# eBay reveals resale fashion as barometer for sustainability and nostalgic trends



In a landscape marked by overproduction and consumer fatigue, resale platforms are increasingly functioning as cultural barometers rather than mere marketplaces. According to eBay's latest Watchlist report, which analyses data from its 134 million users and over 2.3 billion listings, this shift reflects evolving consumer preferences as shoppers lean towards sustainability and nostalgia in their fashion choices.

The report highlights a significant pivot in consumer behaviour, where nearly 40 percent of clothing, shoes, and accessories sold on eBay in 2024 were classified as "pre-loved." This move indicates that the secondhand market has transitioned from being a niche interest to a mainstream norm. A particularly telling figure is the frequency with which the term “vintage” is searched on the platform, occurring more than 1,200 times per minute worldwide. Such statistics pose a challenge to traditional retailers who may still rely on new-season launches to attract customers.

In the UK market, brands such as Armani have emerged as front-runners in the luxury sector on the platform. Additionally, items like the Fendi Baguette and Omega x Swatch Moonswatch have captured consumer attention, underscoring a desire for luxury goods with a diminished environmental impact. Alexis Hoopes, eBay’s Vice President of Global Fashion, articulated this trend by saying, “We envision a world where circularity is the norm, and we want to empower the entire circular fashion ecosystem.”

The report outlines several key aesthetic themes that are gaining traction, each carrying significant implications for retail buyers and brand strategists.

**Romantic maximalism** is one of these emerging trends, marked by a refined version of bohemian styles inspired by fashion icons such as Jane Birkin and Kate Moss. This season, structured suedes and diaphanous fabrics are prevalent, as evidenced by a remarkable 628 percent spike in searches for the Chloé Paddington bag. Other notable search increases include chiffon shirts, which rose by 86 percent, and 3D floral designs, increasing by 58 percent.

**Tailoring**, too, is making a comeback, reflecting a shift towards power dressing in a post-pandemic context. This resurgence is characterised by silhouettes that favour structured self-expression, with searches for “cinched blazer” up by 209 percent and Prada work totes increasing by 220 percent. Oversized suits from brands like Balenciaga and Miu Miu also saw an 87 percent rise in popularity.

The trend towards **utilitywear** is another notable development, particularly appealing to Gen Z consumers who appreciate functionality with a side of irony. Vintage brands such as Carhartt are being embraced for their utilitarian edge, demonstrated by a 130 percent increase in searches for "barrel jeans" and a 41 percent increase in those for "duck canvas."

In terms of colour trends, **soft and whimsical hues** are gaining traction. The search for "butter yellow" dresses surged by 656 percent, while broader pastel categories experienced significant growth, suggesting an emotional response to prevailing socio-economic anxieties.

Denim remains a staple within wardrobes but is evolving through a lens of craftsmanship. Searches for “jeans from Japan” and “selvedge denim” have risen by 68 and 46 percent, respectively. As Amy Bannerman, eBay UK’s Pre-Loved Style Director, noted, “Denim gets reimagined every season. This time, it's about authenticity—original flares, raw finishes, and 80s cuts.”

The implications for fashion retailers are clear: consumers are increasingly drawn to the richness of history, uniqueness, and sustainability. This evolution indicates a need for brands to curate their offerings around storytelling and to incorporate resale into their primary business strategies rather than relegating it to an afterthought.

Overall, as consumers revisit previously overlooked items with a renewed sense of confidence and individuality, platforms like eBay are emerging as more than just marketplaces; they are indicators of shifting trends and evolving values within the fashion landscape.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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