

# ACPCUG

August 2001

## From The DealsGuy by Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group E-mail Address Change

I'm changing my email address from [dealsguy@mindspring.com] to [dealsguy@dealsguy.com]. The old address will work for a while, but with spam increasing each day, and now some of it porn, I want to change it. I'll shut down the old address when the traffic slows to just spam. Also, if I want to change to another ISP, it's much easier. Thanks for your help.

### What Kind-A-Deal Is This?

I assume most of you are aware that when you purchase software, you don't own it, but instead you own a perpetual license to use it. Years from now, if you're still using it, its OK. Well, things are a-changin'.

Probably because of sagging sales, Microsoft will try to discourage the sale of perpetual licensing to customers with 250 PCs beginning October 1, 2001. Instead, businesses may purchase a subscription license for three years, and are "encouraged" to do it before. A MS rep I talked to thought it would only be on business versions and would not trickle down to

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## Trash to Cash - Online

By Donna Barnes-Roberts,  
Pasadena IBM Users Group

### *Here's how to turn your excess stuff into greenbacks*

Ready to get rid of that unsightly IMSAI computer you use for a foot rest? How about that pot that says Roseville on the bottom, the one you can't stand? Well, with a few keystrokes, you can make someone else happy, unclutter your closet, and stuff a few bucks into your pocket.

How? With the Internet. It's not a multilevel marketing scheme and definitely not illegal. It's called EBAY. You simply list your item on their auction site, let people bid on it, and send it after the high bidder pays for it.

I have sold everything from machine tool brochures, WW-II throat microphones, dishes, dress patterns, slide rules, broken dolls, stereo equipment. The guideline is-if you can ship it, you can probably sell it. In fact, I've seen cars listed and even heard of houses listed, so I'm sure you can sell just about anything of value on ebay. The only however? Not everything is worth offering on ebay.

If you are unsure whether or not your treasure is really trash, just search ebay's completed auctions for similar items that have been offered in the last month. If it was offered for \$2.00 and nobody bid on it, figure it really is trash and not treasure. And note that heavy stuff is not usually a good idea for ebay. Remember that you will have to package this and convince the post office to carry it someplace else. They do have limits.

To become an ebay tycoon, all you need is an Internet account, a computer, and a way of uploading pictures of your stuff to the Internet. (Pictures are optional but highly recommended.) When your item sells, you just e-mail the buyer

August 6, 2001

Taylor Memorial Library

Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio

6 pm - **RamArama** 7:30 **Q&A**  
and **Bring Your Computer for**  
**Memory Checking (monitors,**  
**mice & keyboards provided)**

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# The Deals Guy

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personal copies for some time, but you should start asking when you purchase software after Oct. 1, 2001 anyway. If I already had a subscription license, I'd no longer be able to write this column in my present software unless I upgraded because I still use MS Office 97 and it would have shut down.

Another possible scenario: What if it was the third year for a business using subscription software during an economic downturn. A business might be hard pressed financially to upgrade their license. Nevertheless, either upgrade or their software shuts down, and they agreed to it when they read the EULA during installation (you do read the EULA when you install, don't you - do pigs fly?) Talk about being between a rock and a hard place -- that could be the straw that broke that camel's back. According to one article, some managers say subscriptions are OK, but more don't want it. I personally want no part of that plan if it comes to personal packages, even though software is somewhat outdated in three years. There are some columns on ZDNet about all this.

There is also a movement to have users lease their software by the hour, using it via software provided by an Application Service Provider (it's not even on your machine). That is "supposed" to prevent software pirating and provide cheaper applications. Not my bag either. However, with consumer cooperation these new plans will become prevalent. Without consumer cooperation, they will not fly - right?

On the other hand, I hear a copy of the new MS Office XP can be installed on your desktop and one portable. I doubt that screwing a handle on top of another desktop will qualify it as portable. They better not be networked either.

## **Distribution Update**

My thanks to Mike Alcom, editor for Connecticut Personal Computer Users Group, and Michael Hayes, editor for Columbus Baltimore User Group, who said they sometimes use my column and asked to be listed on my distribution page. Also to Bonnie Rorabough, editor for NOVACOM User Group in Fairfax, Va., and Steve Bass, editor for Pasadena IBM Users Group, who asked to start getting the column. Most editors are familiar with Steve Bass since he works with

the APCUG Editorial Committee and writes many good articles.

Welcome to all the new readers.

It's been a rough month for the DealsGuy. Several vendors (leads from Comdex) did not return either my e-mail or phone calls, and two are in financial trouble.

## **Still Good**

The Mouse Bungee deal is still good this month (I love mine), order at [<http://www.mousebungee.com>]. Also the Quick Drive by H45 Technologies.

Call 1-800-373-8181. Now, let's see what we have:

## **Magazine Update From Herb Goodman**

Herb notified editors who regularly print his discount magazine subscription service that Windows Magazine, Windows Sources and Home Office Computing have all ceased publication. However, the rest of his magazine discount subscription list still has the same prices: Computer Gaming World - \$14.95, Computer Shopper - \$17.97, Dr. Dobbs Journal - \$15.95, Family PC - \$8.95, Mac Home Journal - \$15.97, Mac World - \$12.95, Maximum PC - \$8.97, Microsoft System Journal - \$21.95, Mobile Computing - \$9.95, PC Magazine - \$25.97, PC World - \$14.95, Publish - \$17.95, Smart Business (PC Computing) - \$11.50, Wired - \$13.97 and Yahoo! Internet Life - \$13.95.

Prices are for new one-year subscriptions and renewals. (E-mail him for longer-term prices.) Check, cash or Money Order must accompany all orders. Make payable to Herb Goodman, and mail to: Herb Goodman, 8295 Sunlake Drive, Boca Raton, FL 33496 e-mail: [[hgoodman@prodigy.net](mailto:hgoodman@prodigy.net)], Telephone: 561-488-4465

Please allow 10 to 12 weeks for your magazines to start. For renewals you must supply an address label from your present subscription to insure the correct start of your renewal. As an extra service, Herb will mail a renewal notice about four months prior to their expiration date.

## **Expensive Software That's "Almost" Free**

Clark Bird of Alamo PC Organization alerted me to a special for their group that led to this deal. If you check [<http://www.G7PS.com>] and go to the upper left, then click on "View Cart," you will be guided to an array of software packages just for the cost of S&H. Is that a deal, or is that a deal? Some of these packages sold for well over a hundred bucks. You will see nothing in your cart, but you should scroll to the bottom for specials.

Read the instructions, and be sure to click where it says, "Click Here." The free ones that I saw are: Express Forms 2000, Fortune Relationship

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Manager, DataScan Business Card Scanning Software, VersaClips and TransForm Suite Personal. I didn't see the descriptions so I'll leave that up to you.

This company also offers products for printing your own checks, even if you have a laser printer, but that's not part of this deal. Perhaps in the future. However, if you need something like that now, check further with them. The above closeouts are in limited supply so act fast. **This Just In**

I believe Bill Lindsay, Southeastern Regional Sales Manager, Wacom Technology sent this to all user groups, but I will repeat the message for my readers. It follows: " In an effort to recognize select user groups and professional associations, Wacom would like to extend some special pricing considerations to your organization. For a very limited time, you can obtain one of the following graphic tablets for as much as 50% off the suggested retail price! The Intelligent Graphics Tablet System:

"Intuos 6x8 (USB) Special Price: \$199.67 (SRP - \$383.99)

Intuos 9x12 (USB or Serial) Special Price: \$299.62 (SRP - \$509.99)

Intuos 12x12(USB or Serial) Special Price: \$299.62 (SRP - \$509.99)

Intuos 12x18(USB or Serial) Special Price: \$399.37 (SRP - \$819.99)

For product information, check out [<http://www.wacom.com/productinfo/intuos.cfm>].

"This is an exclusive offer that Wacom is making to select associations, organizations and user groups. To maintain this exclusivity, if your association would like Wacom to maintain a list of your members, we will reference it when someone calls in to make a purchase. If not, we will simply request that the caller give us their name, organization and Source Code (JUNEMEMBER1) to ensure that the offer has in fact been extended to your group. Call 1-800-922-6613 to order." (Note) Briefly, I think this is

a pressure sensitive tablet for graphic artists or Web graphic developers. It can have multiple pens and offers 2450 dpi. Can also be used for 3D graphics. This offer expires June 30,2001, but try anyway if it's within a few days.

That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click [[dealsguy@dealsguy.com](mailto:dealsguy@dealsguy.com)]. Visit my Web site at <http://www.dealsguy.com>] for past columns. Also, I keep adding interesting articles (taken from user group newsletters) to my "Articles of Interest" page for viewing or downloading.



# Ebay, I Love It!

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with your address so he or she can send you your money, and send them the merchandise after the check clears. Most buyers are prompt and polite. Some are not. Kinda like life.

Once you decide to list an item with ebay, head to their site at [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com) and click on the sellers link. This page walks you through the process of listing your item. Ebay charges start at \$.25 to list each item, depending on how high you set the starting bid. They also charge a small percentage of the final selling price if it sells. You can also set a reserve, so that you don't have to sell the item until the bidding gets to a price that you set that is hidden from the bidders.

## **Need Some Stuff?**

After you have sold your stuff and have extra money (and some new found room in your home), how about buying someone else's good stuff they just listed on ebay?

Not surprisingly, most users get started on ebay as a buyer, and the depth of the offerings are truly outstanding. If you are looking for anything from the commonplace to the esoteric, you'll probably find it for sale on ebay. It is world's attic for sale, and there are always surprises.

Auctions usually take a week, so there is plenty of time to place your bid, and you can watch the bidding escalate as time passes. Usually there is a flurry of bidding just before the auction closes, and things sometimes get crazy at the end. Or ebay crashes. Kinda like life.

While ebay is not the only auction house on line, it is the most diverse. For instance, Butterfield and Butterfield has online auctions for fine art and antiques, and Egghead is there for computers and software. These sites actually sell and ship merchandise they own or have on consignment, so you know who your seller really is. For reliable merchandise and product guarantees, these can be a great idea, but for the young business of selling anything online, give me the rag-tag wild west of ebay anyway!

Artist Donna Barnes-Roberts has essays on art, examples of her paintings, links to art-related sites, art clubs in the Pasadena, area, and a little humor, at: [www.barnesroberts.com/art/](http://www.barnesroberts.com/art/). You can reach her at [donna@barnesroberts.com](mailto:donna@barnesroberts.com). §

# E-Bay? I Love It!

**By Becky White, Pasadena IBM Users Group**

I have been using ebay to sell our antiques for about a month now. And I LOVE IT!

With ebay, you are using them as a vehicle to sell or buy stuff, but the deals are worked out between the seller and the buyer directly. Ebay charges a very moderate listing fee for each item listed and a moderate percentage of the item sold, ONLY IF IT SELLS. If an item does not sell, you are only responsible for the listing fee, which is from \$0.25 to \$2.00, based on your starting value or your reserve price.

## **Did Your Item Sell Quickly?**

Ebay asks you to set a specified period of time for each item listed.

The choices are 3 days, 5 days, or 7 days. You may be able to ask for a few more days, but most people go with the 3, 5, or 7-day scenario. So, if you get any bids, items will sell as quickly as you choose.

## **Did it Sell for the Amount Asked?**

When listing an item, you (the seller) define the opening bid required, so that no one can bid below your requested opening price. In addition, there is an option to set a "reserve" price for each item, which sets a minimum bid that you are willing to accept. Unless an item is especially valuable, most people do not use the reserve option. For some reason, it turns people off!?

## **Do You Get Paid Right Away?**

Since ebay is only a conduit, the money changes hands directly between the seller and the buyer. When an auction closes, the buyer and seller have three days to Email each other. Email addresses are supplied by ebay. The seller tells the buyer how much shipping and insurance will be and what the total due is. In most transactions, the buyer pays shipping and insurance up front.

When the seller receives the check, then the item can be shipped, however, most sellers wait 10 days or so until the checks clear the bank. A seller can request specific types of payments, like only money orders (safe to ship next day) or visa or checks or COD or whatever works for the seller. The seller then packs and ships the item.

## **Any Hassles...Or was it Fun?**

I have had a blast selling and buying stuff this way! I have made many Email friends and even have an Email pal in England, because of some of the deals I have made. Many of the people are incredibly friendly and personable! All, so far, have been good about paying on time and pretty good about communicating through Email. A few times, I have had deal-

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ings with people who are not accustomed to using Email and they "forget" to check their mail. When they realize that they need to read their mail, then the money comes quickly.

Over all, I have LOVED every part of my ebay experience with the possible exception of having to pack the darn stuff and take it to the post office! Stan helps out in that area a lot.

Becky White is known as "whitebear" on ebay. \$

## Random Access Excerpts

### Bruce Preston, Moderator

Q. (askdacs) I have been using Windows 98 on my 700MHz Pentium w/128MB of RAM. Periodically I receive an error message noting that my memory resources have dropped to too low a level. This is detected by First Aid 97 software. It reports that GDI resources are below 20%, User resources are below 20%, System resources are below 20%, and Free Memory below 2%.

What levels should I set for triggers, and what should I do?

A. The consensus was to stop using First Aid 97--it has

problems, and it consumes the very resources that it is complaining about. If you want to check to see where things are, just use the System Monitor that comes within Windows 95, 98, Me, NT and 2K. We don't recommend running it all the time, but rather as a check tool.

Q. (askdacs) In Win 98, my mouse has a tendency to free up for about five or six seconds. This is usually a minor inconvenience, but if I am using a sound-editing program (CoolEdit) to record music to a CD from a DAT it drops the music. I have to start recording at the beginning again.

A. The first question was "Does he have a fast enough processor for conversion and burning?" We don't know. We will assume that you do. The next thing to check is to make sure that DMA (Direct Memory Access) is activated for the devices (hard disk and CDRW) involved. This means the devices need not bother the CPU for memory to device transfer. Lastly, it was recommended that you SCANDISK, then DEFRAG, then establish a very large fixed size swap file rather than the default dynamic swap file managed by Windows. The swap file size is controlled in Control Panel / System / Performance. Lastly, you might try slowing the write speed of the CDRW down from 16X

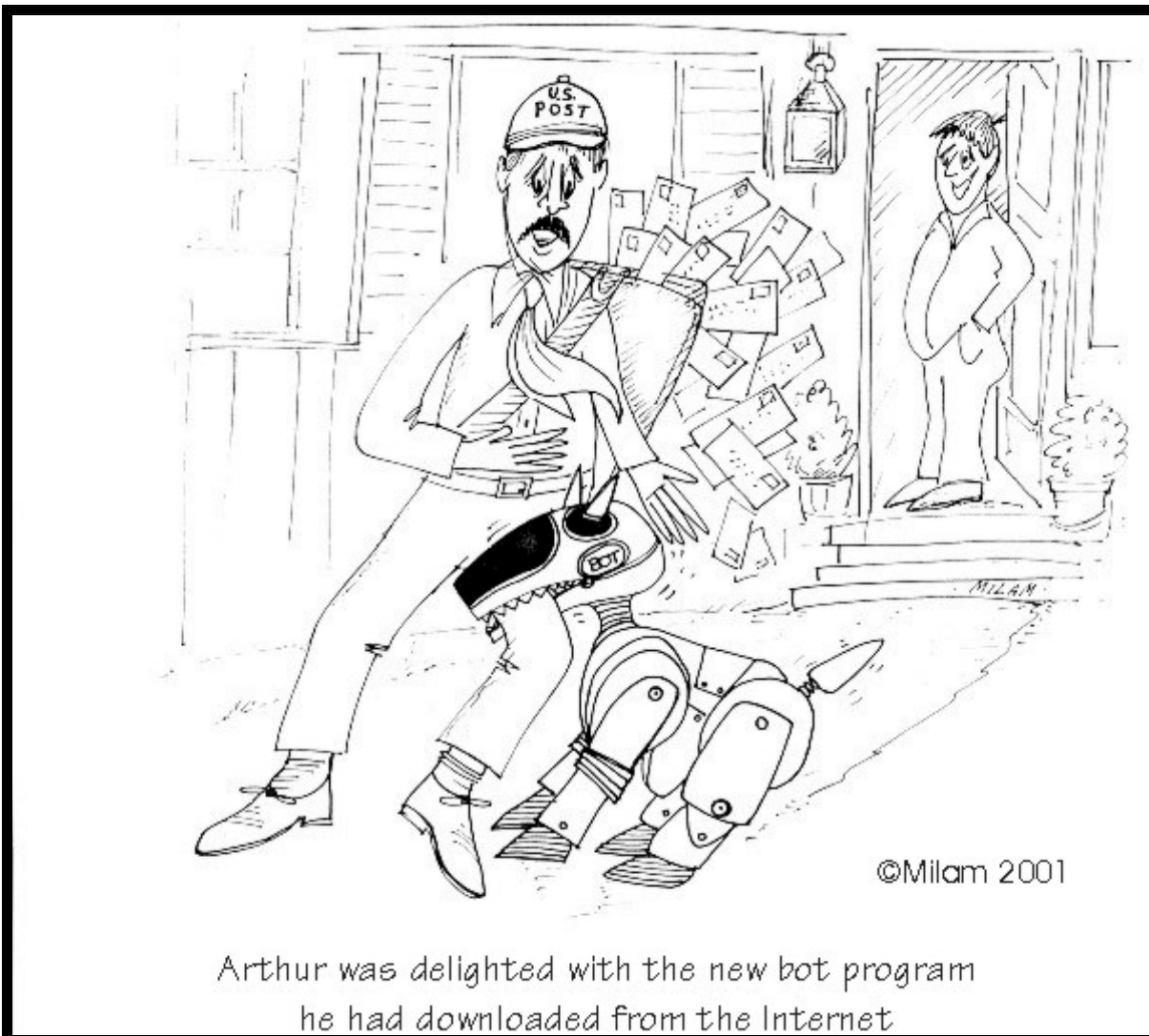
if that is what you are trying to burn at.

Q. I am running Windows 98 and System Tools reveals that the Kernel usage is high even though I am not really doing anything.

Should Kernel usage by high when the machine is idle?

A. No. It should be down under 5%. We suggest that you go get STARTSTOP, a completely free download from <http://www.tfi-technology.com/startstop.htm> and install it. It will give you the opportunity to control what gets started at boot time. Not to scare you, but if you are on a cable modem or a DSL line, you may want

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Arthur was delighted with the new bot program he had downloaded from the Internet

Akron-Canton PC Users Group  
 PO Box 2151  
 Akron Oh 44309-2151

**Next Meeting - Aug. 6th,  
 Taylor Memorial Library  
 Cuyahoga Falls, OH**

**First Class Mail**

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Mailing Label Address Goes Here

**Published by: Akron-Canton PC Users Group  
 Box 2151, Akron, Oh 44309-2151  
 www.acpcug.org**

**\* Membership - 1st year \$25, renewals \$20 per year  
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to check to make sure that you haven't been hit by the "Bymer Internet Worm" which uses "spare" CPU cycles to try to break a coded message by brute-force calculations--it works its way into machines through the internet and then tries to solve a puzzle posed by an encryption vendor. If your anti-virus signature files are up to date, it should have found it.

Q. Everything I read tells me that having TEMP files can really slow your machine down. Why do they exist, and why don't they disappear? Why isn't there an automatic way to get rid of them?

A. Anything that is in your TEMP directory (C:\TEMP or C:\WINDOWS\TEMP) should be fair game for deletion immediately after booting. If you look at the creation date of a file in the temp folders, and the date and time is earlier than when you booted the machine--the file may be deleted. Files are often left there after doing an install, or if a program is shut down abnormally. Once you start an application, such as a word processor, it will create temporary files, and may hold them 'open' which means that you can't (and shouldn't!) delete them until the application closes.

Bruce Preston is president of West Mountain Systems, a consultancy in Ridgefield, CT, specializing in database applications. Members may send queries to Bruce at askdacs@aol.com. Responses will be published in the next issue of dacs.doc

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Future Events	
Sun., Aug. 19th, 2001	Peter Trapp Computer Show at Tadmor Temple off I-77 to Arlington Road, Akron, OH (Exit 120)