



First of all, welcome to new subscribers! I recently attended the [Colorado Nonprofit Association](#) conference, and spent a wonderful two days speaking with devoted people from all types of organizations. Lots of people entered their names for our raffle and one lucky organization, [Erica Rae's Kids](#), won a free year's subscription to [EasyAuction™](#). I'll be helping this worthy organization hold their first auction ever—hopefully the first of many successful auctions.

As people stopped by the Community Auction Services booth, they asked a lot of questions. This issue covers a couple questions, with more to come in the future. Do you have a question you'd like me to address? Just send me an [email](#).

Be sure to take note of the special offer for new **EasyAuction™** clients for 2012 auctions. You won't want to miss this special one-time offer!

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara".

Ask Sara...CNA Edition

Question: How does digital technology make auction run better?

Sara: Digital technology has revolutionized the process of running auctions! PC-based applications have been around for a long time, and helped gather donation and bidder data, producing necessary auction paperwork (catalog, bid sheets, receipts, etc.). However, unless the organization purchased expensive multiple licenses, one person often got stuck doing all the work!

The advent of online (cloud) auction databases has led to many improvements, including:

- Any number of people can help with data entry--anyone with a computer, an Internet connection and the proper login information can work on the database. This really reduces volunteer burnout, and speeds up sales data entry on auction night.
- Some online systems have modules that allow prospective attendees register for the event and donors enter their own donations. Again, a big time-saver for your staff and volunteers.
- Some systems (though they can be expensive) allow payments to be made via credit card directly through the auction software.

A number of companies offer various types of online auction systems. Obviously, I'd like you to consider using Community Auction Services' [EasyAuction](#), which is intended specifically for nonprofits who want to keep overhead low by using volunteers and existing staff to run their auction.

Question: Does the use of laptops or notebooks at events increase auction sales?

Sara: Although laptops can certainly be used for bidding, and can be effective in some circumstances, there is no evidence that their use actually increases auction sales. However, a company that uses this technology has to charge a higher price for their services to cover the hardware cost, so I doubt that the overall effect is higher net sales.

However, there is an exception. If the layout of the auction makes it difficult for bidders to get to the auction tables, and if bidders are seated at banquet tables, laptops can help bidders continue bidding without having to move from their seat. This may increase sales; again, consider the cost and benefit before deciding on this option.

Anecdotally, I've had a couple of auction attendees give the opinion that the use of laptops/notebooks for bidding made the whole auction event seem impersonal, and not much fun. So if your goal is to provide a friendly and interactive experience, you might want to choose good old paper bid sheets for the silent auction, and the excitement of waving bidder cards for the live auction!