

iBidOnStorage EU Innovation Award Entry 2025

Q: Does this innovation provide a degree of novelty within the sector?

A: Yes, iBidOnStorage is the first and only European online auction platform that specialises in self-storage auctions, and in 2024, we introduced several innovative features that significantly enhance the self-storage industry's ability to clear abandoned storage contents more efficiently and with less risk, through AI and automation. One of the most impactful changes is the platform's ability to run storage auctions without requiring staff to be on-site, an ideal solution for automated and unmanned facilities.



Features like the **CleanCapture app** (see Addendum), which uses AI to confirm whether a unit has been cleared, and the **Automated Gate and Unit Access system**, which generates PIN codes for winning bidders, set iBidOnStorage apart from traditional auction platforms. Additionally, AI-powered chatbots and our **inventory tool-builder** - allowing operators to quickly and easily create unit inventories - further elevate the platform's innovation and functionality.

Q: How does it differentiate from existing products or services?

A: iBidOnStorage was developed to provide storage operators with a safe, easy and efficient way of disposing of abandoned goods while minimising the expenses and risks in doing. Our platform stands out from traditional auction platforms by offering tailored solutions specifically for storage facilities. Our most recent innovation ensures a comprehensive, end-to-end system that handles everything, from processing payments, to **collection of cleaning deposits** (which ensure all items are removed from a unit), to granting secure access to the storage units and **AI-powered technology** that verifies whether a unit has been properly cleared. All this without requiring any storage operator staff involvement. With its smart automation and industry-specific innovations, iBidOnStorage incorporates safeguards to minimise legal risks (fully downloadable audit trail of results) and a more efficient and reliable solution compared to other services to clear abandoned contents.

Q: How does this innovation directly benefit users (e.g., convenience, cost, quality)?

A: The new features introduced by iBidOnStorage provide clear benefits to users by making things more convenient, reducing costs, and improving service quality.

Convenience: Winning bidders get automated gate and unit access codes after payment, so there's no need for on-site staff (ideal for manless facilities). iBid has automated capturing and refunding the Cleaning Deposit increasing speed and efficiency, while the CleanCapture app uses AI to check if units are cleaned out properly, saving facility managers time and effort.

Cost: Automation reduces the need for on-site staff or third-party cleaners, lowering costs for storage operators. It also means there is less likely to be goods left behind by winning bidders and the costly process of removing the discarded items. Units are cleared and re-let faster, which helps increase revenue and reduce empty space. The removal of cash transactions makes auditing easier and safer, while lowering the risk of handling cash. The automated deposit system also helps prevent disputes, which can lower legal and operational costs.

Quality: Automated access enhances security by ensuring that only the winning bidder can enter the unit. We also ensure sellers do not use brand names in their listings, prompting them with alternative descriptions to help mitigate legal risks. This is particularly important, as we've seen issues arise if counterfeit brands are listed in error.

Additionally, faster payment processing streamlines transactions, making the experience more seamless and efficient for both sellers and buyers.

Q: Are there any measurable results following implementation?

A: Since our launch we have sold 10,000+ storage auctions and recovered over EUR 3,000,000 for storage operators. Implementing iBidOnStorage's new features, we've seen measurable improvements in operational efficiency, cost savings, and user satisfaction. Automation of tasks like payment processing, unit clearance verification, and access management has saved time and reduced the need for staff. These changes have improved bad debt recoveries and resulted in cost savings, such as lower staff costs, reduced transaction fees, and faster unit re-letting. The AI-powered risk mitigation tool has also helped reduce disputes and improved user satisfaction.

Q: Is there potential for adoption of this innovation in other centers or markets?

A: Yes, the features introduced have been adopted across our entire platform of 10 European countries, the UK, Australia and South Africa. It has made opening manless satellite sites significantly more accessible for all operators. Large-scale operators can benefit from having standardized operations across multiple locations, while smaller or newer operators will find the solution cost-effective.

Q: How easy would it be to implement and replicate?

A: The adoption of iBidOnStorage's new automated and AI-driven features is very feasible, and especially useful in markets where operators can use their existing staff to manage satellite automated sites. These features are scalable and easy to implement, which makes them attractive to both small and large operators. The cloud-based infrastructure, seamless integration, and modular approach ensure that these innovations can be quickly replicated across multiple locations or different market sectors, driving growth and efficiency in the self-storage industry.

Q: How does this innovation contribute to the environment or local community?

A: iBidOnStorage's features means less goods are dumped and end up in landfills and more goods are recycled and reused, which has positive impact on both the environment and local communities. By automating tasks like access control and unit inspections, the platform helps reduce emissions from transportation and cuts down on waste, lowering the carbon footprint. The platform supports local economies by allowing smaller operators to compete with larger businesses, increasing customer turnover, and improving operational efficiency.

With features like CleanCapture, iBidOnStorage encourages responsible disposal by ensuring units are cleaned properly before deposits are refunded.