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Your guide
to great finds
and great prices!

**A Reference
for the
Rest of Us!**[®]

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Chapter 12

Using Pictures and Strategies to Increase Your Profits

In This Chapter:

- Attaching pictures to your auction
- Playing the links (golf cleats optional)
- Finding out all About Me
- Spotting trends and sharpening your marketing savvy
- Acquiring inventory to sell for bigger money

You may be enjoying most of what eBay has to offer, and you're probably having some good buying adventures. If you're selling, you're experiencing the excitement of making money. But there's more. Welcome to eBay, the advanced class.

In this chapter we take you to the head of the class by sharing some insider tips on how to jazz up the selling power of your auctions with images and spiffy text. Successful eBay vendors know that pictures (also called images) really help sell items. We show you everything you need to know in order to create images and give you advice on linking them to your auctions so buyers around the world can take a gander at them. Look no further if you want to know more about spotting trends and acquiring products to sell on eBay.

Using Images in Your Auctions

Would you buy an item you couldn't see? Most people wouldn't, especially if they're interested in purchasing collectible items that they want to display. Without a picture, you can't tell whether a seller's idea of "good quality" is anything like yours.

Welcome to the cyberworld of *imaging*, where pictures aren't called pictures, but *images*. ("Excuse me, could you pass the Grey Poupon while I examine my images?") Mass-market digital technology — including cameras and scanners is

hardly a decade old but has revolutionized the way we capture, process, and view images. With a digital camera or a scanner, you can manipulate your images — crop, color-correct, and add special effects — so they grab viewers by the lapels. Even cooler: When you're happy with your creation, you can add it to your eBay auction.

Sellers, take heed, and read these other reasons why you should use well-made digital images in your auction pages:

- ✔ If you don't have a picture, potential bidders may wonder whether you're deliberately hiding the item from view because you know something's wrong with it. (Paranoid? Maybe. Practical? You bet.)
- ✔ Fickle bidders don't even bother reading an item description if they can't see the item. (Maybe they were traumatized in English class.)
- ✔ Everyone's doing it. We hate to put the additional burden of peer pressure on you, but digital images are the norm on eBay, so if you're not using them, you're not reaching the widest possible number of people who would bid on your item if only they could see it. From that point of view, you're not doing the most you can to serve your potential customers' needs. (Hey, fads are *driven* by conformity. Might as well use them to your advantage.)

So which is better for capturing images — digital cameras or digital scanners? As for all gadgets, here's the classic answer: It depends. For our money, beating a digital camera is hard to do. But before you go snag one, decide what kind of investment (and how big) you plan to make in your eBay auctions. If you're already comfortable with 35mm camera equipment, don't scrap it — scan! The scoop on both these alternatives is coming right up.



Whether you buy new or used digital equipment on eBay, make sure it comes with a warranty. If you *don't* get a warranty, Murphy's Law practically ensures that your digital equipment will break the second time you use it.

Choosing a digital camera

If price isn't a factor, buy the highest-quality digital camera you can afford, especially if you plan to use images with a lot of your eBay auctions, and the items you plan to sell vary in size and shape.

Both Olympus and Epson make good basic cameras, starting at around \$500 (we told you they can be pricey). Middle-of-the-road digital cameras sell for between \$150 and \$250. Compare prices at computer stores and in catalogs.

Another great place to buy digital cameras is (surprise!) eBay. Just do a search of some popular manufacturers like Olympus, Fujifilm, Sony, and Nikon, and you will find pages of listings — both new and used digital cameras — that you can bid on and (if you win) buy.

Look for the following features:

- ✓ **Resolution:** Look for a camera that has a resolution of at least 640 x 480 *pixels*. A pixel is a tiny dot of information that when grouped together with other pixels forms an image. The more pixels an image has, the clearer and sharper the image is — the more memory the image scarfs up, the slower it shows up on-screen. A 640 x 480-pixel resolution may seem paltry next to the 1.5-million-pixel punch of a high-end digital camera, but trust us: No one bidding on your auctions will nit-pick over the difference.
- ✓ **Storage type:** The instructions with your camera explain how to transfer images to your computer. (No instructions? Write the manufacturer.)
- ✓ **Extra features:** Make sure the camera is capable of taking close-up images; you need to be close to an item you photograph for an auction — from 3 inches to a foot away. A flash also comes in handy.

If you plan to sell small or detailed items that require extreme close-ups (such as stamps, currency, coins, or Tibetan beads), look for a digital camera that lets you change lenses. Many newer, higher-end digital cameras have optional lenses for special uses, just as traditional photographers have for 35mm cameras. They cost more, but if you need extreme close-ups to sell your items, this is the way to go.

Choosing a digital scanner

Like digital cameras, digital scanners create images electronically with pixels. Your computer stores and reads these pixels (with software supplied with the scanner) and turns them into an image that you can e-mail, print out, or send to your eBay auction.

If you plan to sell flat items like autographs, stamps, books, or documents — or if you need a good piece of business equipment that can double as a photocopier — then consider getting a digital scanner. You can pick one up, brand new, for a little over \$100; you can also find them on eBay.

Here's what you need to look for when you buy a scanner:

- ✓ **Resolution:** As with printers and photocopiers, the resolution of digital scanning equipment is measured in *dpi* (dots per inch). The more dpi, the greater the resolution.



Some scanners on the market today can provide resolutions as high as 12,800 dpi, which looks awesome when you print the image — but to dress up your eBay auctions, all you need is (are you ready?) 72 *dpi*! That's it. Your images will look great and won't take up a lot of storage space on your computer's hard drive. Basic scanners can scan images up to 1,200 dpi, so even they are more powerful than you need for your eBay images.

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