



The eBay Auction Newsletter

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Proudly published for over 4 years by Brian McGregor

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Welcome from Brian McGregor



Welcome to the latest edition of the eBay Auction Newsletter.

If you're a new subscriber, a particularly warm welcome to you.

If you're interested in eBay, the company, you may well have detected a slight downward trend in confidence that some people have in eBay.

That's fair enough. People say it how they see it.

But I thought against the welter of negativity, you might like to hear of some positive news...

A company called Nielsen are the most respected web stats organisation in the business. In their latest information release covering the month of October, they show that eBay UK recorded 14.4 million unique users during October 2007 which rose gradually to a record of 15.8 million unique users last month. That's a year-on-year increase of 9.6%.

So how can eBay be losing 10% of users in a year in the US, while it gains 9% the UK?

Analyst Jim Clark of Mintel says, "UK consumers are the most sophisticated in Europe and it makes sense that they are trying to do more online to increase the value of the pound," he said.

Clark added that security is a factor; consumers will prefer established brands they know rather than web entities.

The UK also has heavy broadband penetration, and may be ahead of the US in this trend. So, if you're in the UK, and having second thoughts about eBay. Maybe you should reconsider...

Take care, and good luck in your eBay business.

Speak to your soon.



1. Thought for the Day

"No amount of ability is of the slightest avail without honor."

Andrew Carnegie

2. Mind Your Language

I visited McDonalds recently. Forgive me, but I was with the grandchildren.

At the counter, I started the order by asking for the Grilled Chicken with no tomato.

"Right", she said as she started keying the order in, "That's one Classic."

"No", I said, "I want the Grilled Chicken with no tomato."

"Yes" she replied, "That's what I said - one Classic."

This confusing exchange was repeated a couple more times before we both understood we were talking about the same thing. We were just using different words to describe it.

I thought about this and it occurred to me that buyers and sellers on eBay may miss each other for the same reason.

They want to buy a Classic, but your auction describes it as a "Grilled Chicken sandwich".

If you can talk in the language of your buyers, you will sell more on eBay.

Not only that, but there could be more added value to listing in the words of a customer. And that relates to search engines.

As you will probably know, your eBay listings can appear in Google and the other search engines. Far better to get returned in Google with terms that buyers are using to find you!

Indeed, the words used in any business, from the title of listings to the descriptions to the e-mails send out, will attract a certain customer who can relate to the vocabulary used. This is a powerful concept, but one that many people overlook.

Not only is this important when describing what you're selling, but it relates to your overall business too.

For example, are the words you use to portray your eBay business attracting the customer you want?

Check out this small extract from a real listing on eBay - the language and emphasis is theirs. Think about the kind of buyer the seller is likely to attract with this type of vocabulary:

"Winning bidder must make payment within five days after auction end. Failure to pay within seven days will result in the posting of a Non-Paying Bidder Alert. Failure to pay within 10 days will result in Negative Feedback being posted. PLEASE DON'T BE A DEADBEAT BIDDER! Bid Only if intend to Buy. I POST NEGATIVE FEEDBACK AND SUBMIT INFORMATION TO COLLECTION AGENCY FOR ANY NONPAYER."

If you want bidders who are negative, frustrated and demanding, then by all means use language like our seller above did.

You would far better if you used words that included:

- * Your 100 percent satisfaction guaranteed.
- * We will carefully pack your item so that it arrives safely at your front door.
- * We know you are excited to have your new item, so of course we ship as soon you pay for it.
- * We strive for 5-Star gold customer service. Please let us know what we can do for you.

Here you're setting up buyers' expectations, and providing the very important "security and confidence" element that will turn lookers into buyers.

Which version were you attracted to?

I guess the bottom line is, "mind your language".

3. Your Costly Error on eBay

When selling on eBay, we all strive to create the best possible experience for our buyers by providing quality merchandise and top-notch service. Most customers will have rewarded our vigilance with positive feedback and high Detailed Seller Ratings.

But occasionally things can go wrong. Perhaps you sell an item you don't have in stock, or packages get mixed up and sent to the wrong buyers. It's a fact of life, we all make mistakes.

There's an old saying that we learn from our mistakes. For that to happen we need to admit the problem. Not just to ourselves, but to the buyer or buyers, as the case may be. The second is to think about what caused the blunder to occur and how we might avoid it from happening again.

For example, you've just realised you sent a book to the buyer who purchased a clock from you. Yes, it could mean you ultimately take a blow to your hard earned, heretofore perfect feedback score. But if you're proactive and apologetic, most customers will be forgiving.

Buyers like honesty, and most good buyers understand that sellers are just human, and mistakes can and do happen."

You only realise the error when a customer emails and asks why they've received a book from you! Gulp.

Once you know of the problem, give the customer the option to ship the item back at your expense and send him/her the expected clock, or receive a full refund.

It will cost you in terms of extra postage, but it could have cost far more in terms of your reputation as a seller. Solving such situations amicably is the objective, as a disgruntled buyer can put you in a difficult situation.

Whether you rely on eBay for your livelihood or to support a hobby, it's horrible to think that a single, avoidable error could tarnish your flawless reputation. And the simplicity of eBay's feedback system means that the lower your transaction volume, the greater the damage one negative mark does to your feedback rating.

That's why it's so important to establish a good foundation with every buyer you encounter, starting with professional looking listings, and continuing through your post sale communications.

It's a good idea that you write down step by step procedures that you follow for every listing, from start to finish, and every item that you pack and ship. This is especially important if you have employees or family members who help out on occasion.

Of course, nobody's perfect all the time. But when we understand where we went wrong, we can hopefully make the appropriate changes to ensure the same mistake doesn't happen again.

4. Be Careful when you Buy a Computer Game this Xmas

If you're thinking of buying a computer game for your child, grandchild, nephew or niece, be careful if you use eBay!

Unfortunately bootleg games continue to appear on eBay, and they can be hard to spot.

Although there are a few clues as to what might be fake game, these things don't tend to leap out at you in an auction listing. Here are some ways that are a tip-off that something's not quite right.

Certain games are more frequently counterfeited than others. Nintendo's popular brands like Mario and Pokémon are obvious choices. Other games that tend to go out of print quickly and are often fake on eBay are Castlevania games and Majesco's Bookworm port for GBA.

As is the case in every industry, rip-offs tend to look like rip-offs. Make sure you know what the label on the cartridge is supposed to look like before you go shopping, and make sure you're looking at an exact match. If there's no picture, it's suspect. If it's a stock picture, it's suspect. If the picture is of poor quality, it's suspect.

Make sure the game comes complete, by this I mean it has all the inserts - like the manual and a registration card. This can be a step in the right direction, but not 100%. After all, a bootleg game could be put into a legitimate box and manual, or the box and manual can be faked.

The country of origin of the auction can be a giveaway. If the seller is in a country where it doesn't make sense to be selling an English-language version of the game (as opposed to a Chinese language version) it's almost certainly counterfeit. This is even the case if it comes with a box and instruction manual, because fake boxes and manuals are also being produced. Bear in mind that these games can find their way into the country and then the person who buys it will resell it on eBay, with or without any knowledge that it's a fake - so there's really little way to know.

Another step would be to check the seller's eBay feedback. See if there is any mention of people receiving a counterfeit game. Even one complaint like this should be enough to discourage you from bidding. Until the game's in your hands, you can't be certain though.

Once it's there, you can tell by looking at the board. On a GBA game, this entails looking in the connector end of the cartridge for the Nintendo logo. If it's a legitimate game, the logo will be printed on the board. You may need a flashlight to see it, but it's pretty big and it's there. Unfortunately, it's at a very hard angle to photograph without opening the cartridge, so don't expect to see pictures of it in the auction. Promises that the game isn't a bootleg shouldn't be taken lightly though, because specifically saying it's not implies the person knows how to tell the difference. Also, there's that much more to use against the person if it turns out to be a fake when you get it.

So, keep your wits about you when shopping for games on eBay. Give yourself some measure of protection by using PayPal. Have the games checked out as soon as they arrive. Finally, if you are unfortunate enough to get caught by one of these sellers, make sure you report any bad sellers if you come across them.

5. A Gift From Me to You

Now I'm in no position to point the finger at anyone.

However, if you would like to prepare for the festivities by losing some weight before Christmas, this could be for you.

It's an ebook showing 2 easy ways to lose weight by Christmas.

You can download it from:

http://www.workwinners.com/lose_weight_for_xmas/

6. News & Views

The Evidence From eBay Downunder

In a quick analysis of the listings on eBay.co.uk today, I found the following:

Buy it Now/Fixed Price listings: 13.5 million

Auction style listings: 3.7 million

The path eBay is following is pretty clear. Despite most people thinking of eBay as an auction site, it is in fact moving inexorably towards the Amazon model - an ecommerce shop.

In New Zealand, a site called trademe may be a glimpse into the future. www.trademe.co.nz is unashamedly an auction site, and looks remarkably similar to how eBay used to be in the early days. trademe now has more listings than eBay New Zealand!

Perhaps someone should set up a simplyauctions site in the UK?

Speaking of Downunder...

Tracey Edwards is an Australian lady who I consider to be the Queen of eBay Classified Ads.

Tracey has discovered an interesting way to use eBay Classified Ads to make money.

As she's just update her system to take account of the latest eBay policies, I thought you might like to take a look.

If you're interested in making money from eBay without buying stock or shipping packages, you can check out Tracey's ideas here:

<http://www.workwinners.com/tracey/>

Not Quite Pic'n'Mix - But Close

Here is a lovely new site which currently covers eBay.com and Amazon.com (UK sites coming).

I love the slider at the top right that works like a zoom on a camera.

<http://picclick.com/>

Do You Feel Lucky?

eBay.com have introduced a Christmas promotion called "doorbuster deals".

If you enjoy checking eBay several times during the day, you could be in luck.

Every day until December 8th, several certain items are listed on being eBay as Buy It Now for \$1 with free shipping. There are items such as plasma TV's, Nintendo Wii's, DVD's, even a jet ski!

The catch? The listings are hidden. You have to search eBay in order to find these great deals. And it's not as easy as it sounds. During the day, at random times, the doorbuster items will be listed. You have to find it and grab it before someone else does!

All the details are here:

<http://pages.ebay.com/deals/>

eBay Page Views Drop Off Dramatically in October

eBay has seen a steady decline in page views throughout 2008, and in October suffered a precipitous drop of over 30% compared to the same period last year, according to data provided by Nielsen Online.

The downward trend in eBay's page views began in January. April to July is always a period of downward activity - eBay is a seasonal marketplace that does best in the autumn and winter months. But the downward trend continued from July 2008 to the present - although that could be explained at least in part by severe economic conditions.

Sounds pretty bad, doesn't it?

Still, eBay can console itself with the fact that, as of September 30, 2008, the company had zero debt and \$3.643 billion in cash in the bank! So don't worry about eBay just yet!

Cool Tool from Google you can use on eBay

Google have launched a brand new tool in beta mode (still under test), which is really designed for people who pay for the ads that appear down the right hand side of Google's search results pages.

All you do is give the tool a website address, and it comes back with the most popular phrases people are inputting to search on that website. Having tried this tool, I wondered if it could be usefully utilised by eBay sellers.

See what you think, here's the address:

<http://www.google.com/sktool/>

Try putting in www.ebay.co.uk or www.ebay.com, and see what the most popular search terms are. Very interesting!

7. Someone's Auctioning What???

Nothing surprises me when it comes to internet auctions. Amuse yourself with some of these beauties in our regular trawl through eBay's auctions.

Here are some auctions I've spotted as I trawled eBay recently:-

[I thought you just needed a twig!](#)

[Can somebody tell me what the 4X this is please?](#)

[What a shambles of a listing. The Seller ID says it all...](#)

[Help! This listing is in a foreign language to me!](#)

[This really is, as the eBay terms says, "Mint in Box"...](#)

Disclaimer - I have no association with any of the sellers of the above items.



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NOTE: Depending on when you view this newsletter, you may find some links to third party sites no longer work. I know how frustrating this can be. But please don't shoot the messenger! The internet is a fast moving environment and, as the newsletters age, it is to be expected that some links may become obsolete over time.

The moral of the story?

If the newsletter sends you to a site that interests you, and you think you might want to refer to it later, make sure you store the site address in YOUR favorites.