

EBay's success

EBay's beginnings

EBay is the top **auction** site in the world, with millions of users and tens of millions of page hits. The online auction site was founded in 1995 by the Iranian computer programmer Pierre Omidyar. While he was working as a software developer in Silicon Valley he developed a software program that allowed *everyone* to list items of various interest. He built a website called AuctionWeb to buy and sell **collectables**. *"I started eBay as an experiment, as a side hobby basically, while I was doing my day job,"* declared Pierre Omidyar. *"...I was just pursuing what I enjoyed doing. I mean, I was pursuing my passion. It was not hard work because I was having fun."* They say that Pierre was also inspired by his wife's interest in a particular type of **dispenser**. She was frustrated due to the geographical restrictions that she had in order to get in touch with collectors. One of the first items sold on eBay was a broken **laser pointer** for \$14.83. It was only a test but Omidyar was astonished. He contacted the winning **bidder** to ask if he knew that the laser pointer was broken. The buyer answered by e-mail: *"I'm a collector of broken laser pointers."*

EBay's popularity

Omidyar started to collect small **fees** from everyone who sold items on his website and used them to expand his online business. It expanded so much that nobody else was in a position to compete with it. The website now hosts nearly four million auctions every day and every twenty-four hours, sellers add half a million new items such as collectables, decor, **appliances**, computers, furnishings, equipment, vehicles, or anything else they have. In particular, products that have short life cycles are ideas for buying and selling on the net.

People spend more time on eBay than on any other online site, making it the most popular shopping destination on the Internet. The term 'eBay' is now a generic term for online auction, in fact it is common to hear that someone is 'eBaying' or is an 'eBayer,' or that someone is going 'to eBay.' Other companies with such a strong position include Hoover for vacuum cleaners, Google for search engines, Iacuzzi for hydromassages.

EBay's mission

Pierre Omidyar declared *"What was driving me was the ability to create a software that could have a benefit or a positive impact on users."*

Although eBay is helping millions of people to sell their items with just a few clicks, the company is still working to build a reliable online community where anybody, both buyers and sellers, can make the most out of what they have. Omidyar founded the company on the notion that everywhere in the world people are basically good and they all have something to contribute. *He said "I believe that an honest, open environment can **bring out** the best in people."*

Glossary

auction: asta; **collectables**: articoli da collezione; **dispenser**: distributore di...; **laser pointer**: puntatore laser; **bidder**: offerente (di asta); **fees**: diritti; **appliances**: elettrodomestici; **to bring out**: tirar fuori

practice

A. Circle the correct alternative between Simple past and Past continuous. It can refer to the text contents or to the use of grammar.

- The programme that Pierre **developed** / **was developing** while he **worked** / **was working** in Silicon Valley **was** / **wasn't** an online auction.
- Pierre said he **cultivated** / **was cultivating** his passion when he **was building** / **built** the website.
- In that period his wife **was feeling** / **felt** very frustrated because she **didn't have** / **wasn't having** much opportunity to get in touch with collectors.
- The first item that Pierre **was listing** / **listed** online was only a test, but a collector **was buying** / **bought** it for \$ 14.83.
- Pierre **was thinking** / **thought** that the winner **did not know** / **knew** that the item was broken.
- He **sent** / **was sending him** an e-mail message to tell him that the item was broken.
- The winner answered that he **collected** / **did not collect** broken laser pointers.

B. Write corresponding nouns referred to people in the grid.

Verb	Noun	Verb	Noun
To develop		To buy	
To use		To contribute	
To found		To host	
To collect		To bid	
To sell		To win	
To programme		To create	

C. Use the verbs (correct form) or nouns in the completed grid to fill in the sentences.

- The of eBay was the computer Pierre Omidyar.
- His wife, who dispensers, prompted him to a website called Auctionweb.
- His wife was frustrated because she had few opportunities to contact other of dispensers.
- Pierre a programme that allowed both and to join online auctions.
- Thanks to this programme, internet had the opportunity to on articles listed online in the hope to be the final of the auctions.
- Nowadays eBay is a popular online market place and it millions of auctions everyday.
- Omidyar believes that all the people around the world can to create a reliable online trading community.

D. Fill in the sentences with a compound of *some, any, no, every* + *body/one, thing, where*.

- There are millions of people in the world that use eBay to contact interested in buying or selling.
- EBay is an ideal auction site to sell or buy that is at the end of its life cycle.
- on the web is there a such a popular auction site as eBay.
- If you are looking for unusual that you can't find in shops, try to search on eBay, you can find you need there.
- There are many people, particularly in Italy, who don't rely on buying online. They don't trust who sells items there.