

Can Government be a Good eBay? The Use of Online Auctions in the Sale of Surplus Property

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E-commerce, and online auctions in particular, represent important examples of how information and communication technologies have been employed by public organizations to gain benefits in both efficiency and effectiveness. While online auctions have widely been used by governments around the world to drive down procurement costs, they have been seldom used as means for revenue maximization. In this article, we discuss the three-year experience gained by New York State in the use of online auctions for the sale of surplus inventory and property.

This case study, besides representing an example of a best practice for other US state and local governments as well as European Governments, also provides an interesting starting point to address a number of research questions such as the ability of governmental organizations to meet private sector standard; the measurement of returns on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) investments; and the new possible roles played by transparency in the migration toward online models.

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