

Humble start for eBay tycoon

Jude Townend

A PINK mobile phone and some top-brand sunglasses were among the items Sydney-based lawyer Jonathan Bass hoped to sell when he logged on to eBay seven years ago.

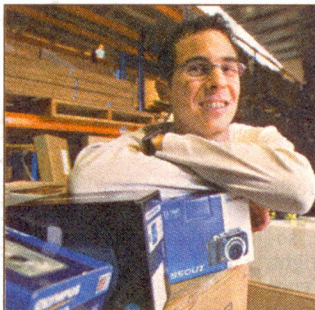
His intention was to sell off a few of the end-of-line products that his twin brother had a habit of accumulating.

“Anthony was always collecting odds and ends,” said Mr Bass, 28, who used to work for three of the top law firms in Australia.

He told *The Australian* his entrepreneurial dabbling on eBay “soon became a much larger animal”.

The business now turns over several million dollars a year and employs seven full-time staff.

Mr Bass is one of the 17,500 Australians whose primary source of income is selling things



Odds and ends: Jonathan Bass

on eBay, the online marketplace with 222 million users. Of those, five million are Australian.

Not long after setting up, he and his twin brother, Anthony, roped in their parents to help pack up the boxes going out to the multiplying number of eBay customers.

Their living room was soon not big enough, and since 2000 they have moved three times,

each warehouse proving too small for the expanding business.

They now work under the name Dinosaur Deals, but eBay is still the only outlet for the range of branded products they sell at cheap prices.

“I don’t think I could imagine it at the beginning,” Mr Bass said. “But there’s no question about this, that without eBay we wouldn’t be here.”

Mr Bass stressed that eBay was not an automatic route to commercial success, a warning to the 94,000 Australian sellers who have considered quitting their day jobs to sell full-time on eBay. “The first little computers crashed with increasing demand, and there were a lot of 18-hour shifts.”

The twins are now so confident of their success they’re planning to branch out to their own website.