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**Experience the Strange and Twisted World of Internet Cafes**

**By Jesse S. Somer**

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Being a novice of the Internet and realms of technology in general, the idea of hanging out in an Internet café scared me about as much as it used to when I first sat in front a computer trying to figure out how to turn the thing on. Pictures of super-obese, nerdy, snotty-nosed tech-heads filled my head as well as visions of stagnant, sterile rooms crammed with blue screens flashing the latest comic heroes and teen idols. Well, I just went on a trip to several countries around the world and I ventured into this unknown sector, as I wanted to keep in touch with people back home. Although I admittedly didn't visit many of these cafes (I needed a break from the computer worlds of school and work), the few I did see were quite different from what I expected.

First stop was a café in Prague, Czech Republic. This was hidden down an alley but was next to restaurant so it seemed safe enough. I paid the equivalent of just over \$1.00 U.S. for a half hour on the machine—not too bad eh? Now I don't know if I was attacked by an evil spirit or just had something with my brain that day, but for some reason it took 25 minutes to just get into my hotmail! First of all, the keyboard was different, and in weird ways I tell you. If you hit the Y key it came out as a Z and vice versa. I was surprised later in London that their keyboard was also different from the ones' back home. I thought keyboards were universally the same around the planet! I finally got into my hotmail, sent a one sentence email and left. Looking around me as I departed I saw that most of the people using computers were so-called normal folks like myself, mainly backpackers and tourists, but also businessmen etc. If I had more patience that day it probably would have been a nice atmosphere to be part of, I saw that they served coffee and tea, but as I was in a beautiful foreign place I needed to get out under the Sun amidst the real action.

My other main experience in the public Internet world was to be in the North of London in a suburb called Neesdon or `Sneezdon' as the Aussie mates I met up with liked to call it. Here, the Café was totally different from the previous one and I assume -I don't like to assume—that like people, each café is an individual entity with both positive and negative traits as well as bonuses and letdowns. This `café' was in the back of a mobile (cellular) phone shop and was just a tiny room with a handful of computers that no one else seemed to be interested in, everyone looked more focused on phones, but I have a weird feeling they might have been dealing something else `under the counter' that was sparking hot

interest.

We paid 1 pound (approx. \$1.75U.S.) for an hour. Three of us walked in and we sat down at two computers, I think this was probably disallowed but again no one was paying any attention to us. My friend said he had been to this particular café a few times previously as he was living in the area for a year, and had seen and experienced some undesirable situations. One day he believes he saw a cannabis deal go down, and on another occasion a drunken man came in and told him he didn't like the look of him and would he go outside for a fight? The confrontation dissipated with the use of calm communication but you can imagine that this type of Internet café would be rated poorly on a world standard. So, beware where you enter the virtual world my friends, reality may just arrive to smash you in the face!

In the end, I think like all things in life these Internet cafes need to be approached with optimism and hope, as one never truly knows what there is to offer in a new experience. I imagine that there is a multitude of different types of cafes—some you may even deem as cool places to gravitate. If strange and twisted is what you look for, or a common normality, I believe both can be found in the cafes of the future.

Jesse S. SomerM6.Net<http://www.m6.net>Jesse S. Somer is a weird and twisted Internet writer who hopes to show others that the Internet is becoming a daily reality for many humans, so dive in!

## **Ebay Auctions: Some Of The Oddest Items Ever Auctioned**

**By Mikel Beck**

eBay has become the hotspot for people to sell strange items. Over the past few years, where eBay has grown from a virtually unknown web site to the leading online auction marketplace in the world, some very odd items and services have been offered up for auction on the site. Strangely enough, many of these strange items have sold for thousands even tens of thousands dollars. A few of these items have sold for six or seven figures as well. eBay does have a policy that it takes down any auctions that it sees as not legitimate, but still, it allows many of these strange auctions to take place. In fact, these strange auctions have become part of the culture in America as they appear in Late Night Television shows, comedic sketches, and in thousands of websites and Internet blogs.

The most recent strange auction that was covered on a National scale and fetched a very high price was when a mother found an old lunch box with a cheese sandwich more than a decade old on which mold had formed in the shape of the face of Virgin Mary. The item was put on eBay and sold for \$28,000. That's right, an old moldy sandwich with the shape of a religious figure fetched \$28,000 on eBay. Many people have offered other strange services like becoming a fan of a certain team, while others have sold themselves for a week or attempted to sell their families (I am not making any of this up. Some people really do go to far lengths to make some money.)

I always find it very interesting when some item that many would disregard as worthless fetches thousands of dollars. It is truly mind boggling. Each day, tens of thousands of items are placed on eBay

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and as of late, it is a growing trend to try and sell all the worthless junk you can imagine on the web site, buy spinning the sales pitch to make the item sound one of a kind or very rare and valuable.

Some of the more recent items that were placed on the web site include a x-ray of the stomach of a duck which seems to have an alien inside (sold for the whopping price of \$9,600), a French fry in the shape of the Nike logo, and a guy willing to bang his head on a door until he was unconscious for a certain sum of money.

Just note, if you are planning on selling a strange item on eBay, it will not automatically make you thousands, the market is now becoming saturated and many auctions do not sell. The more strange and shocking your auction is, the better chance it has of being sold on eBay.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. There are thousands of other very, very strange eBay auctions going on right now and hundreds more are added daily. Use our eBay product search engine to find some of the strangest items ever sold on eBay. Just type in the term for an item you wouldn't expect to be sold over the Internet, like "hot dog", and see what you get.

Mikel Beck is the owner of

, which is a search engine that allows you to

search eBay for listings that have misspellings. He can be reached by e-mailing

or

.



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