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(54) **METHOD AND SYSTEM TO IMPLEMENT SELLER AUTHORIZED BUYING PRIVILEGES WITHIN A NETWORK-BASED SHOPPING FACILITY**

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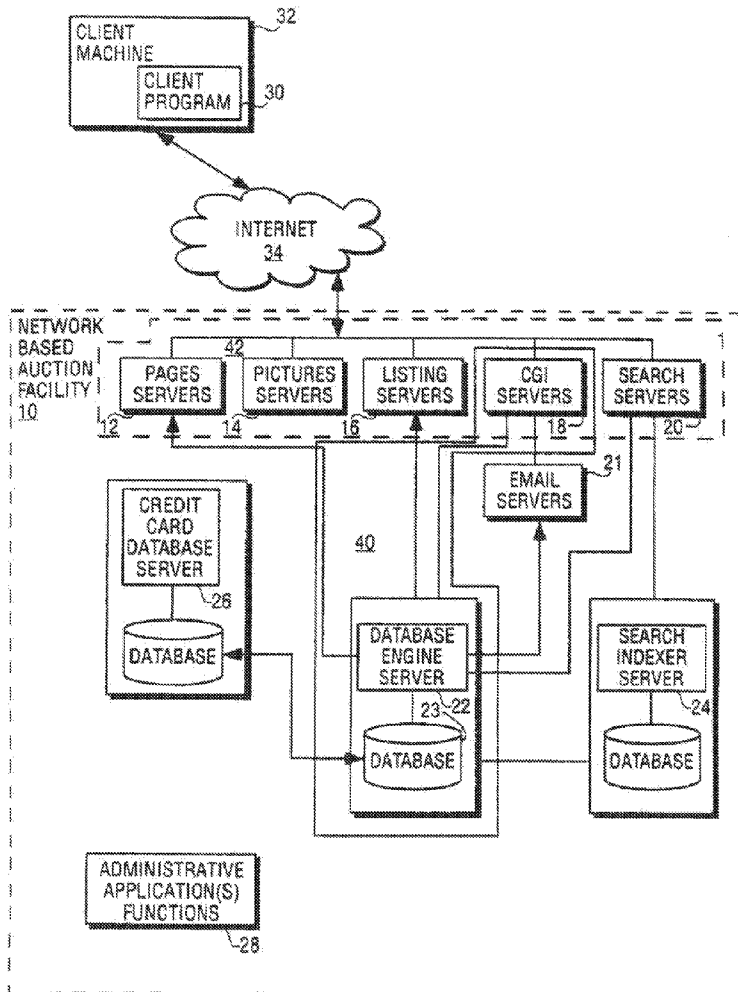(22) Filed: **Feb. 9, 2012**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method that commences by receiving an item identifier, over a network, from a seller on a network-based commerce facility, the item identifier identifying a particular sales listing that describes an item that is listed for sale by the seller on the network-based commerce facility as requiring bidders to be pre-approved to bid on the item. The method continues by automatically recording the item identifier in a database.
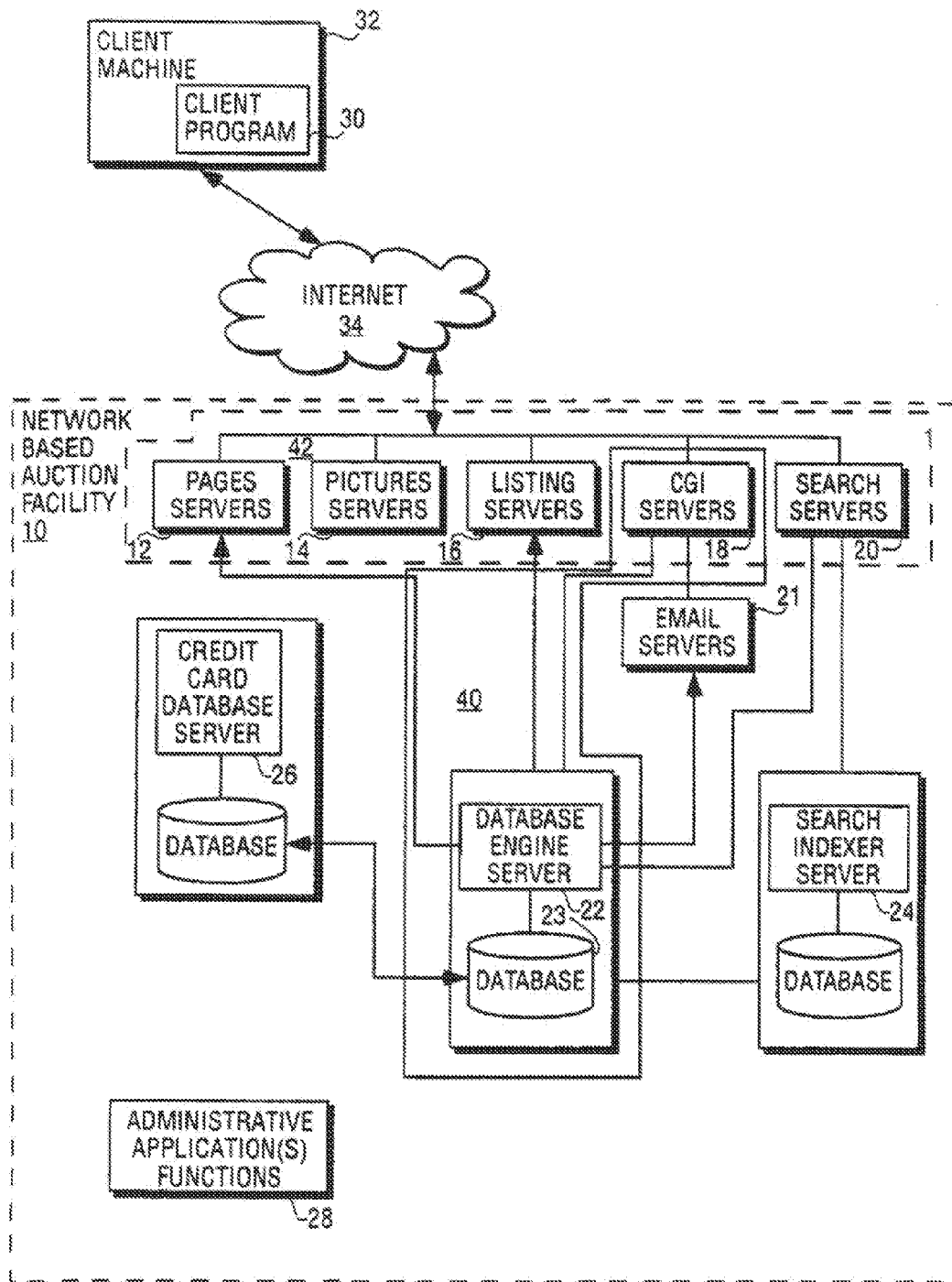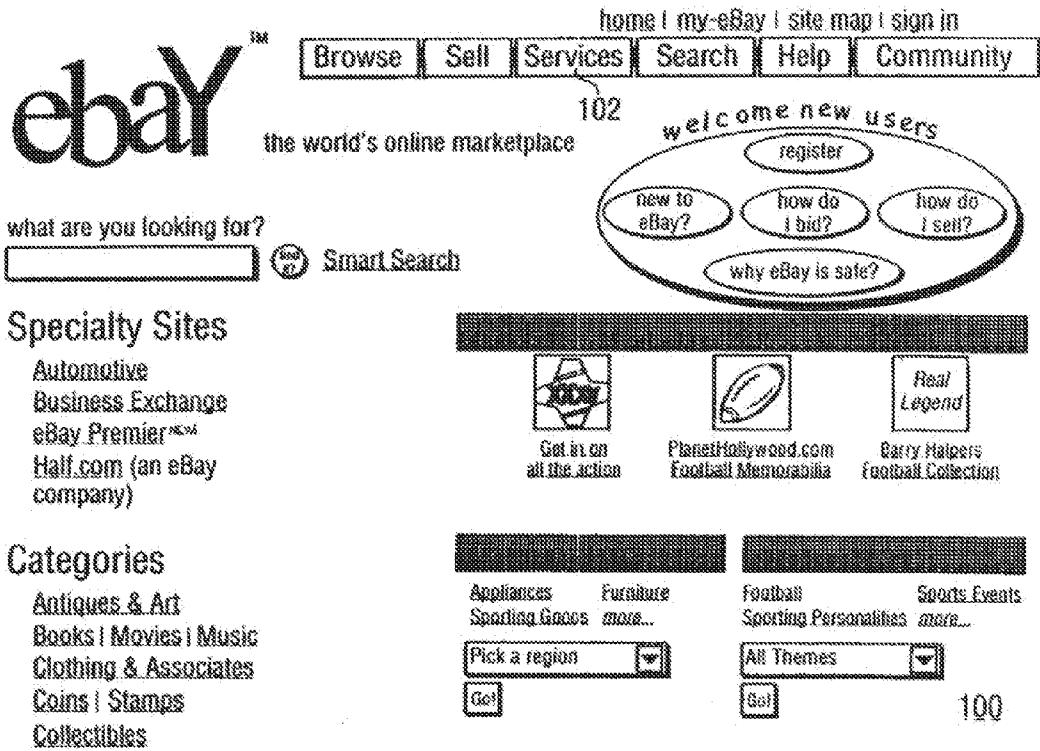
FIG. 1

home | my-eBay | site map | sign in

| Browse | Sell | Services | Search | Help | Community |

ebaY ™

102

the world's online marketplace

welcome new users

register

new to eBay?

how do I bid?

how do I sell?

why eBay is safe?

what are you looking for?

Smart Search

Specialty Sites

Automotive
Business Exchange
eBay Premier ™
Half.com (an eBay company)

Categories

Antiques & Art
Books | Movies | Music
Clothing & Associates
Coins | Stamps
Collectibles

Get in on all the action

PlanetHollywood.com
Football Memorabilia

Real Legend

Barry Halpers Football Collection

Appliances   Furniture
Sporting Goods   more...

Football   Sports Events
Sporting Personalities more...

Pick a region

All Themes

Go!

Go!

100

FIG. 2

home | my-eBay | site map | sign in

Browse	Sell	Services	Search	Help	Community

overview	registration	buying and selling	my eBay	about me	feedback forum	safe harbor

▶ Check out LIVE auctions on eBay

[Search] tips

☐ Search titles and descriptions

Pre-Approve Bidders

Create your own pre-approved bidder list for any item and only allow those on your list to bid.
Please use this feature cautiously as it may limit the number of bids on your item.

Your User ID: [202]
You can also use your email address

Your Password: [204]
Forgot your password?

<u>200</u>

Are you tired of typing in your User ID and Password over and over
again? Save time by signing in. (You may also sign in securely).

FIG. 3

Pre-Approve Bidders

<u>300</u>

Here's what you can do:

- To add and remove bidders from your list click Edit.
- To deactivate this feature and allow **all users** to bid click Deactivate.
- You and edit or deactivate your pre-approved bidder list up until your listing ends.

Items with Pre-Approved Bidders

Item	Title	Time Left	Actions
123456789	<u>Paul McCARTNEY's songs PIANO notes</u> 302	0d 10h 50m	<u>Edit</u> <u>Deactivate</u> 306 308
123456789	<u>Paul McCARTNEY's songs PIANO notes + lyrics</u> 304	Ended	<u>View</u>

+ <u>Add a new item</u> with pre-approved bidders
310

FIG. 4

Pre-Approve Bidders

Edit Item

Edit your approved bidders in the box below. View tips to pre approve your bidders.

402

Item No.	12345678
Add or remove pre-approved bidders	Enter each bidder's User's IDs. Place a comma between each User ID or just press the Enter key on your keyboard to display each name on a separate line. View an example. vicky123 vicky12 vicky1 *404* teddiedd mickcik johnra mautau

400

FIG. 5

500

PETER PAN URBANA, MARYLAND glass
Item #470476060

Collectibles: Advertising: General

Currently: **$20000.00**   First Bid **$20000.00**

504 Quantity: **1**   # of bids **0** bid history | with emails

Time Left: **4 days, 21 hours +** Location **BROADTOP, PA**

Country **USA**

Started   Oct-16-00 11:43:21 PDT   ☐ mail this auction to a friend
Ends   Oct-21-00 11:43:21 PDT   ☐ watch this item
Seller   **susan1073 (115)** ☐   about me
(Rating)   502
          view comments in seller's Feedback Profile |
          view seller's other auctions | ask seller a question

High bid   --

Payment   See item description for payment methods accepted

Shipping Will ship to United States only, See item description for
          shipping charges

Update   **Seller:** If this item has received no bids, you may revise it.
item

Description

<item description >

FIG. 6A

eB....21 PDT) - PETER PAN INN URBANA, MARYLAND glas   Page 2 of 3

BIDDING

PETER PAN INN URBANA, MARYLAND glass
Item #470476060

Notice: This listing is restricted to pre-approved bidders only.

See if you're allowed to bid on this item

Opening bid: $2.00

Your maximum bid: ⬚

(Minimum bid: $2.00)

▬▬▬▬▬

510

eBay will bid incrementally on your behalf **up to your maximum bid,** which is kept secret from other eBay users. The eBay term for this is proxy bidding.

Your bid is a contact - Place a bid only if you're serious about buying the item. If you are the winning bidder, you will enter into legally binding contract to purchase the item from the seller.

How to Bid ▣

1. Register to bid - if you haven't already. It's free!

2. Learn about this seller - read feedback comments left by others.

3. Know the details - read the item description and payment & shipping terms closely.

4. If you have questions - contact the seller susan1073 *before* you bid.

5. Place your bid!

eBay purchases are insured.

500

FIG. 6B

Dear <Buyer name>

This item is restricted to pre-approved bidders. You may place a bid once
this seller has approved you. In order to get approved, you'll need to contact
the seller and request to be added to the pre approved bidder list for this
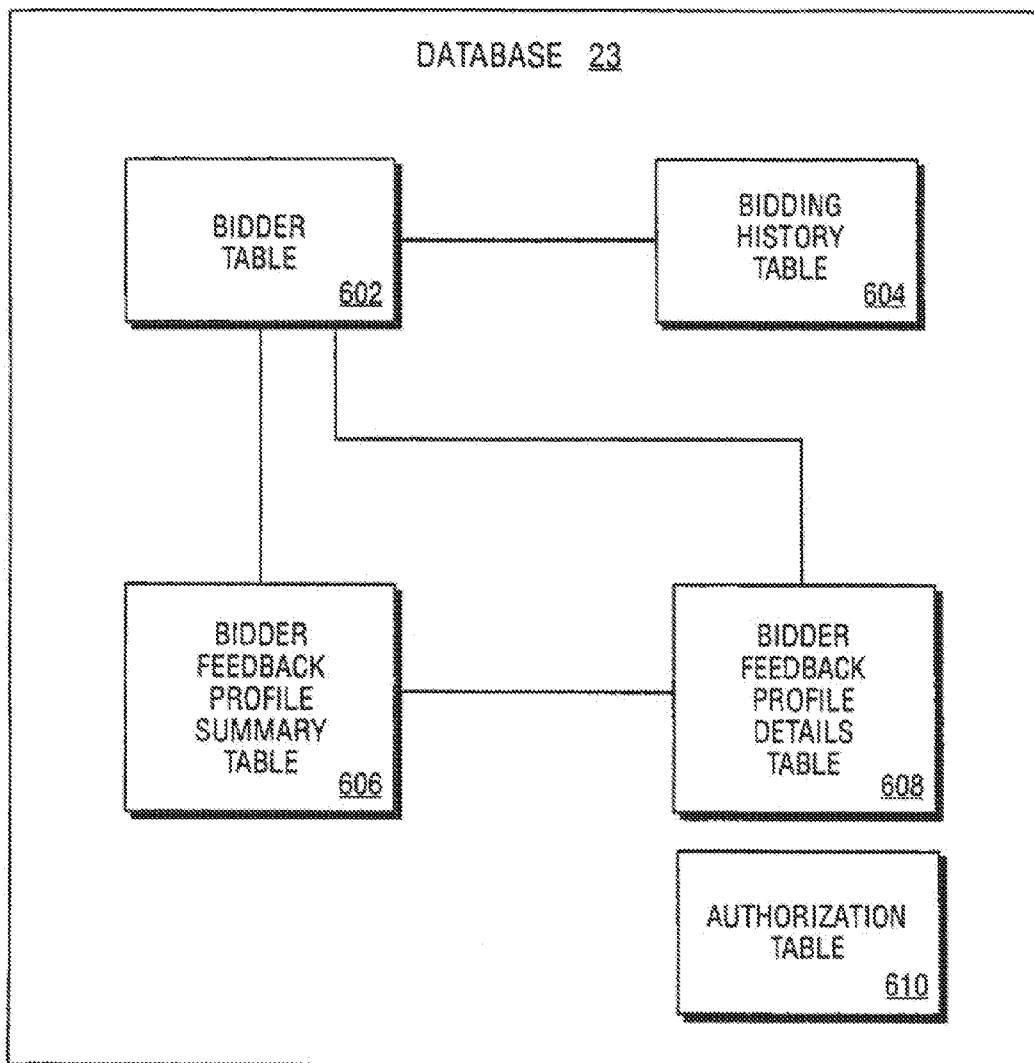item.   520

FIG. 6C

DATABASE 23

```
┌─────────────────┐                    ┌─────────────────┐
│                 │                    │    BIDDING      │
│     BIDDER      │────────────────────│    HISTORY      │
│     TABLE       │                    │    TABLE        │
│            602  │                    │            604  │
└─────────────────┘                    └─────────────────┘


┌─────────────────┐                    ┌─────────────────┐
│     BIDDER      │                    │     BIDDER      │
│    FEEDBACK     │                    │    FEEDBACK     │
│    PROFILE      │────────────────────│    PROFILE      │
│    SUMMARY      │                    │    DETAILS      │
│     TABLE       │                    │     TABLE       │
│            606  │                    │            608  │
└─────────────────┘                    └─────────────────┘

                                       ┌─────────────────┐
                                       │ AUTHORIZATION   │
                                       │     TABLE       │
                                       │            610  │
                                       └─────────────────┘
```

FIG. 7

BIDDER ID	TOTAL SCORE	TOTAL NEGATIVE	TOTAL POSITIVE	NO. OF RETRACTIONS
702	704	706	708	710

806

FIG. 8

ITEM NO.	COMMENT	TYPE	DATE	RESPONSE	REBUTTAL	COMMENTATOR
802	804	806	808	810	812	814

FIG. 9

900

SELLER LOGS ON.
902

SELLER IDENTIFIES
ITEM.
904

ALERT TEXT
906

POTENTIAL BIDDER
SEEKS PRE-APPROVAL
908

SELLER RETRIEVES BIDDERS
BIDDING HISTORY AND PROFILE
INFORMATION.
910

SELLER MAKES
DETERMINATION

912

NO

BIDDER MAY NOT
BID ON ITEM.
916

YES

POTENTIAL BIDDER
IS ADDED TO PRE-APPROVE
BIDDERS LIST.
914

SELLER MAY EDIT PRE-APPROVE
BIDDERS LIST.
918

FIG. 10

METHOD AND SYSTEM TO IMPLEMENT SELLER AUTHORIZED BUYING PRIVILEGES WITHIN A NETWORK-BASED SHOPPING FACILITY

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation application of U.S. Utility application Ser. No. 11/852,868, filed on Sep. 10, 2007, which claims the benefit of U.S. Utility application Ser. No. 09/881,911, filed on Jun. 15, 2001, which claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 60/250,637 filed on Nov. 30, 2000, which are incorporated by reference herein.

FIELD

[0002] The present disclosure relates to electronic commerce. Specifically, the present disclosure provides for a seller to select shoppers to provide buying privileges to buy an offering offered for sale by the seller within a network-based shopping facility such as, for example, an Internet-based shopping facility.

ART BACKGROUND

[0003] More and more Internet users are realizing the ease and convenience of buying and selling online by way of person-to-person online trading pioneered by eBay Inc., the assignee of the present disclosure. As a result, collectors, hobbyists, small dealers, unique item seekers, bargain hunters, and other consumers are able to buy and sell millions of items at various online shopping sites.

[0004] The success of the online shopping sites, such as the Internet-based shopping facilities, depends upon their ability to provide enjoyable shopping experiences and easy-to-use and reliable environments in which buyers and sellers can conduct business efficiently. The online shopping sites can offer their services by facilitating auctions or by allowing sellers to offer their offerings for fixed prices. The current Internet-based shopping facilities have been presented with public relations risks due to excessive bid retraction and cancellation activities. For example, the reputation of eBay Inc. as a safe trading place was threatened because of the excessive bid retraction and cancellation activities during the recent auction of the Titanic deck chair and other high profile listings. It is estimated that as many as eighty percent of the bids made on the Internet-based shopping facilities are bogus.

[0005] In the light of the foregoing, there is a need to enhance the traders' trust of the online shopping facilities. Particularly, it would be valuable and useful to provide a seller with a degree of confidence that a specific shopper is sincere about bidding on the seller's auction listing or offering to buy the seller's fixed price listing.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] The present invention is illustrated by way of example and not limitation in the figures of the accompanying drawings, in which like references indicate similar elements, and in which:

[0007] FIG. 1 is block diagram illustrating an exemplary network-based commerce facility in the form of an Internet-based auction facility 10;

[0008] FIG. 2 illustrates the web home page for an exemplary Internet-based auction facility;

[0009] FIG. 3 illustrates the pre-approve bidders main web page for an exemplary Internet-based auction facility;

[0010] FIG. 4 illustrates the pre-approve bidders logon web page for an exemplary Internet-based auctions facility;

[0011] FIG. 5 illustrates the pre-approve bidders form web page for an exemplary Internet-based auctions facility;

[0012] FIGS. 6A and 6B illustrate the view item web page for an exemplary Internet-based auction facility;

[0013] FIG. 6C illustrates an exemplary error message;

[0014] FIG. 7 is a database diagram illustrating an exemplary database for the Internet-based auction facility;

[0015] FIG. 8 is a diagrammatic representation of an exemplary embodiment of the bidder feedback profile summary table;

[0016] FIG. 9 is a diagrammatic representation of one exemplary embodiment of the bidder feedback profile details table; and

[0017] FIG. 10 illustrates the flow chart of one embodiment of the method for seller authorized bidding through an Internet-based auction facility.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0018] A method and system to implement seller authorized buying privileges within a network-based shopping facility are described. The present invention proposes a method and system whereby a seller can select shoppers to provide buying privileges to buy an offering offered for sale by the seller. The buying privileges can include the authorization to bid on the seller's auction listing and the authorization to offer to buy the seller's fixed price listing. A listing may, for example, comprise an item or service offering. In this description, the terms listing, item and offering are used interchangeably. Unauthorized bidders are blocked from bidding on the item.

[0019] An advantage of the present disclosure is that the seller does not have to manually monitor shopping activities because only the shoppers pre-approved by the seller are allowed to bid on or offer to buy the seller's listing. The shoppers also benefit from the present disclosure because a healthier trading environment is created because only the pre-approved candidates are allowed to compete with them. The community benefits in general because the shopping facility is perceived to have a safer trading place for the community because only the serious shoppers are allowed to bid on and offer to buy the listings. Seller authorized buying privileges can be requested by any seller with privileges to list on the shopping facility and for any listing, although the sellers with high profile listings would have more interest to do so. The present disclosure is extremely useful for high profile listings: charity listings, special events and holiday promotions.

[0020] In the ensuing description, a method and system to implement seller authorized buying privileges within a network-based auction facility are described. It will be appreciated that the method and system are also applicable to the fixed priced listings. In this description, the terms pre-approval and authorization are used interchangeably. In various embodiments, the seller is empowered to use different mechanisms to pre-approve bidders. For example, the seller may view a potential bidder's bidding history and profile to determine whether or not to pre-approve the bidder to bid on a listing. It is understood that if the vetting process is too strict, the conversion rate on the item will be affected. To mitigate, in one embodiment, the auction facility educates the sellers to

use proper vetting mechanism to choose their bidders. Also, in one embodiment, the seller may remove the pre-approval restriction anytime during the auction. For example, the seller may wish to take the risk to open the listing to all potential bidders if the pre-approval restriction produces no bids or the bids amounts are low. In one embodiment, the seller may add and remove the pre-approval restriction multiple times during the auction.

[0021] In one embodiment, the seller may remove a bidder from the pre-approved list after the seller has added the bidder to the pre-approved list. In one embodiment, the seller may add bidders to and remove bidders from the pre-approved list multiple times during the auction of the listing. In one embodiment, the seller may request the pre-approval of bidders for his/her listing without specifying any bidders initially, and then add the bidders to the pre-approved list from time to time. In one embodiment, the seller has the choice to apply the pre-approve bidders list from a prior or current listing to all ongoing listings with the auction facility and/or any future listings. In one embodiment, the seller may pre-approve the bidders individually or in a bulk. In one embodiment, the seller may view the list of the pre-approved bidders and their respective Usernames/email addresses by logging on to the auction facility web site and providing the listing identification number.

[0022] In one embodiment, the bidders within the United States of America as well as international bidders may be pre-approved to bid on the listing. In one embodiment, only the predetermined currencies can be used to bid on a listing.

[0023] In the following description, for purposes of explanation, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. It will be evident, however, to one skilled in the art that the present invention may be practiced without these specific details.

Terminology/Definitions

[0024] Unauthorized bidders include bidders who are not pre-approved by the seller to bid on a particular item. Authorized bidders include bidders who are pre-approved to bid on a particular item by the seller. Items include auction listings. Bidders include bidders and potential bidder.

Auction Facility

[0025] FIG. 1 is block diagram illustrating an exemplary network-based commerce facility in the form of an Internet-based auction facility 10. While an exemplary embodiment of the present invention is described within the context of an auction facility, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the invention will find application in many different types of computer-based, and network-based, commerce facilities.

[0026] The auction facility includes an authorization module 40 and a communications module 42. The authorization module 40 includes the CGI servers 18 that provide an intelligent interface to the back-end of facility 10, database engine server 22 and database 23. The communications module 42 includes one or more of a number of types of front-end servers, namely the page servers 12 that deliver web pages (e.g., markup language documents), picture servers 14 that dynamically deliver images to be displayed within Web pages, listing servers 16, CGI servers 18, and search servers

20 that handle search requests to the facility 10. E-mail servers 21 provide, inter alia, automated e-mail communications to the users of the facility 10.

[0027] The back-end servers include a database engine server 22, a search index server 24 and a credit card database server 26, each of which maintains and facilitates access to a respective database.

[0028] The Internet-based auction facility 10 may be accessed by a client program 30, such as a browser (e.g., the Internet Explorer distributed by Microsoft Corp. of Redmond, Wash.) that executes on a client machine 32 and accesses the facility 10 via a network such as, for example, the Internet 34. The sellers and the buyers (or bidders) access the auction facility through the client machines 32. Other examples of networks that a client may utilize to access the auction facility 10 include a wide area network (WAN), a local area network (LAN), a wireless network (e.g., a cellular network), or the Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS) network.

[0029] FIG. 2 illustrates the web home page for an exemplary Internet-based auction facility. The home page 100 includes a "seller services" link 102, which provides access to the seller services page. The seller services page, in turn, includes a buying and selling tools link, which provides access to the buying and selling tools page. The buying and selling tools page, in turn, includes a pre-approve bidders link, which provides access to the pre-approve bidders logon web page.

[0030] FIG. 3 illustrates the pre-approve bidders logon web page for an exemplary Internet-based auctions facility. The pre-approve logon page 200 prompts the seller to provide a proper username 202 and password 204. When the seller provides the proper username 202 and password 204, the logon page 200 provides access to the pre-approve bidders main web page.

[0031] FIG. 4 illustrates the pre-approve bidders main web page for an exemplary Internet-based auction facility. The pre-approve bidders main page 300 displays the currently active 302 and the past 304 auction listings for the particular seller. The pre-approve bidders main page 300 includes an "edit" link 306, which allows the seller to edit the pre-approve bidders list for the corresponding listing 302. The editing can include adding bidders to or subtracting bidders from the pre-approve bidders list. The pre-approve bidders main page 300 also includes a "deactivate" link 308, which allows the seller to deactivate the pre-approve bidders list such that the shoppers need not seek the seller's authorization to bid on the listing. If the seller removes the pre-approval restriction during the auction, the auction facility 10 requests the seller to inform the pre-approved bidders that the listing is now available to all potential bidders. In one embodiment, the seller can inform the pre-approved bidders of the removal of the pre-approval restriction through email. The pre-approve bidders main page 300 also includes an "add a new item" link 310, which provides access to the pre-approve bidders form page.

[0032] FIG. 5 illustrates the pre-approve bidders form web page for an exemplary Internet-based auction facility. The pre-approve bidders form page 400 prompts the seller to provide an item number 402. The item number 402 can be provided by the auction facility 10 and corresponds to the item for which the seller wishes to pre-approve the bidders. The form page 400 also prompts the seller to add or remove the identifiers 404 for the bidders whom the seller wishes to authorize to bid on the particular item. The identifier 404 can

include the bidder Username. The bidders identifiers **404** that are added to the form page **400** are stored in the authorized bidders table described below with reference to FIG. **7**. The view item web page described below with references to FIGS. **6A** and **6B** is updated to include the information submitted through the form page **400**. In one embodiment, if the seller's username **302** does not match with the item number **402**, the auction facility **10** prompts an error message asking the seller to recheck the item number **402**. In one embodiment, if the Username for the bidder does not match with a Username in the bidder table in the database **23**, the auction facility **10** prompts an error message indicating that the bidder is not registered, suspended, terminated or merged.

[0033] FIGS. **6A** and **6B** illustrate the view item web page for an exemplary Internet-based auction facility. If the seller has requested pre-approval restriction for the item, the auction facility **10** flashes an error message **520** when the unauthorized bidders attempt to hid on the item. An exemplary error message **520** is illustrated in FIG. **6C**. The error message **520** informs the unauthorized bidder to contact the seller to seek the pre-approval to bid. The error message **520** can appear in the bidder box area **510**. In one embodiment, if the potential bidder is on the pre-approve bidders list to bid on this item, the auction facility **10** prompts him/her with a message to continue with the bidding process.

[0034] The view item page **500** includes an "about me" page link **502**, which provides access to the about me web page. The unauthorized bidders may visit the about me page for more details regarding the seller including the seller's vetting process/guidelines. In one embodiment, the "about me" page link **502** is added in the item description area **504**. In one embodiment, when the seller removes the pre-approval restriction, the restricted message is removed from the bid box area. In one embodiment, the seller can request pre-approval restriction after the auction has begun for the remaining time on the auction. In such a case, in one embodiment, the seller can manually cancel the bids made prior to the implementation of the pre-approval restriction.

Database Structure

[0035] The auction facility **10** provides the seller with information regarding the potential bidder such that the seller can make an informed determination regarding whether to pre-approve the bidder. The information may include the bidder's bidding history and feedback profile. The information is included in the database **23**. In one embodiment, the seller provides the auction facility **10** with the bidder contact information to obtain information regarding the bidder. The bidder contact information can include the bidder Username or email address. The seller may obtain the bidder contact information through the bidder or the auction facility **10**. In one embodiment, the auction facility **10** matches the contact information provided by the seller with the contact information stored in the database **23** to provide the seller with user information.

[0036] FIG. **7** is a database diagram illustrating an exemplary database **23**, maintained by and accessed via the database engine server **22**, which at least partially implements and supports the auction facility **10**. The database **23** may, in one embodiment, be implemented as a relational database, and includes a number of tables having entries, or records, that are linked by indices and keys. In an alternative embodiment, the database **23** may be implemented as a collection of objects in an object-oriented database.

[0037] The database **23** includes a bidder table **602**, which contains a listing of the registered bidders of the auction facility **10**. The bidder table **602** can also be referred to as the user table because each user may operate as both a bidder and a seller within the auction facility **10**. The bidder table includes a link to a bidding history table **604** for each registered bidder. Each bidding history table **604** is populated with the particular bidder's bidding history records. Each bidding history record may include, inter alia, the title of a listing that was/is being auctioned via the auction facility **10**, the bidder's bidding amount, and bid retraction information. The bid retraction information indicates whether the bidder retracted his/her bid on a particular item. Two other tables are also shown linked to the bidder table **602**, namely a bidder feedback profile summary table **606** and a bidder feedback profile details table **608**. The database **23** also includes an authorized bidders table **610** for each item for which the seller has requested the pre-approval of the bidders. The authorized bidders table **610** includes the list of bidders identifiers **404** that are authorized to bid on the particular item. The bidder identifier **404** can include the bidder Username.

[0038] FIG. **8** is a diagrammatic representation of an exemplary embodiment of the bidder feedback profile summary table **606**. The summary table **606** stores a summary of the feedback information regarding the bidders. Sellers and bidders that have experienced a particular bidder's behavior during the past auctions provide the feedback information (or comments) regarding to the bidder. The summary table **606** includes a bidder identifier column **702** that stores, for each bidder, a bidder identifier providing a pointer to the bidder table **602**. The total score column **704** stores the total number of feedback comments (e.g., negative, positive and neutral) received for each bidder. The total negative column **706** stores the total number of negative feedback comments received for each bidder, and the total positive column **708** similarly stores the total number of positive feedback comments received for each bidder. The number of retractions column **710** stores the total number of threads that each bidder has retracted from auctions.

[0039] The summary table **606** provides a good summary of the impressions of the users of the auction facility **10** regarding a particular bidder. Each bidder of the summary table **606** is linked to a bidder feedback profile details table **608**. It is contemplated that other embodiments of the summary table **606** can include additional information such as whether the bidder has a credit card on file with the auction facility and whether the bidder is agreeable to use an online payment service (e.g., Billpoint).

[0040] FIG. **9** is a diagrammatic representation of one embodiment of the bidder feedback profile details table **608**. The details table **608** is populated with entries reflecting the details of each feedback comment or opinion submitted by a user to the auction facility **10** regarding a particular bidder. Typically, the users submitting the comments include sellers on whose auction listings the bidder has bid in the past. In one exemplary embodiment, the users are only permitted to provide feedback pertaining to a transaction upon conclusion of that transaction. The feedback details table **608** includes the item number column **802** that identifies the items for which the comments were submitted. The comment column **804** stores the actual texts of the feedbacks, comments, or opinions. The type column **806** stores the indications as to whether the comments are positive, negative or neutral. The date column **808** stores the dates on which the feedbacks, comments

or opinions were received. The response column **810** stores the texts of the responses submitted by the bidder in response to the comments texts stored in column **804**. Similarly, the rebuttal column **812** stores the texts of the rebuttals to such responses. The commentator column **814** stores the identifiers of the users that submitted the original comments stored in column **804**. It is appreciated that further dates and other descriptive information may also populate the details table **608**.

[0041] The tables **602**, **604**, **606** and **608** include information that can provide the seller with valuable insights to evaluate the potential bidders. In one embodiment, the information contained in the tables **602**, **604**, **606** and **608** is easily accessible to the sellers. In one embodiment, the seller can provide the bidder's identifier such as the Username or email address to access the information stored in the tables **602**, **604**, **606** and **608**. It is contemplated that the databases of alternate embodiments can include additional tables that provide additional bidders related information.

[0042] FIG. **10** illustrates the flow chart of one embodiment of the method for seller authorized bidding through an Internet-based auction facility. It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that with certain modifications the method is applicable in many different types of computer-based, and network-based, commerce facilities.

[0043] At block **902**, a seller registered with the auction web site logs on to the site. If the seller were already logged on, then he/she need not logon again to use request the pre-approval restriction. The suspended, merged, or terminated seller who cannot use any other feature on the auction site is prohibited from using the seller authorized bidding feature. At block **904**, the seller identifies the item for which he wishes to add the pre-approval restriction. At block **906**, an alert text appears on the item web page to alert the potential bidders to get a pre-approval from the seller to bid on the item. The item web page or another web page linked to the item web page provides the potential bidder with the seller contact information and vetting process information. At block **908**, the potential bidder contacts the seller and requests permission to bid on the item. It is understood that the bidder must be registered with and logged on to the auction web site. The bidder provides the seller with the bidder auction site identifier such as the Username or email address. At block **910**, the seller uses the bidder's auction site identifier to retrieve the bidder's bidding history and profile information. At block **912**, the seller determines whether to add the bidder to the pre-approve bidders list. At block **914**, if the determination is positive, the seller adds the potential bidder identifier to the pre-approve bidders list. The bidder identifier is then added to an appropriate authorization table. At block **916**, if the determination is negative, the bidder identifier is not added to the authorization table. In one embodiment, the potential bidder is informed through email that the seller has rejected his/her request for pre-approval. At block **918**, the seller may edit the pre-approve bidder list. The editing can include the addition of the potential bidder to the list that was rejected at block **912**. The editing can also include the removal of a bidder from the list.

[0044] When a bidder tried to bid on an item, the authorization module checks whether the bidder identifier is included in the item authorization table. If the bidder identifier is included in the authorization table, the bidder is allowed to bid on the item. If the bidder identifier is not included in the item authorization table, the bidder receives an error message.

[0045] Thus, a method and system to implement seller authorized bidding within a network-based auction facility have been described. Although the present invention has been described with reference to specific exemplary embodiments, it will be evident that various modifications and changes may be made to these embodiments without departing from the broader spirit and scope of the invention. Accordingly, the specification and drawings are to be regarded in an illustrative rather than a restrictive sense.

[0046] In addition, the methods as described above can be stored in memory of a computer system as a set of instructions to be executed. Also, the instructions to perform the methods as described above could alternatively be stored on other forms of computer-readable mediums, including magnetic and optical disks. For example, the method of the present invention can be stored on computer-readable mediums, such as magnetic disks or optical disks that are accessible via a disk drive (or computer-readable medium drive).

What is claimed is:

1. A method including:
   receiving an item identifier, over a network, from a seller on a network-based commerce facility, the item identifier identifying a particular sales listing that describes an item that is listed for sale by the seller on the network-based commerce facility as requiring bidders to be pre-approved to bid on the item, the receiving done at least in part through the use of one or more processors; and
   automatically recording the item identifier in a database.

2. The method of claim **1**, wherein the item identifier includes an item number.

3. The method of claim **1**, further including:
   identifying the seller is not associated with the item that is identified with the item identifier; and
   communicating an error message to the seller asking the seller to recheck the item identifier.

4. The method of claim **1**, further including:
   receiving the item identifier, over the network, from the seller; and
   deactivating the requirement that bidders be pre-approved to bid on the item that is described by the particular sales listing that is identified with the item identifier.

5. The method of claim **1**, further including:
   receiving an authorization communication, over the network, at the network-based commerce facility, the authorization communication to authorize a bidder to bid on the item that is described by the particular sale listing that is listed for sale by a seller; and
   at the network-based commerce facility, automatically recording the bidder as authorized to bid on the item that is described by the particular sale listing responsive to the receiving the authorization communication.

6. The method of claim **5**, wherein the network-based commerce facility requires the seller to authorize the bidder before the bidder bids on the particular sales listing.

7. The method of claim **5**, wherein the authorization communication includes a seller request to authorize a plurality of bidders to bid on the particular sale listing, the plurality of bidders including the bidder.

8. The method of claim **5**, wherein the authorization communication includes allowing the seller to add and to remove an authorization restriction multiple times during an auction pertaining to the particular sale listing.

9. The method of claim **8**, including receiving a request communication, the request communication including a bidder request to the seller to authorize the bidder to bid on the particular sale listing.

10. The method of claim **8**, including providing access, to the seller, to a bidding history associated with the bidder and profile information associated with the bidder thereby to assist the seller in determining whether to authorize the bidder to bid on the particular sale listing.

11. The method of claim **10**, wherein the bidding history and the profile information are provided by the network-based commerce facility.

12. The method of claim **11**, wherein the particular sale listing is selected from a group of listings consisting of a charity listing, an events listing and a holiday promotions listing.

13. The method of claim **1**, wherein the network includes the Internet.

14. The method of claim **1**, wherein the network-based commerce facility includes an auction web site.

15. The method of claim **1**, wherein an authorization restriction requirement is displayed on a web page that includes information regarding the particular sale listing.

16. The method of claim **1**, wherein seller vetting process information is displayed on a personalized web page of the seller that is linked to a web page of the particular sale listing.

17. The method of claim **1**, wherein the seller authorizes only a predetermined currency to be used to purchase the particular sale listing that is listed for sale by the seller.

18. The method of claim **1**, wherein the seller authorizes a predetermined geographic area, and wherein if the bidder is within the predetermined geographic area then the bidder is allowed, by the network-based commerce facility, to bid on the particular sale listing that is listed for sale by the seller and if the bidder is outside the predetermined geographic area then the bidder is prevented from bidding on the particular sale listing.

19. A method including:

receiving an item identifier, over a network, from a seller on a network-based commerce facility, the item identifier identifying a particular sales listing that describes an item that is listed for sale by the seller on the network-based commerce facility as requiring buyers to be pre-approved to buy the item, the receiving done at least in part through the use of one or more processors; and

automatically recording the item identifier in a database.

20. The method of claim **19**, further including:

identifying the seller is not associated with the item that is identified with the item identifier; and

communicating an error message to the seller asking the seller to recheck the item identifier.

21. The method of claim **19**, further including:

receiving the item identifier, over the network, from the seller; and

deactivating the requirement that buyers be pre-approved to buy the item.

22. The method of claim **19**, further including:

receiving an authorization communication, over the network, at a network based commerce facility the authorization communication to authorize the buyer to buy the item that is listed for sale that is described by the particular sales listing; and

at the network-based commerce facility, automatically recording the buyer as authorized to buy the item responsive to the authorization communication.

23. A non-transitory computer-readable medium storing instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:

receive an item identifier, over a network, from a seller on a network-based commerce facility, the item identifier identifying a particular sales listing that describes an item that is listed for sale by the seller on the network-based commerce facility as requiring bidders to be pre-approved to bid on the item, the receiving done at least in part through the use of one or more processors; and

automatically record the item identifier in a database.

24. A non-transitory computer-readable medium storing instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:

receive an item identifier, over a network, from a seller on a network-based commerce facility, the item identifier identifying a particular sales listing that describes an item that is listed for sale by the seller on the network-based commerce facility as requiring buyers to he pre-approved to buy the item, the receiving done at least in part through the use of one or more processors; and

automatically record the item identifier in a database.

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