of the higher value sales. See if the same bidder appears in the list of bidders, usually with aggressive bidding and normally at the start of the auction. If so, you may have uncovered a shill operation, so avoid that seller's auctions.

t) Keep your transaction information

Keep your own record of the transaction when you're buying. Don't just rely on eBay. You want a record of the seller's identification, the item description, emails sent and received, plus the time, date and price of your bid.

u) "I noticed your bid...."

Never deal with anyone who contacts you after seeing your bid on another auction. They will say something like, "I saw you bidding on that digital camera. I have the same model available for sale. I don't have time to list it on eBay. It has more accessories than the one you lost out on. You can have it for xyz." If you bite, they'll probably take you down the fake escrow route. Also, if you entertain this proposition, you're operating outside of eBay and therefore have no auction protection whatsoever.

v) Changed eBay ID

Never deal with anyone who has a changed ID icon next to their name. This icon means they've changed their ID in the last 30 days. Few legitimate people change their eBay ID. When was the last time you changed yours? There's a 1% chance that an ID change is genuine, but 99% that it is fraudulent. Why take the risk?

w) Changed email address mid-stream

If a seller or buyer changes their email address on you in the middle of a transaction, stop dealing with them. It is likely their previous email account was closed down due to some irregularity - such as a previous victim reported them. If you think about it, why would any genuine

buyer or seller change their email address whilst corresponding on a transaction they wish to conclude expeditiously?

x) Complications

Never get involved in any transaction where the seller/buyer tries to introduce a third person into the financial arrangements. They might ask you to pay xyz, who will then pay the seller, and you will receive a discount or commission for your co-operation. Such proposals are always fraudulent. They prey on greed. Don't be tempted.

y) Time is of the essence

This is a scam which has more potential for success than traditional phishing attacks, as it is time sensitive. The fraudster searches for high value auctions that have just ended. The bid history for an auction contains hyperlinks to each bidder. The fraudster checks to see if the winning bidder is selling any items of their own. If so, they go to that auction and embed a request for payment from the first auction within a question for seller. This works because winning bidders are expecting a request for payment shortly after an auction ends. A variation of this is to offer a bidder a "second chance". This time the "Ask the seller a question" email pretends that the real winner has backed out, and offers the item at a lower price. The buyer, believing the story, is lured into paying to someone who they believe is a genuine seller. Many eBayers have heard of the second chance system, but have no experience of it. This unfamiliarity coupled with the fact that a few weeks might have passed, makes this an effective method for fraudsters. The moral of this story is never get involved in any transaction which arrives in your inbox via the Ask the Seller a Question feature.

z) eBay IDs

Never use your email address as your eBay ID, or part of your eBay ID. Fraudsters have software which monitors internet traffic looking for information such as this. If your eBay ID and email address are the same, it is simple for a fraudster to plausibly communicate with other eBay members in your name.

Be aware, and be safe in your eBay buying and eBay selling.

25. Cautionary Tales – eMail scams

Two new email scams were brought to my attention this week by readers of my [eBay Auction Newsletter](#). Both scams are clever, and appeal to that most basic of instincts - greed - and the prospect of getting something for nothing.

The first one comes to you in the guise of a "Question for Seller". I am grateful to Chris for letting me share this with you. This is what he received as a Question for Seller:-

"Hi!

Your last buyer recommend you as a good serious seller. We want advise you very good work. We from Russia, PROWELL ONLINE WEB HOLDING. We know that you work on EBAY and with PAYPAL. We need people who can exchange money. Example is - our clients of our EXCHANGE SITE, send you money (PAYPAL), when u cashout them and send them by WU or BINK WIRE. You get 20% of amount. We have a lot of clients - who want exchange money. All money is clear, from SOFTWARE AND ADULT Sponsors. Weekly amount is 4000-8000\$ (American dollar). You get 20% percent + We pay WU or Bank wires fees. We need answer from you, with additional contacts like ICQ, or MSN, or where we can speak with you instant. (It is not spam, we send you this email manually, we need only man who can work with us)

Thank you"

This is either an illegal money laundering scheme, or something worse.

By appealing to the greed factor, it is easy to visualize how this group could take victims for several thousand pounds. This is what really happens:

The target receives a PayPal payment, and immediately withdraws it to their bank account. This transfer takes 5-7 business days. Thinking they are safe, the victim then sends off the net amount by wire as requested. The wire payment is received by the fraudster. This is an instant transaction, and they withdraw the cash immediately. The fraudster then instructs PayPal that there is a problem with the payment transaction they made for example they haven't received the goods they've "paid for". The transfer to your bank account is stopped in its tracks by PayPal!

Your money, however, has gone! It's not very pleasant is it?

This second scam has been reported to me by Terry. Let him explain it in his own words:-

"Hi Brian,

It is very time consuming as you know but I have found a 'clever' scam on ebay.com where this guy(s) in Amsterdam, copies a seller's car, places it for sale themselves with tons of +ve feedback under their names (construed or rather, probably, constructed), and after a process which is lengthy to explain here, he collects peoples deposits, in cash, from a Western Union office in Holland; of course you see nothing for it whatsoever.

Part of it is fairly convincing and because he doesn't have English as a first language and isn't brilliant with our tongue, part of it is pretty amateurish but, still, greed being what it is, convincing!

I have tracked down the real owner in the USA who didn't manage to sell this car but it is now re-listed - set up for some other unsuspecting people.

I have emailed ebay security (twice now) but what they r doing about it G only knows- the scam continues meanwhile.

I do believe my theories on this matter to be correct and I have copies of all the emails to do with it but.....?

Thought you might like to know anyway, my concern is to make this as safe a place as we can - not easy!

Regards Terry"

As the lawyers say, "caveat emptor" - let the buyer beware!

Finally, an example from me...

A friend of mine rang yesterday and asked if I could help. He was staying in a Guest House in Harrogate, North Yorkshire. His landlord had received two angry telephone calls from people asking why he hadn't delivered the goods they had bought from him on eBay auctions.

My friend's landlord was very confused. He didn't know what eBay was, he'd never even heard of it!

This turned out to be the crudest of deceptions which has netted someone around £1,200 (\$2,600). This is what happened...

A person set up a User ID on eBay using my friend's landlord's name and address. They put three electrical items on auction at very low starting prices. The three items were sold. The buyers were sent an email from the seller asking them to send payment to a different address than that which was registered against the User ID. The three people duly sent checks as requested.

That was the last each of them heard from the seller. Two of the buyers rang my friend's landlord, asking where their purchases were!

The police are now involved, but I suspect the villain is long gone with his loot.

Why did they choose this person's name and address for their User ID registration. I would guess it was pure chance.

The object lesson for everyone who buys on eBay is to make sure you know who your buyer is. This is particularly true when you're talking high value items. This seller had zero feedback, and yet buyers were willing to send checks to the value of several hundreds pounds. I strongly recommend you check up on your seller BEFORE you part with any money.

If this guy had advertised an electrical item for £400 (\$900) in the local paper, do you think anyone would hand over their money and wait for the product to be delivered? Well, that's effectively what these three buyers did! I thoroughly recommend you follow eBay's advice here:

http://pages.ebay.co.uk/help/confidence/ia/knowning_your_seller.html

Lastly with regard to careful trading, here is an excellent site which discloses the latest email scams on eBay and PayPal.

<http://www.millersmiles.co.uk>

You can see whether eBay buying or eBay selling, vigilance is the name of the game!

Register Free with eBay

If you haven't started yet, you need to set up your own eBay account. It's free, and you can register below:

Register for eBay.com at www.ebay.com

Register for eBay.co.uk at www.eBay.co.uk

Another Free Report

Here is another gift for you. A further free report from Brian McGregor.

"The Feedback Accelerator" shows you how you can get 10 positive feedbacks onto your eBay User ID within minutes!

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