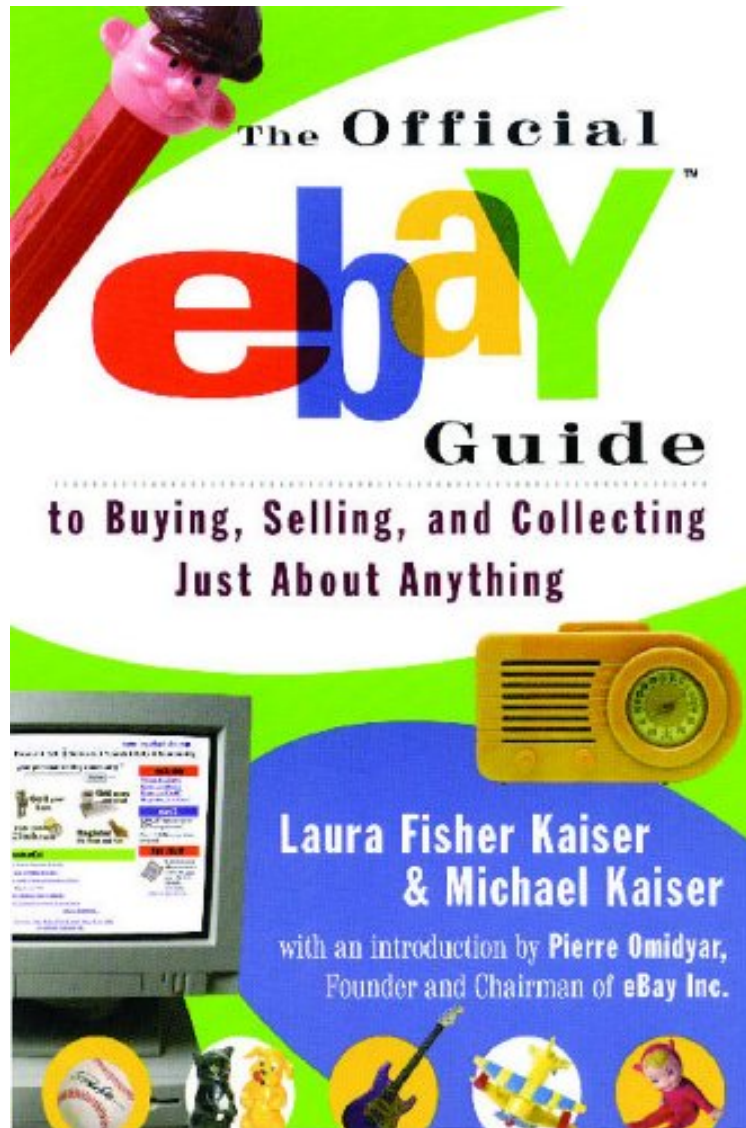


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The Official eBay Guide to Buying, Selling, and Collecting Just About Anything: To Buying, Selling and Collecting Just About Everything

Laura Fisher Kaiser, Michael Kaiser
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HAPPY HUNTINGtrade; ON eBayAunt Fannie's cameo pin collection...the cartoon-character lunch boxes you had in third grade...that cast-iron doorstop you bought for \$2 but is really worth \$200....Whether you're a busy buyer, an avid seller, or just a fun-loving browser, you'll find countless collectibles like these on eBay, the world's largest person-to-person online trading community.Now -- in this official primer from the popular Internet site that has revolutionized the collecting world -- the experts at eBay unlock the secrets of successful online buying and selling, for everyone from the enthusiastic beginner to the seasoned pro. Featuring an introduction by Pierre Omidyar, eBay's founder and chairman, and packed with tips and stories from "eBaysians" all over the country, The Official eBaytrade; Guide is the only authorized book that shows you how to* BUY SMART -- unraveling the mystery of value, bidding to win, and learning how to spot the really good stuff* BE A SAVVY SELLER -- from writing the perfect item listing to collecting payments from your happy customers* LEARN FROM THE EXPERTS -- top eBaysians, Ambassadors, Power Sellers, and eBay employees lend advice and share secrets for success* FIND THE GREAT STUFF -- how to work garage sales, flea markets, tag sales, estate sales, and even the other kind of auctionPacked with invaluable resources, information, and practical tips, The Official eBaytrade; Guide also features entertaining stories about the millions of people who make up the eBay community. It's your must-have companion for mastering the art of buying and selling an astounding range of collectibles and items, from the practical to the whimsical.

About the AuthorLaura Fisher Kaiser amp; Michael Kaiser are collectors, writers, and longtime eBaysians. Laura is Deputy Editor at This Old House magazine. For fifteen years, Michael was an executive at a nonprofit organization. A former art glass dealer, he is now a consultant and writer. The Kaisers live in Manhattan.Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.Introductionby Pierre Omidyar, Founder and Chairman of eBay Inc.First, a confession: I'm not a real collector. But I like to consider myself a collector by proxy -- someone who's interested in other people's collections. As many people know, my wife, Pam, collects Pez dispensers, and it's become part of the eBay legend that I invented the Web site just so she could pursue this hobby. The truth is, long before I clued in to her Pezmania, I had been thinking about how to create an efficient marketplace -- a level playing field, where everyone had access to the same information and could compete on the same terms as anyone else. As a software engineer, I worked for a couple of Silicon Valley companies, and I had even cofounded an early e-commerce site. This got me thinking that maybe the Internet was the place to create such an efficient market. Not just a site where big corporations sold stuff to consumers and bombarded them with ads, but rather one where people "traded" with each other. I thought, if you could bring enough people together and let them pay whatever they thought something was worth (in other words, have them bid in an auction format), real values could be realized and it could ultimately be a fairer system -- a win-win for buyers and sellers.Around the same time, Pam (who was then my fianceacut;e) mentioned that she wished she could find other Pez collectors with whom she could buy and sell dispensers so she could complete her collection. It occurred to me that the Internet might again be the perfect medium for accomplishing this. After all, the Net was becoming pervasive -- businesses and households were getting hooked up at an amazing rate. With such a critical mass, you'd be bound to have a few Pez purveyors -- and who knows what else? Best of all, the Net was interactive: I could imagine people not only communicating with each other one on one around a transaction, but also sharing information about their passion.However, when eBay's AuctionWeb (the name was later shortened) launched on Labor Day, 1995, I never dreamed that the site would become the leading Internet destination for people buying and selling just about anything. It all seems more of a happy accident than a grand business design -- like that old commercial where the guy with the chocolate bar runs into the guy with the peanut butter and -- eureka! -- the peanut butter cup is born. Indeed, eBay.com is the perfect convergence of technology and great people. Person-to-person online trading in an auction format is a fascinating concept, but it merely provides an infrastructure for an even more fascinating sociological experiment. There have been millions of positive transactions on eBay, proving time after time that people are basically honest and trustworthy and eager to do a good job. Without the passion and goodwill of collectors and small entrepreneurs, eBay would no doubt have been just a blip at the end of the twentieth century.I have to admit that it wasn't until almost a year after the first auction that I really understood who our users were. My business partner Jeff Skoll, an analytical powerhouse, had finally talked me into having a focus group, which included people from all walks of life. One of them was a truck driver who said, "I don't use eBay that much -- I'm on it only two or three times a day. But my son is on all the time. He has packages coming and going constantly." Then the truck driver and everyone else in the group asked to take a break so they could go check their auctions. Wow! Not only were these

people dedicated, but I could see that eBay had become a part of their lives. Of course, I'd been well aware that we were on to something for some time. I launched eBay on the space my personal Internet service provider allocated to me as a member. After a few months, I was getting so much traffic they kicked me off the personal site. In February of '96, I had to start charging people. My initial goal was just to cover my rising costs of Internet service; I wasn't even thinking profit. People seemed happy to pay for the service, except I was so busy keeping the site going, I couldn't even get to the mail and open the checks that were piling up. That's when I realized my little hobby/experiment had taken on a life of its own. A couple months later, I had to buy my own server and hire a part-time employee to open the mail. We were no longer working out of my house, but this was still very much a start-up company. The three of us worked out of one room and Jeff kept a suit at the office "just in case" he had to meet with some business bigwig. Neither of us quit our other jobs until August of that year. By the time Meg Whitman joined the company in early '98 as our CEO, we realized that eBay was a collector phenomenon. But, of course, the collectors already knew that -- and they guided us. Their fingerprints are all over the site, from policies and categories to chat rooms to the new interface introduced in 1999. We listen to all user suggestions and, as we add and improve our services, we will continue to do so. eBay is today what our members have built and will be tomorrow what they want it to be. I always tell our members "if you don't like something on eBay, change it." Whether you're a collector or dealer or both, the worst thing you can be is apathetic or disaffected. One of the most unexpected and gratifying aspects of eBay is the impact it's had on people's lives. eBay has given many people a way to achieve success on their own terms, whether that means becoming a self-sufficient businessperson, finding all the lost toys from one's childhood, or simply finding a bunch of like-minded souls. eBay's strength depends on our members' ability to connect with other members of this new global trading community. That's what this book is all about. The Official eBaytrade; Guide is the only book authorized by our company. In the following pages, you'll find clear explanations of the ins and outs of the site, tips for selling and bidding smartly, do's and don'ts of eBay etiquette, and strategies for building and maintaining a stellar collection. In short, our goal is to help you the user be as successful on eBay as possible. I may not be a collector, but I have found a few treasures on eBay, and sweated snipers in the process. In fact, I bought Pam's wedding gift -- a rare "Pez pal bride" Pez dispenser, of course -- on the site. (The staff then chipped in and bought the matching groom for her in another eBay sale.) Winning that for her was much more of a kick than I expected. And that's really the point of eBay -- to have fun. No matter how much the eBay universe expands, I hope we never lose that sense of wonder. Copyright copy; 1999 by eBay Inc. How to Use This Book Welcome to The Official eBaytrade; Guide to Buying, Selling, and Collecting Just About Anything. This book's mission is to help you be a successful eBay user. On a point-and-click basis, eBay isn't hard to master. But there's much more to eBay than words and images on a screen. The world's largest person-to-person, auction-format online trading site has spawned, for many people, a new way of life. Getting the most out of eBay means -- among other things -- mastering new technical skills, searching for amazing stuff (both online and beyond), understanding the economics of the collectibles market, becoming a savvy buyer, perhaps running your own small business, and interacting with other traders (and friends) who make up the eBay community all over the world. In this book, we attempt not only to demystify the technological intricacies and philosophical underpinnings of eBay, but also to help people get the most satisfaction out of building their collections, no matter what they collect. The book is organized into five sections: Part I: The Thrill of the Hunt gets you started on eBay with information on registering, finding great stuff, and bidding strategies. Part II: Parting Is Such Sweet Sorrow helps you sell your items on eBay, from writing good descriptions, posting images, and using HTML to thinking through the details of being in business on eBay. Part III: Making Contact covers what happens when the flush of bidding is over -- getting items shipped and dealing with problems. And just in case, you can find the help and support you need from eBay staff and your peers. Part IV: You Are What You Collect delves into the heart of collecting, including becoming an expert, sources of antiques and collectibles, and making buys in the field. Part V: Putting It All Together is about the care and feeding of your collection, from keeping track of your eBay activities to documenting your "babies" for their own good. The book follows a logical progression of its own, but each chapter is also designed to stand alone. This book contains the collected wisdom of many eBaysians, but if you can't find what you're looking for, let us know so that we may include it in a future edition. Success on eBay comes from sharing. Send your feedback and tips for eBay success to: ebayguide@ebay.com. Copyright copy; 1999 by eBay Inc.