

## SITE ENABLES ONLINE BIDDING FOR COSMETIC AUTO REPAIRS

 WORK & LIFESTYLE

The internet may have already brought new transparency, accountability and ease to myriad aspects of consumers' lives, but auto repair is not typically among them. Aiming to provide an alternative to the time-consuming process of driving from shop to shop collecting estimates, [DentBetty](#) is an online system that lets users upload photos of the damage to their car and receive competing bids from local repair shops in return. Structural damage typically requires a physical inspection for a realistic estimate, DentBetty notes; for that reason, it focuses on dings, dents, scrapes and scratches instead. Users begin on the free system, which is currently in beta, by simply entering their ZIP code and uploading at least two photos of the damage to their car. Local auto body shops can then examine the photos and come up with bids for getting the repair done. Whenever a shop makes an estimate, DentBetty notifies the user by email; all estimates received so far (up to the maximum of seven) are presented together on a personal DentBetty page. The DentBetty Quality Scoreboard, meanwhile, keeps a running record of consumer feedback and other information about the various vendors involved to help consumers evaluate their reliability. When the consumer selects a bid, he or she then contacts the shop directly to schedule an appointment. There are currently more than 100 shops nationwide in the DentBetty Network, each prescreened against DentBetty's rigorous standards. Such members get notified every time a new consumer within driving distance requests an estimate. Since some repairs are difficult to estimate by photo alone, shops can indicate a level of confidence along with their bid. DentBetty's staff also prescreens every photo to make certain that it's from a legitimate consumer—"not just some teenager having fun with his camera." Of the USD 36 billion spent each year in the US on collision repair, some USD 3 to 5 billion takes the form of out-of-pocket expenditures for cosmetic damage. One to partner with or emulate in other parts of the world? (Related: [Home-repair bidding site prescreens contractors](#) — [Premium tire chain focuses on transparency.](#))

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