

eBay: Let's wait and see on tighter security

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Paul Kilmartin, director of performance engineering and availability at eBay, said the company could introduce security technology such as two-factor authentication, but the sure way to eradicate all fraud from its business would be to stop trading. "The one easy way to stop all the fraud would be to turn off the site tomorrow, and there would be no more illegal activity," he said.

Kilmartin, a 10-year eBay veteran, made the comments at Sun Microsystems' quarterly release event here on Tuesday following questions about whether eBay has any plans to introduce two-factor authentication technology to combat fraud among its users.

Two-factor authentication means requiring a second security device, such as a smart card or fingerprint, in addition to a password, to verify the identity of an IT user.

Kilmartin said that eBay has no plans to alter its authentication process for now. "We have no specific plans in this area yet, unless we start to see real demand for it," he said.

Kilmartin's remarks are at odds with comments made earlier this year by Howard Schmidt, the chief security officer for eBay and former White House cybersecurity advisor, who has called for greater use of two-factor authentication.

Speaking at a press briefing in Barcelona last November, Schmidt said that businesses had clearly improved their security practices, but that the technology is now available for them to use two-factor authentication.

"We're doing better security now, but we still depend on usernames and passwords as a way of getting online.

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