

Disabled Online Users Association

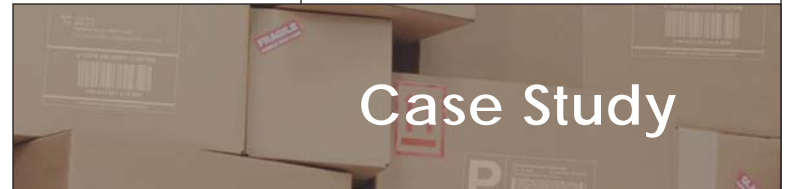
A Helping Hand – Not a Handout –
To the Differently-Abled



www.endicia.com
800-576-3279.140

The Disabled Online Users Association (DOUA) helps the seriously impaired establish online businesses, with not only the DOUA but also the businesses themselves benefiting from Endicia.

Founded as Helping Hands in 1995 by Marjie Smith and arriving at its current and official name in 2001, the DOUA, a volunteer-based non-profit organization consisting of the impaired and non-impaired, serves to help the disabled become self-reliant via selling on the Internet. It focuses its efforts on creating financial independence, bringing technology to the disabled by way of motivation, individualized support, and other resources. Its Helping Hand Program assists the disabled in becoming online auctioneers, an occupation that enables them to work at their own pace, determine their own hours, and not draw attention to their disabilities.



Background. Soon after starting an eBay business, Abovethemall, Marjie Smith, herself wheelchair-bound, realized that resources were lacking for the disabled on the Internet. Not the type to sit idly by, she decided to start a forum for those with disabilities to share tips and resources. The forum helped shape the DOUA.

The DOUA is comprised of students (currently 1200), mentors, and volunteers. The students embody many kinds of impairments, both physical and mental, such as blindness, wheelchair-bound, ventilator-bound, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder. Though their disabilities may differ, they all share the desire to succeed. As for the mentors and volunteers, despite differing in background – active eBay sellers, corporate executives, writers, Web developers, mothers and fathers, and others, many able and some disabled – they all give freely of themselves to help others succeed.

The DOUA established the Helping Hand Program to help the disabled attain financial self-sufficiency as online auction sellers. Qualified participants, including legally disabled persons already registered at www.eBay.com but yet to have listed more than five auctions, may receive five free products to list on eBay, support from the DOUA Community Mentoring program, and even “loaner” cameras and postage scales for students otherwise unable to get



started. Those not qualifying for the five free products are still entitled to use the DOUA Community Mentoring program and the DOUA Training Center, which opened in August 2004 as a place for students, mentors, and volunteers to communicate easily, share ideas, advice, and resources, and become friends.

Remarks Suzanne La Cour, DOUA Grad Student/Community Mentor:

"After over a decade on disability and just when I was reaching the end of the proverbial rope, I was referred to DOUA. The people that I have met through this fabulous organization have literally given me my life back. They have helped me become more productive – in many areas of life, not just eBay – and they have been a constant source of emotional support and friendship. The skills I have learned through the DOUA have been invaluable and I continue to learn every single day."

Endicia's Role. Being an Endicia customer since July 2001 and having a Premium account, Marjie Smith utilizes Endicia to print customizable shipping labels for the DOUA and her eBay business, Abovethemall. She employs DAZzle Designer's clipboard feature to copy and paste from her PayPal packing slip to DAZzle Designer to print the complete shipping label on her HP Photosmart All-In-One printer. She prints piece-by-piece and does all the shipping herself, six days a week from her home office, exclusively using the United States Postal Service to deliver the mail pieces, which consist mostly of Priority Mail with some First-Class and Media Mail intermixed. Moreover, she uses software by AuctionSage, an Endicia integrated partner, to send personalized e-mail notification alerting customers that their packages have shipped.

Key Endicia features utilized by the DOUA and Abovethemall include label customization, Stealth Indicia, electronic refund, and Zip+4 verification and address validation. The rubber stamp feature affords label customization; Stealth Indicia, by hiding the postage amount, lets a fair shipping and handling fee be charged without angering customers; electronic refund makes postage on never scanned mail pieces with tracking (those with Delivery or Signature Confirmation, or Express Mail) eligible for refund when refund requests are submitted, via the Endicia Web site or DAZzle Designer's Postage Log, within 10 days of the original printing; Zip + 4 verification and address validation promotes successful mail piece delivery by verifying and updating the Zip Codes, adding the "+ 4" when needed, and validating the addresses.



Commenting on what Endicia has meant to the success of the DOUA and Abovethemall, Margie Smith states:

"There have been no hiccups using Endicia, including no lost packages, even international shipments. I attribute the 100% delivery rate to the Zip+4 verification and address validation. This has reflected very well not only on the DOUA, but also, on Abovethemall, where my eBay feedback score and positive feedback rating (3864 and 99.9%, respectively), plus the feedback received have been outstanding.

I love the ease of use of Endicia, its great record keeping, particularly the ability to check on Delivery Confirmation, the faster mail delivery resulting from its use, and its stellar customer service. Using Endicia, I no longer need to visit the Post Office or handwrite labels; thus, I save 2 to 4 hours per day, freeing me up to spend more time to grow and improve the DOUA and Abovethemall."

The Future. The DOUA continues to expand, having added several international students and mentors within the past year. It hopes to increase, for years to come, its reach into international communities.

To learn more about DOUA, visit www.doua.org.

For information about Abovethemall, visit stores.ebay.com/abovethemall.