

# EBay to test eBay Bucks shopping rewards program

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(AP) -- Shopping on eBay just got a bit more rewarding, at least for some users of the online auction site.

On Wednesday, [eBay](#) Inc. launched a "beta" test version of eBay Bucks, a program that lets participants earn a 2 percent [reward](#) on certain items they buy through the site and pay for using eBay's online payment service, PayPal. Rewards come quarterly as gift certificates, which can be used to buy other items through eBay within 30 days.

Unlike many other "beta" tests, this one is open by invitation only; eBay is randomly selecting buyers to enroll. Kurt Apen, head of eBay's loyalty marketing team, said the company will likely expand the program to everyone over the next several months.

The arrival of eBay Bucks marks the company's latest customer-retention move - something the company is focusing on as works to improve its online marketplace, at a time when consumers also have cut back on spending because of the dismal economy.

Other efforts eBay has undertaken include distributing coupons to users and offering discounts on referrals from [Microsoft](#) Corp.'s Live Search site.

Program participants will be able to earn up to \$200 in eBay Bucks per item purchased on eBay and up to \$500 per quarter. Because the reward rate is 2 percent, a \$100 cell phone would earn \$2 eBay Bucks,

translating to \$2 in gift certificates at the end of the quarter.

Apen said eBay Bucks users will be able to collect rewards on most types of items sold on the site, but real estate and many items sold through eBay Motors will be ineligible.

EBay, based in San Jose, Calif., initially tested eBay Bucks as a smaller pilot program last year. Changes since then include making it easier for users to redeem their rewards and allowing them to spread them out over various transactions.

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