

Buyforeclosedhomes.com? Online auctions are catching on

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AS POTENTIAL buyers seek deep discounts at foreclosure auctions across the five boroughs, some savvy bidders are choosing to skip the crowds.

More companies are conducting auctions online. But experts are divided on how this growing trend could affect the outer boroughs, which have been hit particularly hard by foreclosures.

"It's truly the wave of the future," said [Richard Wyman](#), director of online auction sales at Real Estate [Disposition Corp.](#) in [Irvine, Calif.](#)

His company let online bidders buy properties at the March 8 [Javits Center](#) auction. Today, it is holding an entirely online auction for homes in [Queens](#), [New Jersey](#) and [Pennsylvania](#).

"You have every walk of life coming to the online platform," Wyman said.

But [Anthony Sabino](#), a professor of law and business at [St. John's University](#) in Queens, isn't so sure that's a good thing.

"Because there's a lot of Queens, [Brooklyn](#) and [Bronx](#) homes up for foreclosures, you can expect a substantial amount of them to be auctioned off online," Sabino said. "But if these buyers aren't who they say they are and they don't have the money, then the homes are going to go right back into foreclosure."

Sabino said he's concerned that if a home goes into foreclosure a second time, the price will plummet even further, and that could bring down neighborhood real estate values as well.

Foreclosures in Brooklyn and Queens accounted for 76% of the city's total last year, according to the [Furman Center](#) for Real Estate and Urban Policy at [New York University](#).

Online bidder [Richard Coia](#), 52, of Spencerport, N.Y., finds those concerns a bit far-fetched.

When the real estate litigation attorney registered with Real Estate Disposition Corp., he had to undergo a credit check and be approved before he could bid.

Only then was he able to log into the auction, where he bid on properties while listening to the real-life auctioneer.

Web bidding saves him time and money, said Coia, who made a successful bid this month on an [upstate New York](#) home auctioned off in Pennsylvania - all without leaving his own home.

"Once you familiarize yourself with it, it's very, very easy," he said. But to avoid surprises, he cautioned potential bidders to visit the properties in person.

"You should never bid blindly," Coia said.

As technology improves and the foreclosure crisis continues, real estate experts believe online auctions will grow further.

"It's sort of a natural progression," said [Jonathan Miller](#), president of [Manhattan](#) real estate appraisal firm [Miller Samuel Inc.](#)

"In the age of [eBay](#), I think investors may feel more empowered to make purchases online," he said. "We buy everything else online."