

***eBay Marketplace Research  
User Guide***



**Version 1.0**

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## About eBay Marketplace Research

eBay Marketplace Research enhances your buying and selling activities on eBay by providing up-to-date information on the eBay marketplace. The tool allows you to search up to 90 days of historical eBay listings in order to gauge the market or the optimal price for the items you buy or sell.

Marketplace Research can also help answer questions such as: How many are available? At what rate do they sell? What is the average price of the item I'm selling? This information can be invaluable when making key buying and selling decisions.

## Navigating Your Way Around the Marketplace Research Tool

Marketplace Research offers two key modules

- Charts and Metrics - enables buyers and sellers to search eBay Marketplace history
- Top Searches – displays the most popular keywords that buyers search for on eBay

Navigate between both modules using the links on the left under **Research Views**.

## The Basics of Searching eBay Marketplace History

Marketplace Research enables you to search up to 90 days of completed items, representing more than half a billion listings of eBay marketplace history. With so many listings on eBay, searching by keyword alone can sometimes return many irrelevant listings. For example, searching “ipod” returns listings not only for iPods, but also many types of iPods and accessories. eBay Marketplace’s advanced search capabilities allow you to build narrow “research queries” that return only relevant listings. These search capabilities are described below.

**Charts & Metrics**

**Keyword(s)**  **Category** Apple iPod 

[Save research query](#) | [Clear all](#)

**Refine Your Research** [Hide](#)

**Select categories**

[All Categories](#) > [Consumer Electronics](#) > [MP3 Players & Accessories](#) > [MP3 Players](#) > [Apple iPod](#)

- [iPod 30GB \(7,500 songs\)](#) (9889)
- [iPod Mini, 4GB \(1,000 songs\)](#) (5366)
- [iPod 60GB+ \(15,000 songs\)](#) (4918)
- [iPod 20GB \(5,000 songs\)](#) (4684)
- [iPod Shuffle 512MB \(120 songs\)](#) (2203)

[More / multiple...](#)

**Add filters**

- [Exclude words:](#) nano
- [Items priced...](#)
- [Multi-item listings:](#) At most 1000 items
- [Number of bids...](#)
- [Listing features...](#)
- [Listing formats...](#)
- [All filters...](#)

### Keyword

Search for listings by entering keywords that might appear in the title. Boolean expressions and operators, such as “and/or” and “quotes” are supported.

### Category & Attributes

Narrow your search to a specific category by making a selection within the **Category** pull-down menu, or within the **Refine your Research** section (once you’ve run an initial search). Once the search is performed, the Categories displayed both in the pull-down menu and under the **Refine your Research**

section is re-populated, allowing you to further narrow your search by sub-category. Some categories at the narrowest level allow you to drill down to very detailed item specifics. If these are available, they appear in the **Select Categories** section of **Refine your Research**. Examples for iPods include color, product, and memory (2GB, 4GB, etc.).

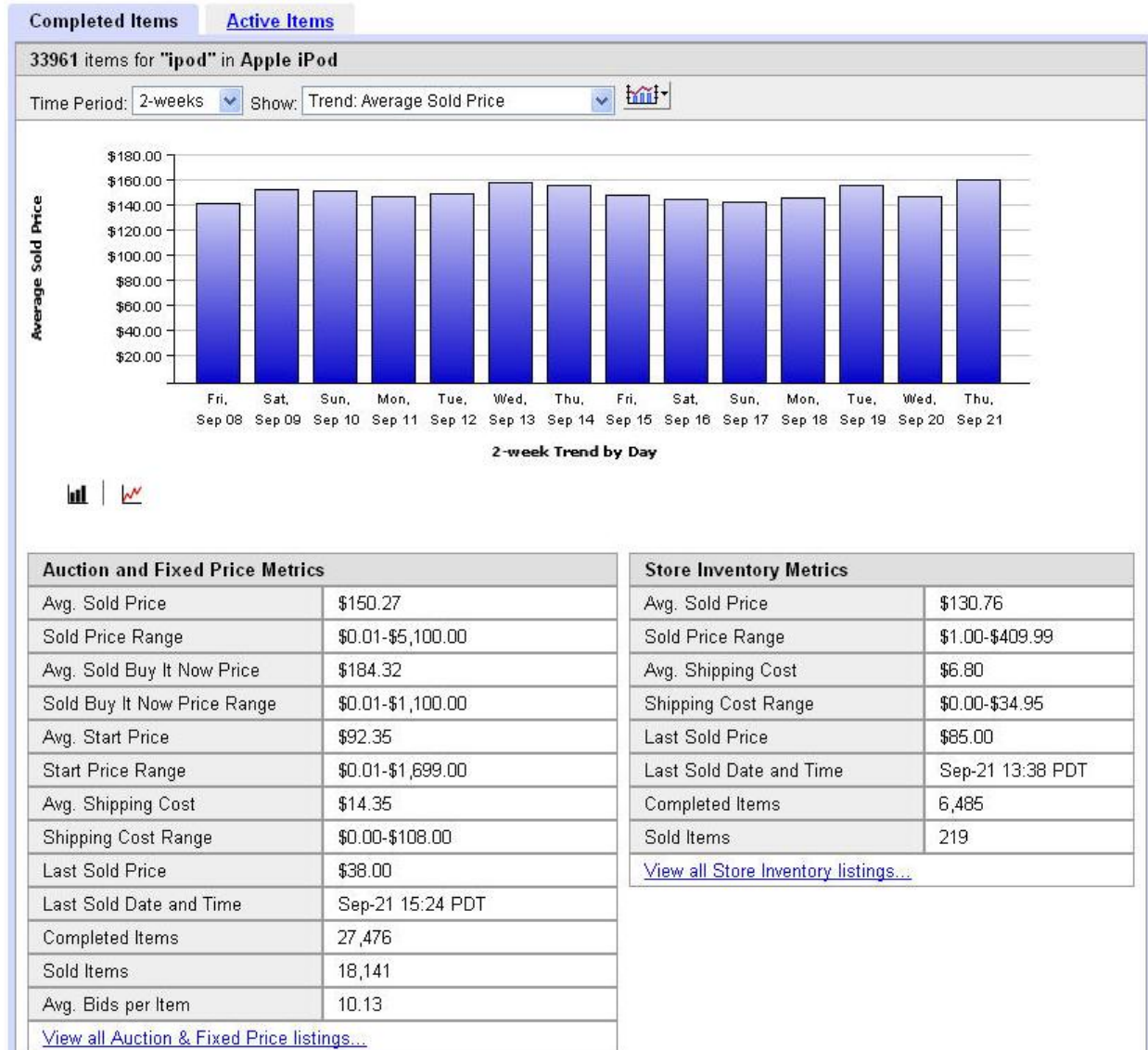
## **Advanced Filters**

Advanced search filters provide additional options for refining your search. The more commonly used advanced search methods are excluding words, setting an item price range, and specifying a specific seller's listings.

## **Charts and Key Metrics**

Running a search of completed eBay listings generates a chart and a table of metrics calculated directly from all the listings returned by your search. Use the charts and the metrics to see key information about products such as pricing levels and volume of items listed and sold across the eBay marketplace.

Note: In order to see the chart, Flash™ must be installed on your computer.



It's important to remember that these calculations are only as good as your research query. If your search is too broad, it may return many unrelated or irrelevant listings, and the calculated totals and averages will also be skewed. Therefore it is important to refine your query, so that all the items returned are relevant and comparable.

For example, assume you are looking for information on a particular watch. Your initial search returns listings not only for the watch, but also for watch batteries. The chart and metrics displayed will be based on the on the low-priced batteries as well as high-priced watches. In this case you'll want to filter your query to exclude the batteries listings so that only results for watches will be returned.

## Building and Saving a Refined Research Query

Refining your search not only eliminates irrelevant listings, but also produces accurate and meaningful charts and metrics. Depending on what you are searching for, building a refined query can take several

steps and can sometimes be more of an art than a science. Below is a recommended approach for building an effective research query.

### Step 1. Search by Keyword Alone

Pick keywords that are likely to appear in listing titles. For example, if you were searching for a television, enter the manufacturer's name and model. For example: "Sharp LCD 37." If you were searching for a watch, enter the brand and model name. For example: "Men's Seiko Pulsar."

Additional tips and tricks:

- \*Only use quotes when searching on an exact phrase.
- \*Including the brand name or model number helps to quickly zero in on the most relevant listings.
- \*Using uncommon keywords may exclude a large number of relevant listings.
- \*Start with one or two common words and add more keywords to narrow your search if required.

### Step 2. Narrow the Search by Category

After searching by keyword, the categories in which listings were found are displayed. For example, if you entered "Nokia Cell Phone," you can select the Cell Phones category. By constraining the search to cell phones, you can effectively exclude irrelevant product listings such as cell phone batteries and other accessories.

If you select the "Cell Phones" category, it isn't necessary to also include the category name "cell phone" as a keyword in your initial search. You can delete the redundant keywords if the category selected serves the same purpose as your original keyword search.

### Step 3. Validate with Sample Results

Once you have searched by keyword and category, scroll to the bottom of the page to check the sample results of listings. If all items displayed are relevant, then your search is likely adequate. If there are irrelevant listings included, you'll need to further refine your research as described below.

The screenshot shows the eBay Marketplace Research tool interface. At the top, there's a search bar with 'ipod' entered and 'Apple iPod' selected as the category. A 'Run Research' button is visible. Below this is the 'Refine Your Research' section, which includes 'Select categories' (Consumer Electronics > MP3 Players > Accessories > MP3 Players > Apple iPod) and 'Add filters' (Exclude words, Items priced, Multi-item listings, Number of bids, Listing features, Listing formats). A bar chart shows the '2-week Trend by Day' for 'Average Sold Price' of 'ipod' in 'Apple iPod', with prices ranging from approximately \$120 to \$160. Below the chart are two tables: 'Auction and Fixed Price Metrics' and 'Store Inventory Metrics'. The 'Completed Listings' table shows 21904 listings, with the first few items listed with their titles, prices, bids, and end dates.

| Auction and Fixed Price Metrics                                |                   | Store Inventory Metrics                              |                  |
|--|-------------------|--|------------------|
| Avg. Sold Price  | \$150.27          | Avg. Sold Price                                      | \$130.76         |
| Sold Price Range   | \$0.01-\$5,100.00 | Sold Price Range                                     | \$1.00-\$409.99  |
| Avg. Sold Buy It Now Price                                     | \$184.32          | Avg. Shipping Cost                                   | \$6.80           |
| Sold Buy It Now Price Range                                    | \$0.01-\$1,100.00 | Shipping Cost Range                                  | \$0.00-\$34.95   |
| Avg. Start Price   | \$92.35           | Last Sold Price                                      | \$85.00          |
| Start Price Range  | \$0.01-\$1,699.00 | Last Sold Date and Time                              | Sep-21 13:38 PDT |
| Avg. Shipping Cost   | \$14.35           | Completed Items                                      | 6,485            |
| Shipping Cost Range  | \$0.00-\$108.00   | Sold Items   | 219              |
| Last Sold Price  | \$38.00           | <a href="#">View all Store Inventory listings...</a> |                  |
| Last Sold Date and Time  | Sep-21 15:24 PDT  |  |                  |
| Completed Items  | 27,476            |  |                  |
| Sold Items   | 18,141            |  |                  |
| Avg. Bids per Item   | 10.13             |  |                  |
| <a href="#">View all Auction &amp; Fixed Price listings...</a> |                   |  |                  |

| Completed Listings (21904 listings containing 33961 items) |        |          |      |                        |
|--|--------|----------|------|------------------------|
| Title  | Format | Price    | Bids | End Date               |
| APPLE IPOD 3RD GEN 3G FRONT COVER & CLICK WHEEL PARTS      | 🔴      | \$7.99   | 46   | Oct-21-06 14:22:07 PDT |
| APPLE IPOD 3RD GEN 3G BACK COVER & HEADPHONE JACK PARTS    | 🔴      | \$19.95  | 124  | Oct-21-06 14:19:12 PDT |
| APPLE IPOD 4TH GEN 4G BACK COVER & HEADPHONE JACK PARTS    | 🔴      | \$19.99  | 23   | Oct-21-06 14:17:44 PDT |
| APPLE IPOD 4TH GEN 4G FRONT COVER & CLICK WHEEL PARTS      | 🔴      | \$22.99  | 51   | Oct-21-06 14:11:09 PDT |
| APPLE IPOD 4G LCD REPLACEMENT SCREEN, 4TH GEN - PARTS      | 🔴      | \$39.95  | 12   | Oct-21-06 14:05:25 PDT |
| Apple iPod Video Black (30 GB, MA146LL/A)                  | 🔴      | \$255.00 | 1    | Oct-20-06 14:21:08 PDT |
| IPOD VIDEO 5TH GEN 5G 60GB HD TOSHIBA HARD DRIVE PARTS     | 🔴      | \$179.95 | 14   | Oct-20-06 13:39:49 PDT |
| New 60GB Video Apple iPod Loaded with accessories!!!       | 🔴      | \$449.00 | 2    | Oct-20-06 04:41:05 PDT |
| New 60GB Video Apple iPod Loaded with accessories!!!       | 🔴      | \$449.00 | 1    | Oct-20-06 04:37:39 PDT |
| Theater Head Mounted Display for IPOD Video i-glasses      | 🔴      | \$327.93 | 2    | Oct-19-06 20:41:50 PDT |
| <a href="#">View all completed listings...</a>             |        |          |      |                        |

Tip: Keep selecting categories and their sub-categories to narrow your search as much as possible.



#### Step 4. Add Advanced Filters to Exclude Clutter

Look for commonalities between the irrelevant listings. For example, suppose a search for cell phones produces a sample of listings where 6 are for cell phones, but 4 were for cell phone batteries. To exclude the irrelevant battery listings, you can enter the word “battery” within the “Exclude these words” field. To exclude more than one keyword, separate each with a comma (i.e. “battery, batteries, case, cases”). Another method is to filter by price range. Since most of the irrelevant listings for batteries fall in the \$15-\$20 dollar range and the relevant cell phones sell for approximately \$55-\$75 dollars, you can easily narrow the search by filtering out listings that do not fall within the \$50-\$80 dollars range. This ensures that the relevant cell phones are included, but the lower-priced battery listings are not.

#### Step 5. Save Your Research

Now that you have built a refined query specific to your requirements, be sure to save it using the “Save Research” link to the right of the **Run Research** button. This saves the research query, but not the research results. Whenever you click on this query again, it runs the same search and gives you the latest marketplace information.

**Tip for Faster Searching** - When building a complex query that needs a lot of refinement (and numerous page loads/refreshes) to get just right, try setting the time period of the query to 1 week. Since 1 week searches scan a smaller number of listings in a more limited time period, the system will return results much faster. Once your query is refined, you can then extend the time period to 1, 2, or 3 months as needed.

## Top Searches

The **Top Searches** module provides data on words and phrases that buyers most commonly use to find items listed on eBay.

| Top Searches         |                 |                               |                   |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| eBay Site            | Keyword(s)      | Category                      |                   |
| United States        | Prada           | Clothing, Shoes & Accessories | Show Top Searches |
| Top Searches on eBay |                 |                               |                   |
| Keyword              | Unique Searches | Actions                       |                   |
| 1. gucci             | 278             | <a href="#">View Listings</a> |                   |
| 2. louis vuitton     | 252             | <a href="#">View Listings</a> |                   |
| 3. chanel            | 218             | <a href="#">View Listings</a> |                   |
| 4. coach             | 176             | <a href="#">View Listings</a> |                   |
| 5. prada shoes       | 125             | <a href="#">View Listings</a> |                   |
| 6. dior              | 91              | <a href="#">View Listings</a> |                   |
| 7. fendi             | 48              | <a href="#">View Listings</a> |                   |
| 8. burberry          | 41              | <a href="#">View Listings</a> |                   |
| 9. prada purse       | 38              | <a href="#">View Listings</a> |                   |

In the example above, entering a keyword in the **Top Searches** section and clicking “Run Research” provides the following information:

*People who searched for the keyword you entered (for example “Prada”), also searched for the exact keywords and/or phrase displayed in the results (“louis vuitton” “prada shoes,” “prada purse”).*

The keyword results are listed in order of popularity and show the number of people who performed a search on that word (unique searches). Only the keywords searched at that exact category level are displayed. If you search Prada for All Categories, and then perform another search for Prada within the Clothing, Shoes & Accessories category, you’ll see different results. Comparing these results can give you insight into how people are searching for and finding products on eBay. Use this information to identify cross-merchandising opportunities.

Selecting a category only and clicking “Run Research” displays the most popular keywords searched by eBay users within that category. The number of people who performed a search on that word (unique searches) is also displayed.

## What Type of eBay User Are You?

The type of eBay user you are often determines which Marketplace Research data and features you will find most useful.

### **Seller of Unique Items**

Unique items, such as antiques, collectibles, and other used goods, often have endless variations that can affect the value and selling price of the item. These unique goods often can not be directly compared with other items on eBay and therefore the calculated metrics such as “average sold price” provide little insight. Sellers of unique types of items tend to use the charts and metrics capabilities loosely, and rely instead on the individual completed listings. These completed listings typically show the specific nuances of each item and help the seller to form qualified opinions or approximate pricing information to directionally influence selling decisions. Also, because there are typically fewer items listed that can be loosely compared to unique items, sellers appreciate the extended completed listings history provided by Marketplace Research. Sellers of this type often subscribe to the Pro tier to get the extra benefit of 90 days of completed listings, as opposed to the standard 60 days of eBay history.

### **Seller of Commodity/Comparable Items**

New, commodity-type products have many comparable items moving across the eBay site. For these types of items, Marketplace Research provides additional insight by calculating product performance statistics. Sellers of these types of items find the charts and calculated metrics for supply, demand, and pricing totals valuable. Completed listings often serve to validate that the research query is refined enough to ensure that the metrics are calculated based only on like items. If you are a seller of this type, where there are typically many products comparable to yours listed on the site, the Basic subscription tier is often sufficient.

### **Buyer**

Buyers are mostly interested in pricing information to ensure that they don’t overpay for a product. Marketplace Research provides this information in the average sold price metric, or through the individual completed listings. The FastPass subscription level is often sufficient for assisting the average buyer with one-off purchase decisions.



## Assessing Selling Opportunities and the Market

Before you start selling on eBay or stocking up on new inventory, you'll first want to get an idea of the demand and size of the market opportunity for your products. This includes the amount of potential business that exists for the type of item you want to sell. Marketplace Research can help you quantify this opportunity in dollars, number of units, and potential profitability.

### Market Size (Number of Items Sold)

Marketplace Research provides the total "Number of Items Sold" for a given time period. This can help you estimate the level of demand for the item on eBay. For example, "approximately 50 items are purchased on eBay per month."

### Market Size (Total Spending)

A second way of thinking about market size is in terms of the total potential sales for a particular product within a given time period. Marketplace Research can help you determine the total amount of money spent by all buyers of a particular product. With this information you can better gauge the demand in terms of dollars and better estimate your potential profit.

The market size is easily calculated by multiplying the *Total Number of Items Sold* for a given period by the *Average Sold Price* of the item.

$$\text{Number of Sold Items} \times \text{Average Sold Price} = \text{Total Market Size in Dollars}$$

Example: 500 office staplers sold last month at an average sale price of \$10. Therefore the market size for office staplers is \$5,000 per month. The market size doesn't tell you how much you'll make on eBay, but it does tell you how much you could potentially make if you captured 100% of the eBay market. When estimating market share, be sure to factor in competition as well the fundamentals of supply and demand.

### Sell-Through Rate and the Competition

Assuming you have determined that demand exists for your products, Marketplace Research can give you a feel of the competitive landscape.

Sell-through rate (or "conversion rate") is often the most important piece of information for sellers. This metric tells you how likely your items are to sell if listed on eBay. Once you run a refined research query, sell-through rate is calculated by comparing the total number of items available on eBay (Completed Items) with how many actually sell (Sold Items).

$$\text{Completed Items} / \text{Number of Sold Items} = \text{Sell Through Rate \%}$$

Example: If your competitors listed a total of 70 items last month, and all 70 of sold (100% sell-through rate), you can assume that demand for that type of item is equal to or greater than the supply available on eBay. Therefore the market demand is likely sufficient to support another seller and a real selling opportunity exists. However, if only 7 of the 70 items listed sold, the market is saturated with competing

listings, and only a smaller percentage (<10%) of the items you list are likely to sell (all other factors being equal). Typical conversion rates vary dramatically between products and categories on eBay.

## Pricing and Profit Margins

To assess the potential profitability of a new selling opportunity or to value your existing inventory, look to the “Average Sold Price” calculated by Marketplace Research.

Average Sold Price is the amount an item sold for on eBay during a given period. You should be able to gauge whether this price represents a worthwhile selling opportunity for you by considering your cost to acquire the item, expected eBay fees, packaging and handling costs, and other overhead.

If you already have inventory, Marketplace Research can help you estimate its value. To calculate the total value of your existing inventory, multiply the Average Sold Price of comparable items on eBay with the number of items you have in stock.

Note: If you are selling “one-off” unique items that don’t have comparable equivalents in eBay transaction history, Average Sold Price may not be applicable. Also, see the section *Building and Saving a Refined Research Query* to ensure the accuracy of the calculated Average Sold Price.

## Refining your Listing Strategy

### Building Effective Listing Titles

Knowing the specific keywords buyers use to search for items enables you to tailor your listing titles so buyers can more easily find your items. The Top Searches module can help with this. It displays the top 20 most popular keyword searches performed by buyers for any category or product. When building your listing title, search for the name of your item at various category levels. See if you can identify additional keywords that buyers commonly use and add these terms to your title to maximize the visibility of your listings. For example, if you were selling a Czech crystal vase, searching for “czech crystal” in Top Searches would reveal that buyers also search for the keyword “bohemian.” By adding the word “bohemian” to the listing title, more buyers are likely to find and bid on your item.

### Selecting a Category

For some types of items, listing in one category versus another can result in a larger likelihood of sale, yield a higher selling price, or both. To determine which category is best, use Marketplace Research to compare the conversion rates of each (number of Sold Items / number of Completed Items). For example a “Polar s625x” watch equipped with a heart rate monitor sells at a conversion rate of approximately 66% in the “Exercise & Fitness” category, but sells at a 90% conversion rate in the “Running” category, and at a higher Average Selling Price. Therefore, listing in the Running category would be the best choice.

### List When Your Customers Typically Buy

A common question from sellers is “When should I list my item?” Unfortunately, there isn’t a simple answer. The success of your listing ending on a particular day can vary based on many factors including the type of product you sell and the current number of competing listings. In some cases, listing on a

particular day doesn't make a significant difference. However, Marketplace Research can help you to identify when listing on a particular day can offer a selling advantage.

- Step 1.** Use Marketplace Research to create a narrow research query specific to your product (See “Building and Refining Your Research Query.”)
- Step 2.** Set the “Time Period” of the search to 2 weeks. This will break down the chart into days, displaying the activity on each day for the last two weeks. For example, you'll be able to see the sales activity for the last two Wednesdays.
- Step 3.** Select “Trend: Number of items sold” from the chart's **Show** pull-down menu. This gives you an indication of the day that had the most sales. Mouse-over the chart and write down the exact number of sales on each day.
- Step 4.** Select “Trend: Number of Completed Items” from the chart's **Show** pull-down menu. This tells you how many listings ended on each day. Write these daily values down as well.
- Step 5.** Calculate the conversion rate for each day, by dividing the number of items sold by the number of completed items for each day. Take a look at the highest conversion rates. These are the days that performed the best. Look for one day that performed at a higher percentage over the last two weeks. That day is likely one that will yield good sales results. In the example below, Wednesday performed the best, having the highest conversion rate during the last two weeks.

|                 | Sun             | M              | T              | W               | Th             | F              | Sat            | Sun             | M              | T              | W               | Th             | F              | Sat            |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Number Sold     | $\frac{14}{50}$ | $\frac{5}{25}$ | $\frac{8}{24}$ | $\frac{12}{20}$ | $\frac{6}{16}$ | $\frac{3}{18}$ | $\frac{4}{25}$ | $\frac{12}{45}$ | $\frac{6}{23}$ | $\frac{7}{21}$ | $\frac{14}{21}$ | $\frac{7}{25}$ | $\frac{5}{17}$ | $\frac{4}{18}$ |
| Total Completed |                 |                |                |                 |                |                |                |                 |                |                |                 |                |                |                |
| Conversion Rate | 28%             | 20%            | 33%            | 60%             | 38%            | 17%            | 16%            | 27%             | 26%            | 33%            | 66%             | 28%            | 29%            | 22%            |

Note: Considering only the number of items sold is not enough to determine the best day to sell. The number could be high only because it happened to be the day that more listings were scheduled to end, and therefore be a function of supply, not demand. For example, many eBay sellers assume buyers have the more time to shop online on Sunday night, and therefore schedule their listings to end at that time. With more listings ending on Sundays, more items are successfully sold on Sundays.

In the example shown above, with 14 sales on the first Sunday and 12 on the second, Sunday appears to be a good day to list. However, if you look more closely, you'll notice that there was a much higher number of competing listings ending on that day, resulting in a much lower conversion rate for sellers.

In addition, because there was a much greater supply of competing products to select from that day, the selling prices are likely much lower due to the increased selling competition. Be sure to consider conversion rate in your assessment.

**Step 6.** Check the Average Selling Price – Once you select what seems to be the best day, check the average selling price on that day to be sure that the increased conversion rate is not due to lower selling prices.

## **What Time of Day is Best to List?**

We don't recommend using Marketplace Research data to estimate the best time of day to list. Most products do not have enough volume running through the system to credibly assess the performance of every hour of every day. Often the best time to list is most accurately determined by an experienced seller through "feel."

## **Listing when Competing Supply is Lowest**

The best time to list your item is when there are fewer competing listings, in other words, when buyers have fewer sellers to choose from. Therefore, before listing, you should make sure that there are not greater than normal levels of competing products listed on eBay. To determine if this is the case:

1. Use Marketplace Research to search over the last month to see the total number of completed items.
2. Divide this number by 30 to find the average daily number of items available (average number of items completed daily).
3. Perform the same search for active items.
4. Since items are typically listed for 7 days, either divide the total by 7, or for a more accurate picture count how many listings are set to expire seven days from now (use the "View all Auction and Fixed Price Listings" link). If this total is significantly greater than the monthly average, you may want to wait to list. If it is about equal to or lower, then the supply on eBay is relatively balanced or skewed in your favor.