Silent Sniper™ Auction Management Software Manual

Version 3.00

1.   Introduction

Silent Sniper™ Auction Management Software ("Silent Sniper") allows you to fully manage your auction bidding experience on eBay®. Silent Sniper includes a tracking feature to view and track the relevant information for your favorite auctions. The search function allows you to search your favorite terms and see only the newest and most relevant auctions. The hallmark feature of Silent Sniper is automatic bidding. Silent Sniper will place automated bids for any auction on your tracking list at a time you designate. Have Silent Sniper place your bid seconds before the auction ends, giving you a competitive advantage over other bidders. This is known as sniping.

1.1   What is sniping?

A snipe bid is placed near the end of the auction, usually around 1-10 seconds before the auction ends, which doesn't give people you outbid a chance to come back and bid again.

There are very few practical reasons to bid on an auction days before it ends. That just gives other bidders a chance to raise your final price, or actually outbid you, causing you to lose auctions. However, most people can't be at their computer when every auction ends to place a bid.

1.2   Why Snipe?

- Avoid nibblers that keep bidding in small increments.
- Avoid shill bidders that can increase your final price.
- Avoid proxy-ignorant people that don't place their maximum bid and rely on outbid emails.
- Avoid people who might decide to increase the maximum bid after you outbid them.

2.   System requirements

Before starting, please verify that you meet the minimum system requirements for using Silent Sniper. Silent Sniper will operate on any computer running Macintosh (OS X) or Windows. You must be a registered user of eBay® to use the bidding feature of Silent Sniper.

- *Operating systems*
  - Windows 98 or above
  - Macintosh OS X or above
- *RAM*
  - 32 MB
- *Hard drive space*
  - 60 MB of free space
- *Internet Connection*

Silent Sniper is best viewed on a screen resolution of at least 1440 x 990. Smaller resolutions may not allow for full viewing of auction titles, prices and other information.

3.   Getting started

To use Silent Sniper, you must have a serial number or request a free 14-day demo. To purchase Silent Sniper, visit http://www.silentsniper.com for purchasing information or contact support@silentsniper.com. You can also purchase Silent Sniper by pressing the "Purchase" button when you initially launch Silent Sniper. When you first launch Silent Sniper, you will see the registration window illustrated below.
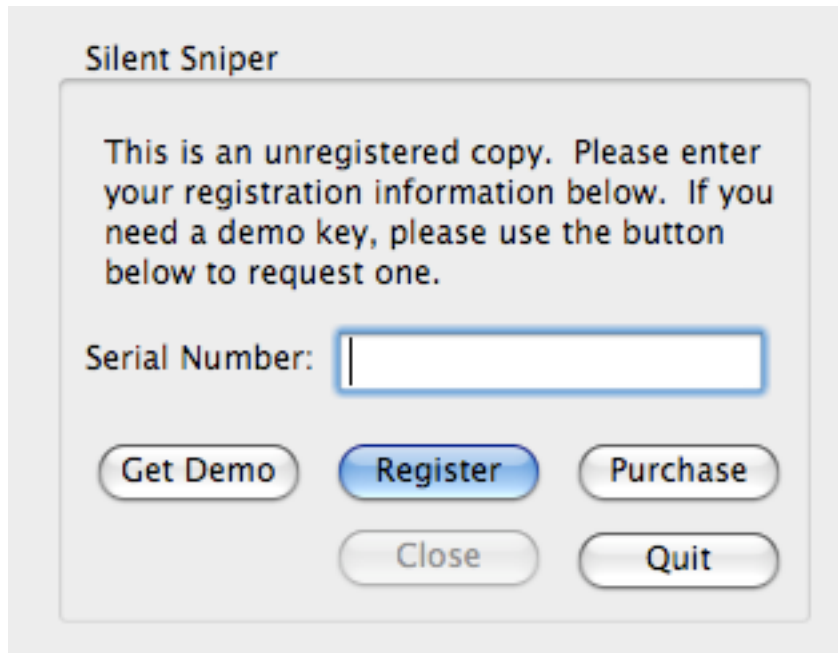
FIG. 1 - Registration window

3.1   Are you a registered user of Silent Sniper?

Enter your serial number into the text field and press the "Register" button. You will then be prompted to view the terms of service for using the software. Once you complete this process, the software will be fully activated.

Having problems entering your serial number?

Please contact support@silentsniper.com for more information.

3.2   Not a registered user of Silent Sniper?

If you are not a registered user of Silent Sniper, then you can request a free 14-day demo of the software. The software will be fully functional for 14 days. After 14 days, you will need to purchase Silent Sniper to continue using the software.

Start by pressing the "Get Demo" button. You will then be prompted to view the terms of service for using the software. Silent Sniper will then connect to the Internet to request a demo serial number.

3.2.1   *Error message #217 – You have already requested a demo period*
If you have previously requested a Silent Sniper demo, then you will be unable to obtain another demo period. For more information, please contact support@silentsniper.com.

3.2.2   *Error message #220 – Unable to request demo serial number*
Silent Sniper was unable to download the demo serial number from the Internet. Please contact support@silentsniper.com for more information.

If you purchase a copy of Silent Sniper later, you can enter your serial number by selecting "Enter serial number" under the "File" menu.

3.3   Setting your personal preferences
Before using Silent Sniper, you should set your personal auction preferences, including your username and password. You should also synchronize the auction time. See section 3.4 for more information.

Silent Sniper can store all your personal auction preferences, including your username, password and email address. This information is used for placing snipe bids. It is also possible to have Silent Sniper automatically update tracked auctions and conduct saved searches at specified times.

The preferences panel will automatically open upon launch of the software any time you have not saved your username or password.   You can also access the preferences panel any time by selecting preferences from the "File" menu.
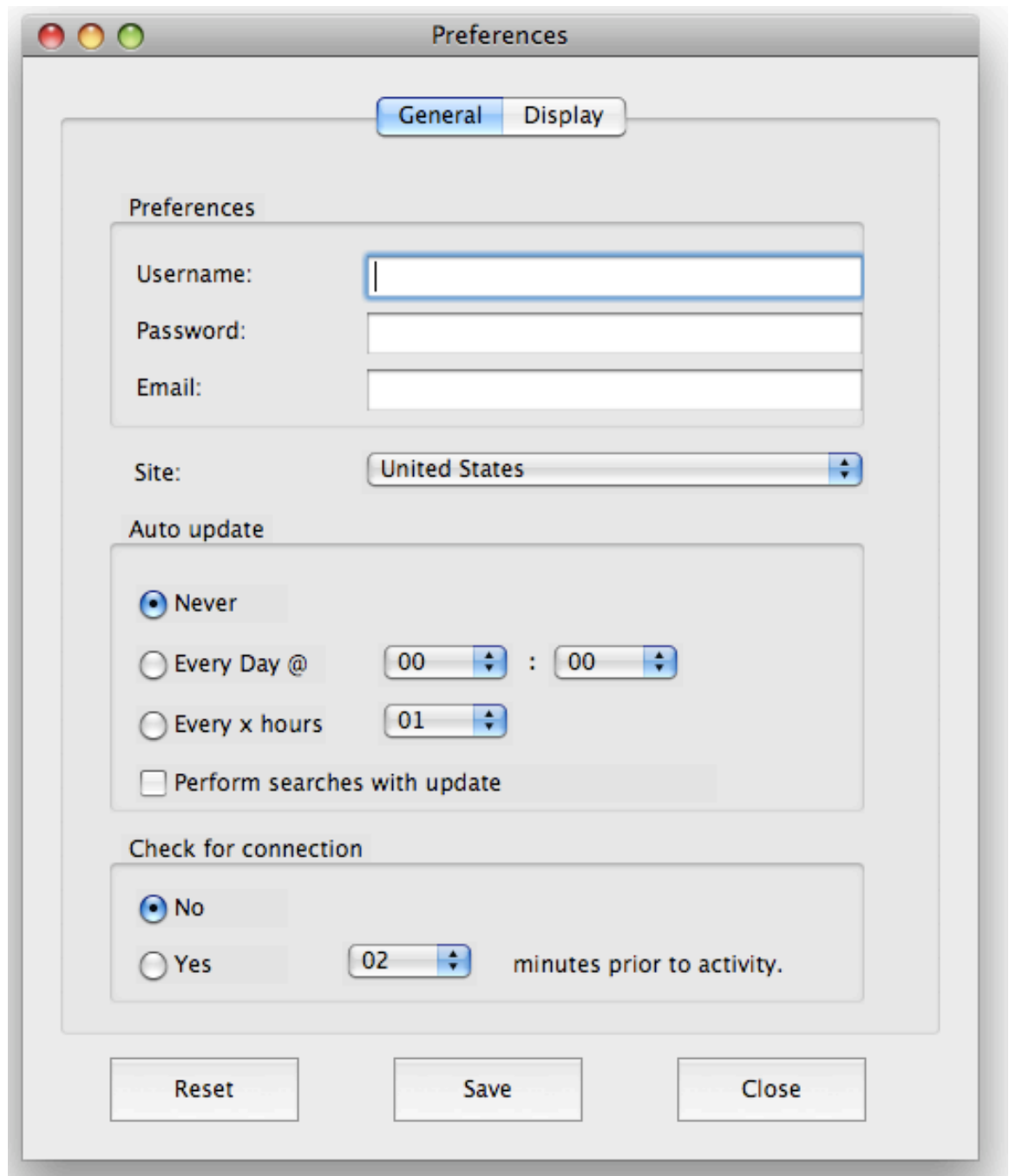
FIG. 2 – Preferences panel

3.3.1   Enter your username/password/email address

Enter your eBay® username and password. You can optionally enter your e-mail address for support purposes. Your personal information will only be stored on your personal computer and will not be transmitted to an external web site except in accordance with your instructions.

You can check whether your username/password have been entered correctly by choosing "Check username" under the "File" menu. Silent Sniper will connect to eBay® and attempt to login using your saved personal information. If the information is incorrect, then you will receive an error message.

3.3.2   Select your eBay® site

Select your primary eBay® site. Your site selection will be utilized for searching purposes.

3.3.3   Auto update

Silent Sniper can automatically update your tracked auctions according to your desired selection. If you do not want Silent Sniper to automatically update auctions, then select the "Never" option. You can also set Silent Sniper to update auction information daily at a specified time using the "Every day" option. For example, you can set Silent Sniper to update auction information every morning prior to waking up. You can also set Silent Sniper to update auction information periodically throughout the day using the "every X hours" option.

3.3.4   Perform searches with update

If you want Silent Sniper to automatically perform searches using your specified search terms, then select the "Perform searches with update" option.   The searches will be performed simultaneously with the updating of the auction information.

3.3.5   Check for connection

If you are using a dial-up connection, then Silent Sniper can be set to automatically check for a connection prior to updating auction information or processing automated bids. If there is no connection, then Silent Sniper will attempt to launch the dial-up connection to your ISP prior to making snipe bids or performing updates. You can set Silent Sniper to automatically check for an Internet connection x minutes prior to your bid or update. It is recommended that you set Silent Sniper to check for a connection at least 2-5 minutes prior to placing a bid so that Silent Sniper can launch a dial-up connection before attempting to place your bid.

Do not check the check for connection option if you are using a broadband connection, such as DSL or cable.

3.3.6   Display preferences

You can also customize the date display format and the columns displayed in the auction tracking window. Silent Sniper will display the ending date of auctions in the local time unless you select the eBay® time option. If the eBay® time option is selected, then the auction time will be displayed in the Pacific Time zone.

Silent Sniper will display your selected columns in the tracking window. The "ID" field displays the auction number for a particular item. The "Title" field displays the title for a particular item. Silent Sniper will always display the title in the tracking window for each auction. The "Closing Time" field displays the auction end date. As described above, the end date will be displayed either in the local time or the eBay® US web site time according to your selected format. The "Time remaining" field displays the time left before an auction ends. This field is

automatically updated every 5 minutes.   The "Snipe bid" field displays any automated bids that you have set in Silent Sniper. The "Highbidder", "Price" and "Minimum bid" fields display information associated with the auction.

3.4   Synchronizing Silent Sniper time

Silent Sniper can synchronize your computer's time with the eBay® auction site time. If you do not synchronize the time, then Silent Sniper will not place your snipe bids at the correct time.   Time synchronization can be done from anywhere in the program using Command-T (Apple-T) or by selecting "Update time" from the "Manage" menu.

Silent Sniper will try to accurately synchronize the time with the eBay® auction site time. However, due to network transfer time, there may be slight variances depending on the network load. Please keep this in mind when setting automated bids.

4.   Auctions

The main window for Silent Sniper displays information regarding your tracked auctions, snipes, bid groups, searches, folders and log information. The main window can be accessed at any time by selecting "Auctions" from the "Manage" menu or by using Command-A (Apple-A).

4.1   Auctions Tab

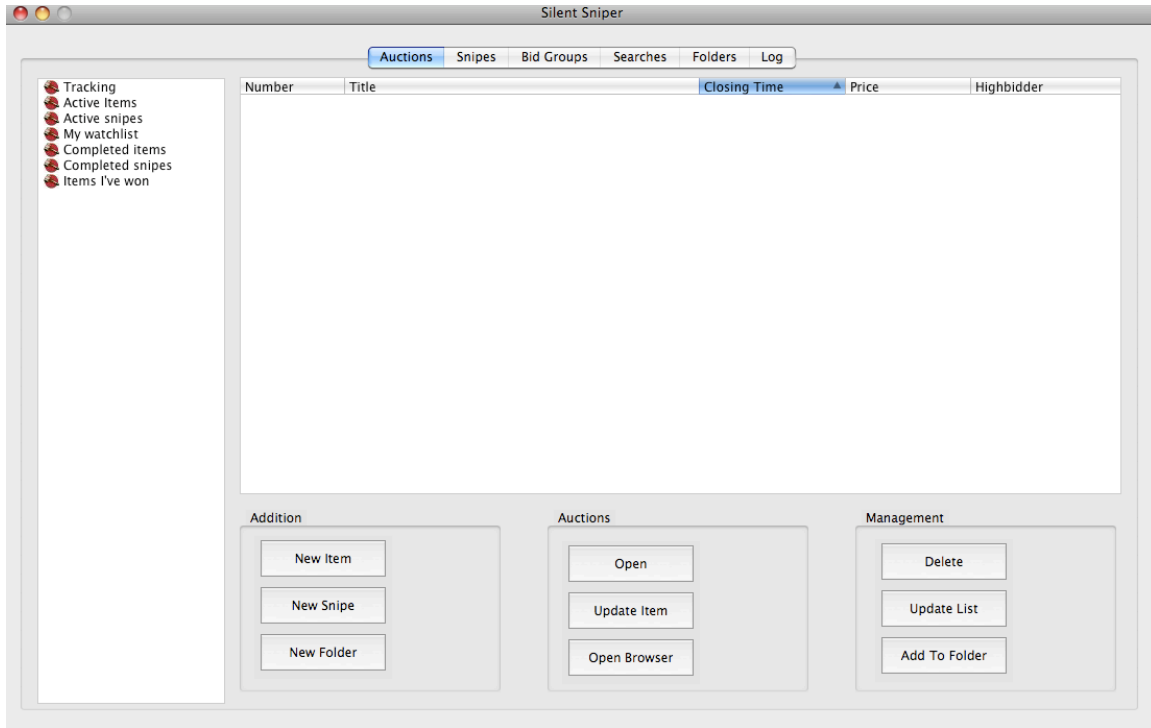The auctions tab allows you to view your tracked auctions.

FIG. 3 – Main window "Auctions" tab

4.2   Adding new tracked auctions

New auctions can be added by pressing the "New item" button in the main window. A new item window will open. Enter the auction URL or item number into the new item window and press the "Add" button. The new item window can also be accessed using Command-N (Apple-N) or by selecting "New" from the "File" menu.

4.3   Deleting tracked auctions

Auctions can be deleted by selecting the auction and using Command-D (Apple-D) or by using the "Delete" button. To delete all tracked auctions, select the "Delete all" option under the "Manage" menu. Deleting an auction will not delete any snipe bids associated with the auction. Snipe bids may be deleted under the "Snipes" tab.   See section 5.3 for more information.

4.4   Viewing auction details

To view the item details for an auction, highlight the auction and press the "Open" button. See section 4.11 for more information.

4.5   Opening auction in browser

An auction may be opened in the computer's default browser by selecting the auction and using the "Open Browser" button.

4.6   Updating an auction

Auctions can be updated individually by highlighting the auction and pressing the "Update item" button.

4.7   Setting a timed bid ("snipe bid")

To place a timed bid, highlight the auction and press the "New snipe" button. See section 5 for more information regarding snipe bids.

4.8   Updating all auctions

All of the tracked auctions can be updated at once using Command-U (Apple-U) or by selecting "Update Auctions" from the "Manage" menu or by pressing the "Update List" button.

Silent Sniper can also be set to update auctions at specified times. See setting preferences under section 3.3.3 for more information regarding the auto update feature.

4.9   Viewing a subset of auctions

Within the auction tracking window, you can select to view subsets of your tracked auctions. The left-hand panel of the "Auctions" tab can be used to select a subset of auctions for viewing. To view all auctions, select "Tracking" in the left-hand panel. To view only open auctions, select "Active items" in the left-hand panel. To view only auctions that you have set a pending snipe bid, select

"Active snipes". By selecting "My watch list", you can view items listed on your watch list at the eBay® site.   The "Completed Items" option displays all tracked auctions that have already closed. The "Completed snipes" option allows you to view all tracked auctions that you have placed a snipe bid that has already been placed. To view all auctions that ended with you as the winner, select the "Items I've won" option.

4.10   Organizing items into folders

Silent Sniper allows you to group auctions into folders. The folders can then be used to view a subset of auctions tracked by Silent Sniper. For example, you can group all of the auctions related to a specific type of item in a folder or you can group all of the auctions from a single seller in a folder.

4.10.1 Creating a new folder

To create a new folder, press the "New folder" button from the "Auctions" tab to open the "Add folder window". You can also create a new folder from the "Folders" tab. When the "Add new folder" window opens, give your new folder a new name and press the "Add" button.

4.10.2 Editing a folder name

To edit the name of a folder, begin by highlight the desired folder. The folder name will appear in the text field at the bottom of the "Folders" tab. Enter a new folder name and press the "Update Folder" button.

4.10.3 Deleting a folder

To delete a folder, highlight the desired folder and press the "Delete folder" button. This will remove the folder from the Silent Sniper database. However, it will not delete the associated auctions from the tracking database.

4.10.4 Viewing auctions in a folder

To view the auctions in a particular folder, highlight the folder from the left-hand panel of the "Auctions" tab.

4.10.5 Adding auctions to a folder

To add an auction to a folder, highlight the folder from the "Auctions" tab and press the "Add to folder" button. You will then be prompted to select the folder for the auction.

4.10.6 Removing auctions from a folder

To remove an auction from a folder, highlight the auction in the "Auctions" tab and press the "Remove" button.

4.11 Viewing auctions

To view an auction, highlight the auction in the "Auctions" tab from the main window and press the "Open" button. A new window will open that displays the details of the auction. This includes the auction number, title, seller, highbidder, current bid, minimum bid, closing time and buy price. The "View item" window also displays the time remaining in the auction. The time remaining field will periodically update, counting down to the end of the auction.

The text field in the "View item" window can be used to save notes regarding the auction. To save your notes, press the "Save" button. If you do not press the "Save" button after entering your notes, then your notes will be lost.

4.11.1 Opening an auction in browser

An auction may be opened in the computer's default browser by selecting the auction and using the "Open Browser" button.

4.11.2 Updating the auction

You can update the auction details by pressing the "Update" button. Silent Sniper will download the updated auction information and update the data fields.

4.11.3 Placing a bid

To place a bid, press the "Bid" button. A new window will open allowing you to save your snipe bid. See section 5 for more information regarding snipe bids.

5. Bidding

Silent Sniper is capable of placing your bid at a designated time.   These are known as snipe bids.   Silent Sniper also supports bid groups. Bid groups allow you to group together multiple related auctions and Silent Sniper will place the bids in chronological order until you win <u>one</u> of the auctions.

5.1   Saving snipe bids

Bids can be saved for timed bidding later by selecting the auction and pressing the "New Snipe" button from the "Auctions" tab or by selecting "New Snipe" from the "Manage" menu. Silent Sniper automatically fills out the username and password for the bidding form. The default quantity is one. For Dutch auctions, the quantity can be changed. Silent Sniper will not place bids for quantities larger than currently up for auction. The bid should be your maximum proxy bid. Silent Sniper places bids as if they were placed using the eBay® auction site forms.

For example, if the current auction price is $9.99 you would need to enter a bid of at least $10.49. If you enter your bid at $20.00, then Silent Sniper will send your bid of $20.00 to the eBay® site. If the previous maximum bid is $10.00, then the current bid will rise to $10.50 and you will be the high bidder. If

the current bid is higher than $10.00, then the eBay® proxy system will keep raising your bid up until your maximum of $20.00.

To save your bid, select the applicable time and press the "Bid later" button. It is recommended that your bid be set at least 10 seconds prior to the end of the auction. This allows Silent Sniper to account for network delays and timing variations. If you find that your bids are not being placed correctly, then it is recommended that you increase the time before the end of the auction that your bids are placed.

5.2   Add to bid group

To add the auction to a bid group, select the applicable bid group and press the "Add button". Please see section 5.4 for more information.

5.3   Managing snipes

Snipes can be managed using the "Snipes" tab. The upper panel displays your pending snipes that have not yet been placed. To edit a snipe bid, highlight the auction and press the "Edit" button. You can also delete a snipe bid by highlighting the auction and pressing the "Delete" button.

The lower panel displays your completed snipes. When placing bids, Silent Sniper saves log information regarding your bid. You can export the log information by highlighting the auction and pressing the "Export log" button. The log information can be sent to support@silentsniper.com for diagnosing bidding problems that you are experiencing.

5.4   Bid groups

The bid groups feature allows you to select an item you are looking to purchase and select associated auctions for the item. Silent Sniper will successively bid on each of the auctions until one of the auctions has been successfully purchased by you. Silent Sniper will use the same maximum bid each time and will check to see if you are the highbidder once each auction is

complete. If you are not the highbidder, then Silent Sniper will load the next matching auction and attempt to place another snipe bid. All auctions are bid in order of ending time.

Here is how bid groups work:

Scenario #1 - User selects a bid of $10.00, with three auctions selected.
- Auction #1 - User outbid at $10.50, Silent Sniper loads the next auction
- Auction #2 - User outbid at $12.50, Silent Sniper loads the next auction
- Auction #3 - User is highbidder at $10.00, Silent Sniper closes the bid group

Scenario #2 - User selects a bid of $10.00, with three auctions selected.
- Auction #1 - User is highbidder at $10.00, Silent Sniper closes the bid group
- Auction #2 - Auction is never bid on by Silent Sniper
- Auction #3 - Auction is never bid on by Silent Sniper

Scenario #3 - User selects a bid of $10.00, with three auctions selected.
- Auction #1 - User outbid at $10.50, Silent Sniper loads the next auction
- Auction #2 - User outbid at $12.50, Silent Sniper loads the next auction
- Auction #3 - User outbid at $11.50, Silent Sniper has no additional auctions to load at this time.

NOTE that once a winning bid for a bid group is completed, Silent Sniper will close the bid group, even if additional auctions are added to the bid group after the winning bid is placed. To reopen bidding for the item, you will need to create a new bid group.

5.4.1   Viewing my bid groups
View "Bid Groups" tab in the main window.

5.4.2   Edit a bid group

Select the bid group and press the "Edit" button. You can change the description, price and snipe time for the bid group.

5.4.3   Viewing bid group auctions

Select the bid group and press the "Auctions" button. A new window will appear showing the matching auctions for the specified bid group. You can highlight an auction and view the contents in your web browser (using the "View" button), or remove an auction from the list (using the "Delete" button).

5.4.4   Deleing a bid group

Select the bid group and press the "Delete" button. Any current snipes for the bid group will also be deleted.

5.4.5   View winning bid group auction

To view the winning auction for your bid group, select the bid group and press the "Winner" button. The winning auction for the bid group opens up in your default web browser.

5.4.6   Adding a new bid group

Select "New Bid Group" from the "Manage" menu or press the "Add" button in the bid groups window. For each bid group, specify a description, maximum price and ending snipe time.

5.4.7   Add an auction to a bid group

From the "New Snipe" window, select the appropriate bid group from the pull down menu in the "Add To Bid Groups" section and press the "Add" button. The auction will be loaded with the pending snipes in the selected bid group.

6. Searching

The search "Tab" shows all of your currently saved searches. An auction may fall under multiple search keywords, but will only appear in the Silent Sniper database once under the first associated search.

6.1   Adding searches

Only the keywords field is required. A price range for the search can be specified and upper and lower bounds are not both required. The search can be optionally limited to only a specific category. Finally, all new search items can be automatically added to the auction tracker by selecting the checkbox. This is only recommended for small searches.

6.2   Deleting searches

To delete a search, highlight the search and press the "Delete" button. Deleting a search will also remove all associated auctions from the Silent Sniper database.

6.3   Modifying searches

Saved search terms can be modified at any time. To modify a search, highlight the search and press the "Modify" button. Modifying a search may lead to the deletion of saved searched auctions.

6.4   Viewing searches

The "View Items" window will initially show only new search auctions.

6.4.1   Deleting individual auctions

Individual auctions can be deleted from the search database using the "Delete" button.

6.4.2   Add auction to the tracker window

Individual auctions can be added to the "Auctions" window using the "Add To Tracker" button.

6.4.3   Marking an auction as read

The "Mark Read" button will mark the selected auction as read.

6.4.4   Marking all read

The "Mark All" button will mark all the auctions in the search as read.

6.4.5   Open browser

The "Open Browser" button will open the selected auction in the default computer browser.

6.4.6   Show new

The "Show New" button will show all the new auctions in the search.

6.4.7   Show all

The "Show All" button will show all the auctions in the search.

6.4.8   Unmark all

The "Unmark All" button will mark all the auctions in the search as new.

6.5   Searching

6.5.1 Run all saved searches

Select "Perform Searches" from the Manage menu.

6.5.2 Run a specific saved search

Select and highlight the search that you wish to perform. Press the "Search" button to perform the saved search.

6.6 Viewing new searches

The "New Items" window will show only new search auctions.

6.6.1 Add auction to tracker window

Individual auctions can be added to the "Tracker" window using the "Add To Tracker" button.

6.6.2 Marking an auction as read

The "Mark Read" button will mark the selected auction as read.

6.6.3 Marking all read

The "Mark All" button will mark all the auctions in the search as read.

6.6.4 Open browser

The "Open Browser" button will open the selected auction in the computer's default browser.

7. Downloading your watch list

You can download your eBay® watch list into Silent Sniper to continue tracking the auctions or set snipe bids. To download your watch list, select "Download Watch list" using the "Manage" menu.

8. Log tab

The "Log" tab displays status information related to your snipe bids. Silent Sniper also saves various log data in the databases folder, such as the html data from the

bidding pages. The log information can be provided to support@silentsniper.com to help diagnosis any bidding problems you are experiencing.

9. Warranties & Updates

For the latest news and updates, please visit the Silent Sniper web site at http://www.silentsniper.com.

Silent Sniper will also check daily for new updates to the Silent Sniper software. If a new update is found, a description of the updated features will be displayed. You will then have the option to visit the Silent Sniper web site to download the new update. You can also skip the new version by pressing the "Skip" button.

10. License Agreement

See the attached documentation for the license agreement.

11. Questions?

Any questions or questions or bug reports should be sent to support@silentsniper.com. Bug reports should be specific, including any problems experienced and any related searches or auction numbers.

12. Troubleshooting

Occasionally problems will occur within the Silent Sniper software. Below are answers to common problems experienced with the Silent Sniper software. If your question it not answered, then please contact support@silentsniper.com for more information.

12.1   Silent Sniper is unable to open a database

The database has either been moved or has become corrupted. The databases should be in the same folder as the Silent Sniper software. Do not

move or rename the databases folder. Otherwise, Silent Sniper will not function correctly. If the database becomes corrupted, then reinstall Silent Sniper.

122   An auction is showing up in the tracker window with no title or other information.

It is possible that the auction no longer exists. Sometimes, auctions are deleted before the ending time due to the seller's violation of eBay® policies. Other times, the updating window is interrupted and unable to update information for an auction. To solve this problem, run the update window again or update items individually through the "View Item" window.

12.3   An auction is shown closed, but time still remains in the auction

Try updating the auction time using Control-T.   There will always be a slight variation due to network time travel.