

eBay HACKS

100 Industrial-Strength Tips & Tools



O'REILLY®

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HACK
#76

Obtaining Sales Records

Extract detailed accounting data from My eBay, or do it automatically with eBay's Selling Manager.

Sellers pay the bills at eBay. Fees are assessed for listings and upgrades (see “The Strategy of Listing Upgrades” [Hack #36]), and eBay gets a percentage of the final value of each successfully completed auction.

Any eBay user can check his or her account by going to My eBay → Accounts → Account Status. The fees are broken down individually and cross-referenced by item number. So to see exactly how much a particular auction cost you, just search for the item number, add up the corresponding amounts shown in the Debit column, and subtract any corresponding entries in the Credit column.

A more convenient approach is to use a spreadsheet to organize the data. First, go back and turn off Pagination and choose the appropriate date range. Click Submit and save the resulting page to an HTML file (File → Save As in your browser).



If you want to remove the images and search box from the page, open the HTML file in a text editor and do a few search-and-replace operations before importing it into Excel. Replace every occurrence of `<img` with `<ximg`, and every occurrence of `<input` with `<xinput`. Save the file when you're done.

Open the page in a web-capable spreadsheet like Microsoft Excel. Highlight all the rows above the table (about 30 rows), and remove them (Edit → Delete). Do the same for all cells below the table. Finally, sort the listing by item number. Select the entire sheet (Ctrl-A), go to Data → Sort, choose “Item” in the first box, and then click OK.

It's not pretty, but it does the job in less than two minutes, and it's free.

Step Up to Selling Manager

For a monthly fee, you can have access to eBay's Selling Manager tool. Among other things, Selling Manager keeps an archive of past sales for up to four months, allowing you to download a sales history in a more convenient CSV (comma-separated value) format than the spreadsheet hack discussed earlier. CSV files can be easily imported into any spreadsheet, database, or accounting program.

Selling Manager simply appears as a tab in My eBay, replacing the Selling tab discussed in “Keep Track of Items You’ve Sold” [Hack #65]. See Figure 7-5.



Figure 7-5. Selling Manager provides more robust sales records for an extra fee

You can subscribe to Selling Manager by going to pages.ebay.com/selling_manager. eBay offers a free 30-day trial, and is even kind enough to remind you a few days before the trial period ends. Selling Manager can also be used for more general-purpose auction management, as discussed in “Streamlining Communications” [Hack #74].



One of the drawbacks of Selling Manager is that it won’t migrate any of your past completed auctions to the new format; only currently running auctions and auctions that have ended *after* you upgrade will ever appear in Selling Manager. However, you can always click “Original My eBay Selling tab” to temporarily revert to the old interface to view older completed auctions.

Alternatives

If you prefer to do your accounting and reporting off-eBay, you can use Andale Reports (www.andale.com) or Auctiva eBud (www.auctiva.com), both of which offer some additional functionality at some additional cost.