

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

eBay helps small businesses succeed in parts of Germany that are too often seen only through the lens of being economically disadvantaged.

This matters in a country where regional imbalances are still shaped not only by the legacy of East and West, but also by the slower economic momentum of many rural Districts and areas marked by the decline of former heavy industries.

This report uses **eBay Digital Density data**, a measurement of per capita eBay small business activity, to refute the conventional wisdom that digitalization is destined to worsen imbalances. Rather, the data reveals that eBay small businesses are an inclusive business phenomenon in Germany. The findings are consistent whether looking at GDP and Income, the Districts qualifying for GRW structural support, or urban/rural breakdowns, with eBay small business communities in “disadvantaged” Districts often outperforming the wealthier and more urban locales.

GDP and Income:

- The Top 20 Districts for eBay Digital Density have a GDP per capita 13% below the national average, but have three times the eBay small business activity than the Top 20 wealthiest Districts.
- eBay activity in Districts with median salaries below the national median outpaced the higher-income areas by 18%.

Success in GRW Districts:

- In 72% of structurally weak Districts, eBay small business activity exceeds the national average, and eight GRW Districts are in the eBay Digital Density Top 20.
- The 18 GRW Districts nationwide that qualify for the top level of government funding average an eBay Digital Density 63% above the national average.

Rural Digital Wins:

- Rural Districts delivered the highest average eBay Digital Density while collectively having the lowest GDP per capita.
- Twelve of the eBay Digital Density Top 20 comes from the least densely populated Districts.

The report offers a definitive counterpoint to the misconception that urban hotspots are destined to dominate digital success and growth. Rather, small businesses in any locale can succeed when they are empowered by eBay’s digital tools and level-playing field marketplace. That is what makes this story so powerful. eBay is not simply participating in Germany’s economy; the marketplace is helping small businesses create economic strength well beyond the country’s traditional hot spots, including in Districts where the starting conditions are objectively weaker. eBay shows that entrepreneurial strength in Germany is far more widely distributed than traditional economic maps suggest.