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Government Bargains

By Karen D. Schwartz   Government Enterprise

Not too long ago, the places to look for government-sponsored bargains were police auctions and army-navy surplus stores. Today, a growing number of Web sites specialize in selling government surplus at bargain prices.

Agencies of all sorts-- from the Treasury Department to the U.S. Marshals Service to individual counties--are selling surplus goods through these sites. Among them:

GovLiquidation.com handles the entire sale process--everything from warehousing and logistics, customer service, and buyer transportation to funds collection, documentation handling, and enforcing unique terms and conditions. The site charges a 20%-to-50% commission, depending on services rendered. It has seen as many as 46,000 bids from 1,700 individual bidders in a 48-hour period.

Bid4Assets.com follows the eBay model, never taking ownership of property. Customers visit Bid4Assets to gather information about products and properties. The site provides value-added services, such as product promotion and customer service, and it works on commission.

GovernmentAuctions.org, a subsidiary of Cyweb Holdings, takes another approach. It acts as a clearinghouse for local, state, and federal auctions. Customers pay $39.95 per year to access the listings, which currently consist of about 1,600 live and online government auctions. Once customers find items they want, they visit the auction sites to carry out the bid process.

Photo by Michael Shelley/Stone

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What are your plans for implementing Mic
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○ An upgrade is scheduled for as soon a
can get our hands on it.

○ We'll probably do it, but not until it's be
out for at least six months or longer.

○ Let others work out the bugs; we'll sta
away for at least a year.

○ No plans to implement anytime soon.

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