

Re: Strategies for Buying Test Equipment off Ebay

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- *From:* Paul Mathews <opto@xxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Fri, 26 Oct 2007 18:52:14 -0700
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On Oct 26, 6:33 pm, D from BC <myrealaddr...@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Sat, 27 Oct 2007 01:19:28 +0100, "john jardine"

<john.jard...@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

"D from BC" <myrealaddr...@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
news:c1g4i39i1opa3jtkrtmm64c7hv8rgrtn8r@xxxxxxxxxxx

Here's a few observations I've been thinking about when
buying test
equipment off Ebay..

1) Not only am I bidding against people that actually want to
use the
test equipment but I'm also bidding against used equipment
resellers
buying test equipment to resell (on Ebay)!!??
Lets say somebody might not care about the money selling
item X.. The
seller creates a starting bid of \$100.00..Then a used
equipment buyer
blows away everybody with a \$1000.00 bid and then sells it
back on
ebay parked forever at \$1500.00 until a sucker comes along!!

2) Bidding soon may attract other buyers...Bidding late and
there's a
risk of losing the bid.

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3) I suspect UPS still has the highest brokerage rates. Using the USPS is cheaper.

4) I seem to dodge used equipment resellers. They know their sh*t and can appraise for optimum profit. They may even fish with ridiculous prices on depreciated and used items. It's a profit game. You get what you pay for.

5) I suspect the best prices are from those that don't care too much about money and would just like a new home for they're cherished oscilloscope. Unlike the sharks from the used equipment shops.

6) Not to bash the used equipment shops too much, they are calibrating and testing. They also have the capability to scrap units for parts to restore other units. Ironically, their prices are useful to roughly guess at the savings you get by buying from somebody else.

7) I suspect better prices are from those that are selling due to upgrading, moving, company closure, gave up electronics, demo units and let's not forget the possibility of stolen goods.

8) On occasion, some sellers (junk buyers) haven't a clue what they have and just sell at a stupid price.. That's the best. Especially when wise used test equipment buyers are too fat with mountains of

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equipment and can't force the bid high.

Comments? Additions? Arguments? Observations?
Experiences?

D from BC

I've bought shedloads of stuff off Ebay, both on auction or "Buy it now". Be it England, Europe, US, Hong Kong, China, wherever, no problem. Best thing out since sliced bread.

An hour ago, "won" 33 years worth of issues of the old "Electronic Engineering" magazine. Seems I was the only bidder :). There's no way on earth I could have come across such nerdy items as these, by searching local newspaper ads etc.

My own personal thoughts are ...

Equipment resellers are there to run a business. They make a profit or die. Hence their prices will/must always be comparatively exorbitant. Stay clear of them. Play the waiting game. Buy, only if you've a customer willing to pay for that item as part of your work.

It's obvious who the resellers are, as apart from the high initial bid price, or silly "buy it now" price, the liability issues mean their item descriptions will be minimal yet correct, with a lot of body text dealing with conditions of sale. One UK company has now put the same piece of stupidly priced electronic junk through Ebay at least 50 times. A sane individual would have binned it 12 months ago. From a business POV it can be

worth it, if they catch the unique someone looking for that exact item. Then that someone is happy and satisfied.

Don't worry too much about bidding against equipment resellers. They just cannot profitably afford to pay the prices you as an individual are liable to bid up to. You know you paid a worthwhile price, the reseller shakes his/her head knowing they cannot compete, as they could not add anywhere near a useable profit margin, which must be >>>100% to allow for the risk and other factors

If you've the skills, then buy the stuff plainly offered as 'broken' 'won't power up' or 'needs repair'. Only do this after you've located the availability of a circuit diagram (schematic!). 99.9% of potential bidders avoid these items like the plague and you'll only be up against a couple of

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other hardened enthusiasts. You'll get it for a song, and a couple of hours work (usually :) has it running again.

Do NOT under any circumstances bid for newish items that say "fails self test".

Unsure of a good price to bid?, then always look over the 'completed items' listings. Items such a particular 'scope model will turn up regularly, (moreso in the states with it's vastly increased market size). There can be say a 5:1 ratio on final prices but it's a good marker.

There's no 'ideal seller', as good stuff at a good price can come from anywhere. If anything and afearred of the unknown, then the guy selling his personal kit is a good starter. He'll describe it with great accuracy, explain why it's for sale and how well he's looked after it. If he can cause you to shed a tear for him then all's the better. And of course, a lot of other bidders will now jump in and the final price will be top whack. (that's how to auction stuff!)

Be leery over the 'don't understand what it is', or 'lights come on when plugged in' type descriptions. Most are genuine, some are BS descriptions of junk. Look at their other stuff for sale, see if it's consistent.

Ignore the "classic/vintage/collectable" tags, They're worthless. The person is clueless and selling passed on junk. Bid accordingly.

Work out the maximum price you want to pay. Don't bid, just regard the goods as being on display. It's essential you keep a daily eye on the item's 'view counter'. The rate of change of this shows the level of interest and what you will finally be up against. Any bid placed early on unfortunately shows that someone values the item. Sheep instinct then takes over with more and more bidders turning up.

The problem with early bids is that people have time to think and mull over how much they –really really– want the kit.

Assuming no or low bids, then two thirds of the way through the sale put a bid in of half your final maximum. The idea is to scare off the casual bidders looking for a bargain. They'll find they are constantly "outbid" by Ebay as they ratchet up their own bids in minor increments and then lose interest. More persistent, hardy individuals will ratchet up to a 'highest

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bid' position and then feel smug. Ignore these, they must be dealt with at the end-of-days.

Ensure the radio controlled clock has a good battery. Log into Ebay and the item. During the last couple of minutes refresh the page regularly. Watch for the late bids coming in. These are from those who have lost their nerve and are now exposed. Now watch the bidding list to see if anyone's put in a big bid at some point such that it is knocking the others down.

During the last 60 seconds you now are up against machine software bids 'sniping' and the seasoned players. At T-20 seconds put your maximum bid in.

It may not be enough. If you want, you have just enough time left to try the extra 10% you knew the item was –really really– worth.

If you lose, then no problem. Someone was determined to buy the item at a price you aren't prepared to pay.

Late breaking news ...

Goody!. A HP 8640B has just turned up. I've been looking for summat like this for a month. Very low phase noise synth. Even better, it needs "repair" and even better I've already a circuit.

The pic' is damned poor but the style and quantity of stick-on labels are suggesting ex UK military, which is a good sign that it's had a decent service history and may be complete internally.

Tally Ho!.

A very good read.. Its new stuff to me..
Ebay seemed so simple at first..but surprise!
The Art of Ebay :)

Thanks.

D from BC– Hide quoted text –

– Show quoted text –

I've had very good luck buying test gear on ebay. Best score: brand new TDS5034B with deep memory option for \$4600 from seller NewarkInOne. ALWAYS snipe. The main problems I've had were with inadequate packaging for shipment. Offer to pay more, including

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overnight or 2-day shipping: packages are handled more gently and fewer times.

Be prepared to do some contact cleaning on older gear. Output stages on signal and pulse generators are sometimes burned out. Demand a partial refund from the seller....often successful. However, such problems are usually easy to troubleshoot and to repair.

Paul Mathews