

Computer Tips

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Using Ebay—2

Now that we have a general idea of the workings of Ebay, lets take on the challenge, and go buy something on Ebay. To buy (or sell) anything on Ebay, you must sign up for a free account with them. They will ask you for your name, address, location and contact details, and also a username which will identify you to the Ebay community. This account information is kept secure on Ebay's server, and is not sold or given to any one else.

Once you have created an account, each time you visit Ebay, you can sign in. This enables you to have full access to all of Ebay's features, including a section called My Ebay. This area is where you can bookmark or save different items of interest for looking at later. My Ebay is also a center of information for you, where you can ask questions, send emails, check progress, make payments, etc.

Now that you are a member of Ebay, go to their home page at www.ebay.com.au. On this page, you can type a search word or words, and then let Ebay's search facility find any matching items for you.

For example, lets say you want to buy a 4-man tent. Type this into the search box, and click Search. All the matching entries in Ebay for 4-man tent will show up in the next page, including a brief description of the item, the current bid price, the number of bids for that item if any, and the time left in the auction.

The descriptions of these matching items on this page are only brief. If you click on the headings underlined in blue, more information is shown for that particular item, along with the seller's Ebay identity, and often photos of the item. Your evaluation of the item for auction is largely dependant on the detailed description shown on this page.

To know if what is listed is a good buy or not, you must have two things: a good general knowledge of the item you are interested in, and also what they usually sell for elsewhere. Because there are hundreds of different sellers on Ebay, each seller often has a different price and a slightly different description, sometimes even for the same item. Like any good buyer, do your homework well, and don't bid on something unless you are thoroughly assured it is what you want. Ebay has the facility to send questions via email to the seller during the duration of the auction. This often helps to clarify anything that might be unclear about the seller's description.

If after some homework and maybe a few questions to the seller, an item sounds like it's what you are wanting, take note of how much time is left in the auction. Most auctions go for several days, and if the current bid price is very attractive, but has 2 days left, that very attractive price could easily double in the time remaining. That's the gamble of an auction. What you can do is place that item of interest in your Watching area of My Ebay, and Ebay will keep you posted via email of its price and progress of bids during the rest of the auction.

To be continued...



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