

# Using *Auction!* in a Team Environment (Network Edition)

Network users of *Auction!* can share their data with other users simultaneously, and have all the capabilities of single-user and multi-user editions. This includes merge capability for team members who are doing data entry outside of your network. See *Merging Data Together in Auction!* and *Merging Projects in Detail* chapters for more information on Merge.

Network *Auction!* adds the ability to **share** your dataset with more than one user at a time. Data entered in one location is immediately accessible to all other users.

## Network Requirements

*Auction!* is designed to run in a wide range of networks. *Auction!* may be run on full server network configurations, as well as peer-to-peer networks. *Auction!* has been tested on terminal services (e.g. Citrix) systems and works well when appropriate permissions and sharing are enabled.

*Auction!* is not designed as a server application. Please install *Auction!* on each individual computer that will access project data. Project data may be located on the server or on an individual's PC.

It is critical that your organization have one or more individuals who understand the network setup you are using for *Auction!* These individuals should be thoroughly familiar with the physical configuration, individual user profiles, sharing, mapping drives, and the software that enables the network operation.

Database applications such as *Auction!* are “connection-intensive.” This means the network must be robust and stable. Cable lengths must not be extended beyond recommendations for the hardware selected. When a wireless network application is chosen, outside interference from cell phones and security devices must be minimized or may cause interruptions in the data transfer. These circumstances can result in data corruption, so a wireless network is not advised.

Power supplies, network cards, and cables must be well within operating specifications. This is much more important for database applications than programs such as word processing or spreadsheet applications, since database applications are frequently accessing and saving data.

Some basic network technique hints are provided here. Auction Systems, Inc. does not attempt to diagnose or repair fundamental operation of your network environment. Your technical support covers the *Auction!* program.

If you will be running an “ad hoc” network on the day of your event, plan to set up and test the exact configuration of computers and printers to be used at your event at least three days ahead of time, to allow your team time to resolve questions.

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### Caution

*It is important to anticipate the possibility network issues may occur at the event. DHCP addresses can change; computers may be logged into other user accounts with different privileges, cables and ports can malfunction. Bring flash drives and/or floppy disks to allow use of the software in multi-user mode as a fallback position if one or more computers cannot be made to communicate successfully on the network.*

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### Tip

*If your network has a log-in password, make sure you have it handy for your data entry team in the event any of the computers needs to be re-booted during your event.*

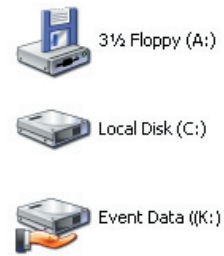
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When the network is correctly set up and working, appropriate sharing is enabled, and the network drive is mapped, you can open a project in *Auction!* by selecting the mapped network drive from the drive list selection.

## Sharing Drives

The file path where your data is located must be shared. When a drive or folder is shared, Windows™ adds a symbol to the drive and folder icons, which looks something like a hand holding a drive.

Drive K is shared and is the **server** in this example.



## Mapping Drives

Once the path to your data is shared, then each computer with **Auction!** installed must be able to find the data on the server or designated master computer by mapping the drive. Some networks are set up to automatically map drives to the network when you turn on your computer. These drives appear in **My Computer** and **Windows Explorer** as if they were on your own computer.

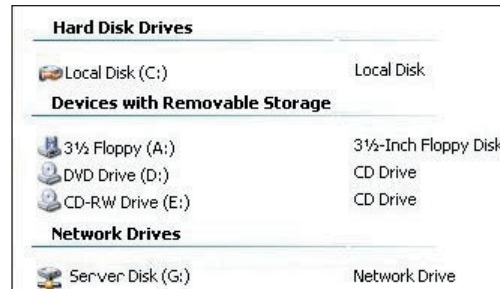
If the drive is not mapped, consult Windows™ Help for directions.

Drive K is shared on the other individual's PC. It is mapped as Drive G for this user.

This means when this computer opens a project on drive G, they are REALLY accessing Drive K on the other PC (server.)

Double-click **Network Neighborhood** or **My Network Places** on your desktop.

The **Network** screen shows all local and networked computers.



## Exclusive Access and Shared Access

**Auction!** Network edition has two access modes. The title bar at the top of your main **Auction!** screen shows the name of your project event, then **Exclusive Access** or **Shared Access**, followed by the drive/folder location where your project is located.

Single user and Multi-user edition customers are always in Exclusive Access mode.

Most tasks may be accomplished while in **Shared Access**. These tasks include entering or editing items or names, entering winning bids, exporting data, reviewing baskets and table assignments, and printing reports and documents. When in Shared Access, two or more users may use the dataset at the same time.

Tasks that change large numbers of records rapidly or demand a static dataset must be performed in **Exclusive Access**. When you attempt to begin one of these tasks in Shared Access, a message notifies you to switch to Exclusive Access.

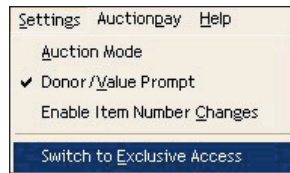
### Tasks requiring Exclusive Access:

- Most Maintenance activities (File menu).
- Merge Project.
- Refresh Project Database.
- Import.
- Assemble Baskets.
- Categorize Items.
- Sequence Items.
- Auto-assign Bid Numbers.
- Assign Seating.
- Catalog (\*Recommended, not required.)

To switch to Exclusive Access:

- Click **Settings, Switch to Exclusive Access.**

Proceed with the desired task.



## Default Project Values

Many project characteristics, such as fonts and margins for each document and report style are **global** values. These global values are stored as part of a dataset. Be sure fonts selected are installed on each computer that will be accessing the data.

When you choose a font that exists on one computer, and open the project on a computer that doesn't have this font, the selected font reverts to the current report font.

**Restore Project from Backup** restores all data, including global values. **Merge** joins name, items and transaction records together; it does not overwrite or change settings & preferences. See **Merging Data Together in Auction!** for further details.

## Records Edited by Two Users at the Same Time

Occasionally, two users in Shared Access mode will attempt to revise the same record at the same time (for example, the same name or the same item). If this occurs, the first user to click save will have their changes saved; they will not be notified. The second attempted save will result in a message that other changes have been saved since the record was opened, and these latest changes will not be saved.

### Caution

*If more than one computer is being used at check in, do not use the Next Bid Number feature; assign Bid Numbers manually, each computer with its own range of numbers. Otherwise, you may assign the same bid number to two different guests. The first guest will be fine, but the second will be a duplicate and you'll get an error message.*

## Refreshing the Screen

In Shared Access mode, data entered by all users is saved in the project dataset. Each person will see the results of their own changes immediately on screen. Reports and documents will be up to date, reflecting all users' entries to date, unless data is revised while the document is queued to the printer.

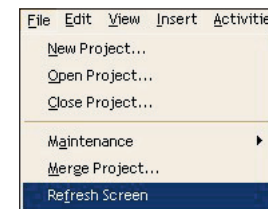
**Auction!** does not automatically refresh your screen to reflect changes made by other users. To update your display while in **Shared Access** mode,

- Click **File, Refresh Screen.**

Editing a name or item record always displays the most current information. When a name or item has been deleted by another user, attempting to edit it will result in a message that the record is no longer available.

Viewing a summary such as **Auction Grand Total** automatically displays the most current information at the moment.

During **Winning Bid** entry, a **Refresh Screen** reminder may pop up when you exit the **Winning Bid** entry screen. You may choose to refresh the screen or not, as you wish. It is not critical to refresh the screen unless you need to see the most current bids and purchase totals on the grid views.



## Validation Process

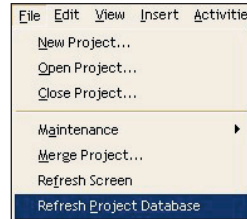
When opening a dataset on a server, some servers will take longer than others to validate and open the data. Wait at least 30 - 60 seconds before assuming the process is hung.

If two users are attempting to open the dataset at the same time, you may see a message that your data may be corrupted. If the Dataset Status shows as **Unknown**, it's symptomatic of a slow server process; the data is likely to be fine.

## Refreshing Project Database

**Refresh Project Database** examines each name, item, and transaction, crosschecking donor and buyer names, updating/correcting the total donor value and total purchase amount, and updating the total of tickets purchased and payments received. Refresh Project Database is not generally required. It may be necessary, for instance, when two donated items for the same donor are added at the same time. When updating, it is accessing and possibly saving many records in a very short amount of time.

1. Network users: Select **Settings, Switch to Exclusive Access**.
2. Click **File, Refresh Project Database**.



## Network Hints

The most common network problem experienced on event night is “We can’t see/open the project data on the network.”

The following procedure provides a quick and easy way to verify network functionality required for **Auction!** This test is done independently of **Auction!**, to facilitate diagnosis.

**On the Remote computer:**

1. Click **Start, Programs, Accessories** and select **Notepad**.
2. Type a few characters, then click **File, Save As**.
3. Click the dropdown arrow, and select the drive letter assigned to the Server/Host computer (Drive G in the example.) This should be the location where event project data is stored.
4. Type a file name such as Bob\_TestFile, and click **Save**.
5. Wait a moment to see if the file is saved successfully or not.

When Save is successful, you should be able to open the project data in **Auction!**, unless another user has temporarily chosen Exclusive Access to the project.

When Save is unsuccessful, you **must** resolve this prior to opening the project in **Auction!**

**Check the following:**

- Verify Read AND Write sharing capability on the Server/Host computer location.
- Verify Drive Letter on Remote PC is mapped to correct location on Server/Host computer.

Contact your network administrator/expert for assistance.