





## **AuctionBytes Blog**

Covering auctions, collectibles and marketplace selling.



The AuctionBytes Blog has been giving a voice to online merchants since its launch in 2005. Named one of the world's top 30 blogs in 2008 by "Blogging Heroes." Weigh in with your thoughts on the joys and pitfalls of selling online.

Sat Nov 21 2009 16:34:13

#### Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed

By: Ina Steiner

Sponsored Link

eBay experienced search problems on Saturday morning, and now there appears to be a complete search outage. At 11:17 am PST, eBay posted an announcement stating it was experiencing "some issues with a delay in search being displayed," and by noon, users began posting that they could not search at all on the website.

When searching, shoppers either come up with an error message (see graphic), or a search results page with 0 items, but the ad listings showed up.

There are several postings on Twitter from 8 and 9 hours ago complaining about eBay search, including this one from 9 hours ago: "eBay search engine is having issues this am."

**Update**: eBay posted a new message on its Announcement Board at 1:37PM PST:

Due to errors in some of our backend systems, members may be seeing different errors in Search. This could be that "We were unable to run the search results you entered. Please try again in a few minutes" or a blank page, or simply the browser being unable to display the page.

This is also affecting the ability to access eBay Stores through search directly, and sometimes from the store URL.

Please note that we are working as quickly as possible to get this resolved. Thank you for your patience as we continue to work to resolve this.

David reports that browse is not working either.

**Update**: 4:47 EST: I can get to the Daily Deals on the U.S. site.

I just tried searching UK site, same problem, no search! Ouch, international problem!

**Update**: 4:55 EST: I have inquiry in to eBay about what's going on and whether they will be issuing credits. Will update if/when I hear back.

**eBay Outage Policy** is found here, and only applies to listing scheduled to end during the outage or in the hour after the end of the outage. In the event of a hard outage of two hours or more, eBay automatically extends listings for 24 hours.

Given that it's impossible to find listings, I'd consider this a hard outage!

**UPDATE:** 6:12 pm EST - eBay replaced its previous Systems Announcement posts with one at 2:59 pm PST that suggests a workaround:

If you use the Advanced Search option at the top of the page, and type in your search query and click the title and description box and then run the search, the results for the title and description search will be returned. Likewise, if you receive a 0 results page for title search and choose the title and description box and rerun the search, you'll see the appropriate results.

Does eBay think buyers are going to first of all, find this announcement, and second of all, follow these convoluted instructions? Surely eBay is not paving the way to get out of calling it an outage?

**Update**: 11 pm EST: eBay says it found the problem and that things will be fully functional tomorrow (Sunday). Will frustrated buyers return? What about sellers who lost money on this outage?

John Pluhowski sent me eBay's statement on the search outage:

eBay expects full search functionality to be restored to eBay.com on Sunday after a technical issue today resulted in searches returning either limited or no results throughout the day today. The identified technical issue has been fixed and is being implemented across the site.

The unanticipated technical issue resulted from a surge in live listings as sellers ramp up for the holiday season. eBay currently has more than 200 million live listings, 33 percent more than at this time a year ago. The company said the technical issue, once identified, was easily fixed.

Interesting - apparently eBay can't handle a 33 percent increase in listings this month compared to last year. (Message to world: we're not scalable!?) It would appear to me that Diamond PowerSellers and LMS ("Operation Catalog" sellers) are to blame for today's search outage. See new AuctionBytes Newsflash article for details.

**Update** 11:20 pm EST: eBay spokesperson John Pluhowski said eBay will be issuing refunds to sellers, no details provided as of yet.

**Update**: 11/22/09 7:45 am EST: eBay posted another announcement to the Systems Announcement Board on 11/21/09 at 10:55 pm PST in which it confirmed eBay would be crediting fees and would be compensating sellers appropriately.

### Full search functionality expected to be restored to eBay.com on Sunday, Nov. 22 - Lorrie Norrington, President, eBay

We are really sorry about the technical issue that resulted in searches returning either limited or no results throughout the day on Saturday, Nov. 21. We know this search issue may have disrupted your business. Our No. 1 priority has been to identify and fix the issue as quickly as possible, and restore full search functionality. Our teams are working around the clock to do that. Search functionality is returning to eBay.com throughout Saturday evening, PST, and we expect full search functionality to be restored Sunday.

We know this is a really busy time for sellers as you are ramping up your businesses for the holiday season, and we regret any potential impact that this technical issue may have had. Please accept our sincere thanks for your patience as we work around the clock on your behalf to restore search functionality. We will continue to keep you informed of site performance. Our immediate priority is to resolve this issue. Once that is achieved, rest assured that we will assess the economic impact of this issue and will be compensating sellers appropriately. In the meantime, we will be issuing full fee credits for affected listings.

**Update**: 11/22/09 5:30 pm EST: eBay posted to the General Announcement Board about Saturday's search outage. eBay's Lorrie Norrington wrote on Sunday at 2:04 pm PST that "critical search functionality" was restored overnight on Saturday, while eBay kept some "secondary search features" temporarily offline. "We expect to bring these features online today as part of a phased approach to restore full functionality."

She apologized and wrote, "We will now be assessing the economic impact of this issue and will be compensating sellers appropriately. In the meantime, we will be issuing full fee credits automatically for affected listings."

AuctionBytes continues to report on the outage and its aftermath. We are conducting a survey to determine how sellers were impacted by the search outage. Please take a few moments to complete the survey, we'll publish the results in AuctionBytes.

**Update**: November 23 at 7:45 am EST: eBay posted on the Systems Announcement board on Sunday evening at 7:53 pm PST the following message:

#### Updated: Issues with Search results and eBay Stores - Resolved

We are pleased to report that we have restored the secondary search features of having Store Inventory Format appear in the main search results and refining certain item specifies, such as color or clothing size. All key search functionality is now fully restored. We appreciate your patience and understanding during this process.

However, eBay sellers are now looking for answers for what to do in the aftermath of the search outage. Auction sellers are looking for answers on what they should do about transactions that ended on Saturday at artificially low prices. If they cancel transactions affected by the outage, do they risk receiving negative feedback from buyers? We have a question in to eBay on this (and about why they had not extended auction listings on Saturday).

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#### **Readers Comments**

Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed
by: ePowerSeller
Sat Nov 21 16:44:31 2009
ARE YOU FREAKIN' SERIOUS?!?! The site is totally useless! Can't search, can't browse. Thank you eBay - you've managed to screw it up again!!!

Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed
by: Pat
Sat Nov 21 16:45:53 2009
This is going to be interesting to see if eBay will be giving refunds to sellers. What are we paying fees for again?

	Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed
, 5	

by: Kick Watson		
Sat Nov 21 16:48:12 2009		
You'll be happy to know that you can still get to the Daily Deals page.		
Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed		
by: Mr Sarcastic		
Sat Nov 21 16:52:39 2009		
Thanks Rick. Really Useful!		
Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed		
by: Nock		
Sat Nov 21 16:52:51 2009		
How can a company of this magnitude have a total break down in its website AND then take over 12 hours (so far!) to fix the problem. These amateurs don't deserve the success and wealth it has brought them. Shame there is no serious competitor out there because I for one would be using them from now on.		
Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed		
by: sdfs		
Sat Nov 21 16:52:58 2009		
what about reimbursing sellers for major losses???		
Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed		
by: John		
Sat Nov 21 16:56:33 2009		
Ebay makes Billions in profits and doesn't have back-up system to keep the site from becoming useless? Great time for this to happenSat before ThanksgivingI was planning on getting most of my Christmas shopping done today. Well, Target.com and Walmart.com are working.		
Major Soarch Outage Leaves of av Shenners Empty Handed		
Sat Nov 21 16:58:14 2009		
"by: sdfs Sat Nov 21 16:52:58 2009 what about reimbursing sellers for major losses???" When did ebay start caring about sellers again?		
within the coay start caring about sellers again:		

Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed
by: Sue Battle
Sat Nov 21 16:58:21 2009
Amazon search is working just fine, btw
Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed
by: sdfs
Sat Nov 21 17:01:38 2009
they should cancel all auctions and allow sellers to relist free- can you say class action
Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed
by: vancamp
Sat Nov 21 17:02:45 2009
Ebay just removed my comment on their forum for using the word "crap" - shouldn't those same idiots be helping to fix their search OUTAGE? I just sold all of my ebay stock - hope there is something left to their stock to sell by Monday. I am keeping the stupid e-mail from the freedom of speech police at ebay, to sell on ioffer.com - it will possibly be dated the day eBay falls too far.
Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed
by: infocomlabs
Sat Nov 21 17:06:13 2009
This started after eBay came up from scheduled maintenance Friday. Looks like they tried fixing it on the fly. And now
This is unbelievable. No fall back. No WAR ROOM. It is time for a number of employees to go, starting at the top.
We're buying more eBay stock and will certainly be at the next meeting. Time for a stockholder revolt.
Angry in Arizona
Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed
by: seller
Sat Nov 21 17:09:16 2009
leave shoppers empty handed? what about us sellers who list 99 cent no reserve

# Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed by: toscaredtosay Sat Nov 21 17:12:36 2009

I am sure eBay is losing money by the second right now.

Folks, this is a terrorist attack. They have been probing ebay and other financial sites hard. Last week an unannounced attack happened on the US foriegn currency exchange board. BOA has lost over \$10,000,000 to attacks this year. get used to it

# Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed by: Chester Sat Nov 21 17:15:02 2009

Outages happen but not that often. If you have fundamental appreciation of IT systems, you should already know this.

Also, check the Service Level Agreement - when you sign up for an account, you agree that outages are an inevitability and can be caused by a wide array of issues.

Rest assured that it is in the best interest of eBay to have their site return to its normal, fully functional state in the earliest possible instance.

In the meantime, just be patient! Read a book or something.

#### Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed

by: vancamp

Sat Nov 21 17:15:39 2009

Infocomlabs, you are buying more ebay stock? Becasue it will be zero on Monday's close - buy low?

Seller, my heart goes out to you - YOU are what made ebay EBay, doubt they will have much empathy for you - I do.

#### Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed

by: Fruity

Sat Nov 21 17:15:58 2009

Hi Everybody, I'm podcasting in 19 minutes about the outage. If you are experiencing problems and want to demand some refunds then call in! WE TOLD THEM NOT TO MESS WITH ANYTHING THIS CLOSE TO THE HOLIDAY SEASON

#### Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed

by: KaliMarcum

Sat Nov 21 17:17:43 2009

And to think that all those sellers that just had auctions end for low starting bids or next to nothing are obligated to follow through with the sale. (((shaking head)))

Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed				
Sat Nov 21 17:19:02 2009				

Shame on you, eBay. We make our living on ebay and we rely in LARGE part on the mid-November to mid-December rush. An outage like this kills our bottom line now and kills eBay's reputation in the future. Brutal!

Major Search Outage Leaves eBay Shoppers Empty-Handed
by: me
Sat Nov 21 17:19:40 2009
Ebay should have been ready for major holiday shoppers. I bet it was just too many shoppers looking and crashed the system. Poor planning

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#### **Ecommerce EKG**

ebay	Not able to update contact info on seller account.
ebay	I've been noticing that items on eBay do not end when they

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