

Computer Tips

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Using Ebay—1

Many of our readers no doubt have heard of Ebay. This popular auction website has been featured in several TV and news reports, and is raising a lot of interest. In our column for the next several issues we will be looking at Ebay, and how to best use this excellent online market.

How many of you have been to an auction? Do you remember going around the different item lots, seeing if there was anything of interest? Did you get hold of a bidders card, and stand there in the crowd waiting for the auctioneer to reach your selected lot number? Do you remember your nervousness, excitement, or maybe your sweaty hands as first one, then another called out their bids? Then you put your hand up, and called your bid. Do you remember the elation you felt when the hammer went down, and you had the winning bid? Or the disappointment as the price went way over what you wanted to pay?

If you have ever participated in an auction, then this scenario will be familiar to you. Now, through the advancement of technology, you can do the very same thing sitting at home in front of your computer—on Ebay.

Ebay, found at www.ebay.com.au, is an auction market conducted through the Internet, and they sell just about anything you can imagine. Actually, Ebay is only the administrator and provider of the auction market—the sellers are people like you and me.

Before we go in and use Ebay, lets have a general look at how Ebay works. That way we will be better prepared to use it when the time comes.

Ebay has two main parties—the seller, and the buyer. The seller has an item he or she wants to sell. They list the item they are selling with Ebay, who charges them a small fee for using Ebay's resources. The seller lists their item with a minimum price that they want to receive. This is called the starting bid. In their listing, the seller describes the item up for auction, along with its history, current condition, etc, often using photos as well. They also specify how long they want their item up for auction, which can be anywhere from 1 to 10 days. Once their item is listed, the seller then waits to see if anyone takes an interest in their item.

This is where the buyer comes in. Anyone may browse through the many different items for sale. There are hundreds of thousands of sellers on Ebay, and this gives a huge number of items for sale. The buyer can find items directly from the front page of Ebay, using the search facility. The buyer is then presented with all the listed items that match his search words. Along with the listed items is shown the description, the current price, and what time is left in the auction. The buyer then reads the item description that interests them, notes the price, and determines how much he wants to pay. Then if there is time left, he can place a bid for that item.

To be continued...



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