Following up on its decision last year to implement a partial ban on auctions of items related to hate groups, eBay has now decided to expand the prohibition to all such items regardless of their age and historical value. The new policy, which takes effect on May 17, will prevent sellers from auctioning items such as Nazi memorabilia, which is clearly offensive to large segments of the eBay user base, but it also prevents the sale of paintings and letters attributed to hated historical figures, such as Hitler. The new policy will apply to auctions on eBay sites throughout the world.

eBay decided to implement the ban after it was criticized by anti-hate groups such as the California-based Simon Wiesenthal Center. "As the eBay community expands around the globe, we are
encountering different laws and different points of view as to what constitutes illegal, offensive or inappropriate items," said eBay General Counsel Mike Jacobson in a statement. "Given our expansion, as well as feedback we’ve received from our users, we reviewed our policy and concluded that these changes are appropriate."

The ban has also been expanded to cover non-hate-related items that could cause distress such as murder weapons. Despite the expansion, eBay will continue to allow sellers to auction some items that are indirectly related to hate groups. Examples of permitted items include German coins and stamps from the 1930s and 1940s, regardless of markings, German WWII memorabilia that doesn't bear Nazi or SS markings, and items of historical importance associated with acts of violence against public figures, such as the items used in the 1945 assassination attempt against Hitler.

**Why This Matters:** Anti-hate organization and European law enforcement officials have been trying to halt the online sale of hate-related materials for several years. It remains to be seen whether eBay’s decision to ban auctions of hate materials will influence others to follow suit. Clearly, eBay’s decision creates a very slippery slope regarding what is and is not considered "hate" materials. While some materials would universally be considered reprehensible, others might not.

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Publication date : May 7, 2001

Last updated : January 6, 2005

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