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CASE STUDY · MARLUC SYNOPSIS

eBay Magical Listing

IMPLEMENTED 2023–2026 · RETAIL AND HOSPITALITY · US · BAND C · CLAIMED ONLY

VERSION 1.0 · PUBLISHED 15 NOVEMBER 2026 · UPDATED 15 NOVEMBER 2026 · FACTS CHECKED 15 NOVEMBER 2026

eBay rebuilt how new and returning casual sellers create listings, so that the seller starts with a photo and AI drafts the listing. By eBay's account, new listing creation in the US rose by more than 50%. Independent reporting found item misidentification, complaints from sellers who could not turn the flow off, and no published data to check eBay's figures.

ABOUT THIS SYNOPSIS

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Facts and figures are as reported by the sources listed below, which may be incomplete, self-reported or out of date. Check the original source before relying on any figure.

The impact band, proof marker and SEAM view are MarLuc's opinion. The organisation is not a MarLuc client and has not reviewed or endorsed this synopsis. Names and trademarks belong to their owners.

NOTICE WORDING LAST UPDATED 16 NOVEMBER 2026

AT A GLANCE

AI used: Generative AI and image recognition: a listing tool that builds titles, categories, item specifics and pricing suggestions from seller photos, described by eBay as built on AI agents.

Implemented: 2023–2026. Grade: band C, Process change, Claimed only.

Headline result, as reported: eBay says its AI Magical Listing tool raised the rate at which new US sellers create listings by more than 50%; independent reporting records misidentified items and seller complaints about a photo-first flow with no opt-out

1 · The case

The facts, as reported by the 5 sources listed at the end. Where a source is silent, the field says "Not reported".

Organisation

eBay Inc.. US online marketplace; the tool is aimed at casual and new sellers listing second-hand items in the US, UK, Germany and Australia. Canvas block: 3. Customers and proposition. Also 4. Operations and process, 6. Data and technology.

Business challenge

The challenge. Per eBay's CEO, AI reduces the friction that prevents consumers from listing and selling successfully, and eBay wants to unlock items sitting in homes. The 2023 plan was that sellers could take a picture and let AI do the rest.

Who implemented it

In-house (In-house): Built and operates the tool using what it describes as proprietary models.. No outside partner is named in the sources opened.

Technology (SEAM pillar E)

SEAM types: T5 Custom / fine-tuned models, T7 AI agents. Deployment: Not reported. Vendors and products: Magical Listing.

Where it was built in: Built into the eBay mobile app listing flow. Per eBay, it uses proprietary models, a product knowledge graph and 30 years of marketplace data, and the latest generation uses AI agents to build a listing from images alone.

What changed

Before: sellers typed a title and filled in listing details by hand. After: for new and reactivated listers on the mobile app, the flow starts with a photo and AI drafts the listing for the seller to check. Sellers on desktop or in some other flows can still list the earlier way, per seller reports. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

What it cost

Not reported

What it saved

By eBay's account: a greater than 50% increase in new listing creation rate in the US, double-digit percentage increases in sold items and GMV per lister, and about one-third less listing time for casual listers. These are company figures with no published baseline or independent check. Cost saving: Not reported. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Governance and control

Sellers see the AI draft and can edit it before publishing; the standard form is shown if the AI cannot identify the item. eBay has not publicly defined which sellers get the new flow, per Value Added Resource. Owner, testing standards and error monitoring: Not reported.

S2 · Accountable owner · Not reported
No accountable owner is named in the sources opened. The CEO reports results on earnings calls. [1]

A1 · Safe use · Not reported
Not reported.

A2 · Human in the loop · Evidenced
Hands-on testing shows the seller sees and can correct the AI-filled fields, and the standard listing form appears when the AI cannot identify an item. Sellers report that correcting errors takes time. [2] [3]

A3 · Monitoring and assurance · Claimed
By its own account eBay tracks seller KPIs, retention and A/B test results, and in 2024 reported a CSAT figure for the new flow. [1] [5]

A4 · Vendor AI · Not reported
No outside vendor is named; eBay describes proprietary models. [1]

A5 · Agent controls · Not reported
eBay describes AI agents building listings; controls on those agents are not reported. [2]

A6 · Standards and regulation · Not reported
Not reported.

What worked, what did not, what is unproven

WORKED

– eBay reports a greater than 50% rise in the rate of new listing creation in the US, and double-digit rises in sold items and GMV per lister.

– eBay attributes a mid-teens year-over-year rise in casual fashion listers in Q1 2026 to its AI tools.

– Early A/B tests in Germany showed a directionally similar uplift, per eBay.

– One reseller who first expected disruption said he could probably reverse his process and may not spend more time overall.

DID NOT

– An independent hands-on test in early 2026 found the tool identified a sea turtle mousepad as a ceramic decorative plaque, and later as a fridge magnet, so the title and item specifics were wrong.

– In September 2026 sellers on X, Reddit and eBay's community forums complained about a photo-first flow and asked how to turn it off; one UK seller wrote that there is no setting to turn it off. One seller said correcting its mistakes took about three times longer than before. Sellers reported workarounds such as starting from Sell one like this or listing on desktop.

– A UK seller reported that an item of girls' clothing was placed in baby and toddler sizing, blocking the required size.

– The tool took over a year and a half to reach sellers after the 2023 demo, per Value Added Resource.

UNPROVEN

– Whether eBay's figures hold up independently: no baseline, sample or seller definition is published.

– Effect on listing accuracy, returns and buyer satisfaction: Not reported.

– How many sellers opt out or use the earlier flow: Not reported.

– Cost of building and running the tool: Not reported.

Timeline

Sept 2023 CEO shows investors a mocked-up demo of AI-assisted listing [2]

2024 Q2 2024 call: eBay reports Magical Listing and a 20-point CSAT increase for the new selling flow [5]

2025 From Q4, the next generation of Magical Listing rolls out as the default listing experience for new and reactivated listers on iOS and Android in the US [2]

Feb 2026 eBay describes the next generation on its Q4 2025 call; an independent hands-on test finds some items misidentified [2]

Apr 2026 eBay reports US results and begins expanding to new and reactivated listers in Germany [1]

Oct 2026 On the Q3 2026 call eBay reports listing time for casual listers down by about one-third, per PYMNTS [4]

2 · Grade and SEAM assessment

MarLuc's opinion, made on the evidence above. How cases are graded: marluc.co.uk/case-studies/how-we-rate

Level of change and impact

Claimed: Not applicable. Grade: C, Process change. Proof: Claimed only. Level of change: Process change.

Process change (Level 2, band C). The listing process was redesigned around AI for a segment of sellers. The proof marker is Claimed only because the results come from eBay's own statements.

The listing process was redesigned around an AI model that builds the listing from photos, and became the default for new and reactivated listers in the US. That is a process change. The results come from eBay alone, so the proof marker is Claimed only.

The SEAM view and lessons learnt

This is a process rebuilt around an AI model, and eBay reports a large lift in new listings. The evidence on quality is thinner: the one independent test and the seller complaints point to errors in item identification and to friction for experienced sellers who had their own workflow. For a marketplace, the transferable point is that listing speed and listing accuracy are separate measures, and sellers who already have a working process need a way to keep it.

1. Measure listing accuracy as well as listing speed.
2. Let experienced sellers keep their own listing workflow.
3. Publish how results are measured and which sellers are in the sample.

Evidence

Score 1 of 4. Company statements on earnings calls, relayed by trade press. Independent hands-on and seller-complaint reports exist but cover quality, not the headline figures.

Evaluation method. Company results statements and call transcripts, set against independent hands-on testing and seller reports from Value Added Resource.

Sources disagree. On the Q1 2026 call eBay described a greater than 50% increase in new listing creation rate. Value Added Resource reports the CEO at a September 2026 investor conference as citing 50% more listings per lister in the US. The measures are worded differently and the underlying data is not published. PYMNTS dates a one-third listing-time reduction to the Q3 2026 call. Retail Dive reported the tool on the Q2 2024 call, while Value Added Resource says rollout took over a year and a half after the September 2023 demo.

3 · Original sources

Read these in full. To challenge a fact or a grade, use the contact form at marluc.co.uk or the link on https://marluc.co.uk/case-studies/ebay-magical-listing

[1] The Motley Fool: eBay Q1 2026 earnings call transcript
https://www.fool.com/earnings/call-transcripts/2026/04/29/ebay-ebay-q1-2026-earnings-call-transcript/

[2] Value Added Resource: Magical Listing Revisited: Has eBay Finally Closed the AI Gap?
https://www.valueaddedresource.net/ebay-ai-magical-listing-revisited/

[3] Value Added Resource: eBay Calls AI Magical Listing A Success Amid Growing Seller Complaints
https://www.valueaddedresource.net/ebay-ai-magical-listing-complaints/

[4] PYMNTS: eBay Courts Recommerce Customers as Revenue Rises 14%
https://pymnts.com/earnings/2026/ebay-courts-recommerce-customers-revenue-rises-14percent

[5] Retail Dive: eBay's AI investments fuel streamlined experiences for buyers and sellers
https://www.retaildive.com/news/ebays-generative-ai-experiences-magic-listing-shop-the-look/723146

eBay Inc. website: https://www.ebay.com

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