

# Ebay in talks to clamp down on stolen goods

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A group of fashion retailers is to meet with online auction site eBay to discuss the growing problem of the sale of stolen goods.

The Profit Protection Fashion Forum, a group of Loss Prevention Managers from 20 retailers, including Monsoon, H&M, Peacocks, Matalan, Blacks Leisure and Mosaic, has arranged a meeting at eBay's UK HQ in Richmond-upon-Thames in Surrey for early next month.

A spokesman for loss prevention specialist The ORIS Group, which organised the forum, said auctions of retailers' stolen goods were costing at the very least "Hundreds of thousands of pounds a year".

Over a three-month period, River Island Head Of Profit Protection Simon Hoyle closed down almost 1,000 individual auctions on eBay, using software approved by the website. Of these, just two sellers complained that they were legitimate traders.

The protection forum, sponsored by New Look, is calling for a code of conduct to be agreed between eBay and the fashion retailers. The group, first revealed in Drapers in January wants better regulation to force the proven identification of sellers when they sign up to the site (Drapers, January 6).

Ebay said it is up to retailers to provide evidence to the police that stolen goods are being sold on its site. If the police can confirm this, it will act to remove the goods from sale.

According to industry sources, more than 70% of retail theft is committed internally by staff.