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## SPECIAL REPORTS

### Government Starts eBay-Style Auctions

- VIDEO: [Dorothy Tucker reports.](#)

Jan 6, 2004 4:38 pm US/Central

**CHICAGO (CBS 2)** The government has started its own auction site to get rid of stolen goods and unclaimed property from around the country.

You'll find fancy cars, motorcycles and cell phones that once belonged to convicted drug dealers. The IRS has expensive furniture, boats, and swimming pools. The Department of Housing is auctioning off homes, buildings and even vacant lots.

These are some of the best bargains on the Web.

"I've bought 200 items, maybe more," said Karen Lenahan, a prolific Internet shopper.

"This 1906 doll. I paid \$10 for her and she's worth about \$1300," Lenahan said.

But Karen didn't get this great deal on the popular eBay. Her favorite auction site is operated by the federal government. Lenahan has had bought rings, watches, camcorders and more on firstgov.gov.

"This is my Neimen Marcus jacket. It's \$279, still with the price tag attached. I paid \$40," Lenahan said.

Why are the items so cheap? These are goods seized by the IRS, Defense Department, U.S. Marshal's office, and other agencies. What's for sale? Just about anything – from personal property, real estate and automobiles to boats, recreational vehicles and time shares.

You can also find government goods on dozens of other auction sites like stealitback.com. These sites offer confiscated or unclaimed items from police departments across the country. There are often enough bargains to fill up huge warehouses.

"More TV's, transformers, sporting goods equipment, radios, Walkmans,

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- <http://www.aceauctioneers.com>
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- <http://www.firstgov.gov>
- <http://www.government-auctions-guide.com>
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JAG
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- 10:00 p.m.  
CBS 2 News
- 10:35 p.m.  
David Letterman

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Playstations. Everyday we're bringing more and more trucks of items in from the police department, and processing them through out warehouse. On an hourly basis, items are going up on our site," said Tom Lane with the Property Bureau.

And anyone buying these items are actually being patriotic.

"Auctions are a good deal for the taxpayer, because not only does it raise money that can be used in place of tax dollars, but it also takes those items off our rolls so we can longer have to pay for the upkeep and maintenance on them," said Casey Coleman with the General Services Administration.

That may be, for for shoppers like Lenahan, it's a good bargain.

"I love it. Nobody can deny a good deal and it's a steal at times," she said.

When you look at the Web sites, you'll find a number of houses and other properties from the Chicago area, but you won't find any merchandise.

That's because Chicago and state police still sell stolen goods the old fashioned way with live auctions.

Dorothy Tucker

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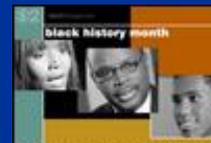
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