

SURVIVAL GUIDE

Shopping for auction sites

IF YOU'RE looking for the biggest and most popular auction website, you can't go past eBay Australia.

With millions of customers and thousands of products, you'll likely find what you're looking for. But eBay's decision to force use of PayPal — which is owned by eBay — is motivating some users to seek alternatives.

Fortunately, a few sites are worth considering.

Oztion (www.oztion.com.au) is the second-largest auction website in Australia with more than 200,000 registered users and half a million items for sale.

As with eBay, Oztion offers a choice of auction-style listings or "buy it now", where sellers offer items at a fixed price.

Oztion has a similar fee structure to eBay. However, a basic listing is free with higher overall commission for items that sell. Unlike eBay, as a seller you can choose how customers pay you, potentially saving you money on the transaction.

Bang4Bucks.com.au has just been launched by a group of Australian traders who wanted to provide a cheaper auction service with better customer support.

Because the site is new I had trouble finding much to buy, but this will change if it succeeds in growing a membership base.

A US company called Wigix (www.wigix.com) aims to make the process of matching buyers and sellers easier with an exchange-style website where buyers list the amount they are prepared to pay for an item, and sellers can decide to sell goods at the offer price.

Like Oztion, listing items for sale is free and if your item sells for less than \$25 there are no fees.

It's a twist on the popular auction model and makes it much easier to sell popular commodity items. When I checked the site, for example, items such as the iPod, Burberry bags and Oakley sunglasses appeared as the most popular items.

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