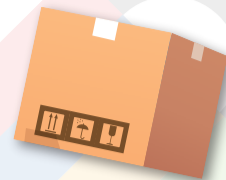


What Parents & Carers Need to Know About



EBAY



eBay is the world's biggest online auction platform: a digital emporium where you can buy practically anything, new or used. Although eBay has made huge strides with protecting buyers in recent years, there are still dangers to be mindful of: particularly when it comes to children using the site. Here's how to minimise the risks.

Shop by category

Search for anything

All Categories

Search

Advanced

It's not for Children



Although many items on the site – toys, video games, DVDs, etc – will appeal to them, it isn't intended for children. eBay's policy does state that "a person under 18 can use an adult's account with the permission of the account holder" – but note the next line: "the account holder is responsible for everything done with that account". So you could be liable for bids made on your account, which might result in unexpected bills or an account suspension. Think carefully before letting an under 18 loose on eBay.

17 People are watching your item

+£3.00

+£4.50

+£2.00



+£20.00

Counterfeit/Illegal Items



Despite tightening restrictions, eBay is still rife with counterfeit, unlicensed or illegal items. It's not uncommon, for example, to find cheap internet TV boxes for sale that promise access to premium sports and movie channels, often using illegal streams. Some listings are deliberately misleading. You might, for instance, find an Xbox box shown – but literally all they are selling is the box the console came in. However, a child might see an Xbox selling for £100 and make a bid, thinking they're getting a bargain.

Overspending



It's easy enough for adults to get drawn into eBay bidding wars – and find themselves paying more for an item than they can really afford. For children, who often aren't aware of the financial consequences of their actions, that temptation could be even stronger. Allowing children to bid on eBay auctions is fraught with risk.

Off-site Communication



Rogue eBay sellers may try and get buyers to contact them away from the site, to avoid paying eBay fees. Any transactions conducted off the site, however, don't offer the protection that you get on eBay itself (in terms of feedback, returns and refunds). Off-site trading can often involve swapping mobile phone numbers or email addresses, which poses obvious risks if a child is using the site.



Advice for Parents & Carers

Visit the Safety Centre

eBay's Safety Centre (pages.ebay.co.uk/safetycentre) publishes good advice on how to avoid scams. Pay particular attention to the guidance on fake 'second chance offer' emails, which often arrive when you've just missed out on an item. Again, children who desperately want a product are more susceptible to such tricks and could inadvertently infect the computer with malware or hand over personal details to fraudsters.

Use Two-Factor Sign-in

eBay has a security facility that requests confirmation from the eBay mobile app when you sign in. That way, even if your child (or someone else) knows your password, they won't get access to your account. Install the eBay app on your smartphone, then on the computer click the 'Hello, [your name]' link at the top of the screen. Select 'Account Settings', then 'Sign-In and Security'.

Adjust Content Filters

If you don't use eBay, you can block it using the filters provided by all leading internet providers. Instructions on how to implement these filters vary, but all will offer the facility to block certain sites to any user on the Wi-Fi network. These filters aren't foolproof, however: they won't stop access if your child visits eBay using 3G/4G mobile data on their phone.

Secure Your Account

Remove temptation and don't leave your signed-in account accessible on a family computer. Ideally, give your children separate accounts on the computer so you're not sharing the same web browser and apps. Alternatively, ensure you log out after an eBay session, so it's not possible for your child to make bids or sell items using your account. You're left logged in by default, so make sure you click on the 'Hello, [your name]' link in the top left of the screen and sign out.

Meet our Expert

Barry Collins has been a technology journalist and editor for more than 20 years, working for titles such as the *Sunday Times*, *Which?*, *PC Pro* and *Computeractive*. He's appeared regularly as a technology pundit on television and radio, including on BBC *Newsnight*, Radio 5 Live and ITV *News at Ten*. He has two children and has writes regularly about internet safety issues.

