

(Approx. 1,262 words)

Everything you've ever wanted to know about eBay

Book Review: *My eBay for Seniors*

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My eBay for Seniors

By Michael Miller, Que, 2014

Education, \$24.99



The large sans serif type and its references to grandkids makes *My eBay for Seniors* a book geared to older folks in the publisher's eye. Everything else about the book—its information and colorful artwork—is for the beginner or average user—of any age. But I did like that I didn't have to whip out my glasses to read it.

Some of the instruction lists run into the high 20s for number of steps, but visually the book makes it seem easy with lots of clear artwork of what you'll see on the screen each step of the way. It shows you how to buy and sell and relist items...and what happens when you make a sale.

If you want to use eBay from your smartphone or tablet, the book even has a chapter dedicated to buy and sell that way too.

Bidding for items on eBay can be exciting like in a real auction—and, except for the cost of the item (and shipping charges if additional), you pay no money to eBay to shop or buy.

When you bid on an item and a box appears on the screen to tell you that you are outbid that means that someone put in a maximum bid that they are willing to pay that is higher than the amount you just entered.

You can do the same after you are the highest bidder. The book explains how to easily set up that maximum bid up so you don't have to hover around your computer, even on the day the item's auction will end. Though eBay doesn't like bid retractions, you do have that ability under many conditions if you made a mistake.

To win an auction for an item takes a strategy. The book's 10 tips for better bidding include the recommendation to bid in odd numbers, such as \$10.03 instead of \$10.

The book also recommends waiting till the last 10 seconds to ever bid on anything (also called sniping) and gives a list of automated sniping services that will do it for you if you

can't be up at midnight when an auction ends. One of the services listed is even free: Gixen (www.gixen.com)!

eBay also lets you keep a watch list to track items you are interested in but haven't bid on yet. The watch list is only one of many lists eBay lets you keep in your account, which is called the dashboard in "My eBay." Others include items you've bought or sold in the past, and more.

You can pay for items in whatever way the seller lets you pay. Oftentimes people accept credit cards, but you can almost always pay with PayPal (using your credit card or other means), which makes it even safer for you. The book even details how to set up a PayPal account and how to link it to eBay.

You can most often shop safely on eBay, but occasionally people can run across deadbeat sellers...folks who take your money and don't ship. Two chapters talk about the risks on eBay and how to minimize them.

Various colored stars for each seller is a feedback system that rates the sellers so you can know if they've long been trusted on eBay. Most good sellers also offer a money-back guarantee, but you'll likely have to pay for the returning shipping costs.

Maybe you want to sell an item on eBay. The seller pays fees to eBay, not buyers. The fees depend on what the item is and how you want to sell it. The first 50 items you list each month (that's a lot!) are free to list, but you do pay a fee if it sells.

That final value fee is 10% of the total selling price (item price plus shipping/handling charges). If you are listing items in eBay Motors or Real Estate categories, the fee pricing differs.

eBay has many optional fees, such as having a boldface title, a subtitle, or a reserve price. Having a reserve price (that only you and eBay knows) lets you list an item at a low starting bid, but it won't sell unless the bidding reaches the reserve price you set in advance (you don't pay the fee, though, if the bidding doesn't reach the reserve price). You can see the various fees at pages.ebay.com/help/sell/fees.html. The book outlines how to use eBay's Fee Calculator too.

Another source of fees comes from PayPal, which most sellers use to receive payments for their items. Granted, eBay owns PayPal, but the fees are separate. The PayPal fee is \$0.30 per transaction plus 2.9% of the amount paid to you by the buyer.

The book walks you through the process of setting up a buyer's account and the more detailed seller's account. You'll likely want to have a PayPal account too, which is easy to link to eBay. Again, the book details how to do it.

Beyond using the website, you'd need to prepare an item for sale and then ship it when it sells. The book details everything from finding items to sell to picking categories to sell it in to writing effective titles and descriptions and photographing and packing the item.

It even provides tables of grading systems for level of quality, a list of services to refer to, and the common abbreviations used, such as MIB for Mint in Box.

The book also lists what you cannot sell on eBay, such as ivory, lock-picking devices, tobacco, and used underwear...but people *do* sell them all on eBay (with cleverly couched wording in the descriptions). eBay does have an Everything Else > Adults Only category that a lot of people don't know about, but no nudity or sexually explicit content is allowed in the listing.

Although you may not copy someone else's picture for your eBay listing, you can use eBay's stock photos for certain items, such as books, CDs, and electronic products. The book recommends that you shoot and edit your photos with 1600 pixels on the longest side (500 pixels minimum on the longest side) for the best possible display. You can post up to 12 photos for free.

The book also describes how to determine the way to sell your items: Individually or in lots? List items yourself or use a service? Sell by auction or fixed price (or both with the Buy It Now feature that lets buyers bypass the auction)?

The book really is inclusive of everything you'd want to do on eBay, from canceling an auction to blocking an unwanted buyer to packing an item for shipping. The red boxes labeled "It's not all good" gives a heads up about pitfalls to avoid each step of the way. I'm a regular eBay buyer and seller and I learned some tricks too!

AARP has teamed up with Que Publishing to help those 50+ learn how to use technology, including smartphones, tablets, computers, and social media. Que and AARP are developing new products within Que's popular "My for Seniors" book series.

The AARP community may purchase a Que book, eBook, or video today and save 40% off the list price. Use discount code AARP in the "Enter a New Discount Code" box during checkout.

If your group belongs to Que's UG program, you receive a 30% discount.

My eBay[®] for Seniors



Michael Miller