

## **5 Frequently Asked Questions**

### **CAN AGENTS HAVE IDX WEB SITES?**

All agent Web sites must frame their IDX Participant's Web site in order to display IDX listings. Agent sites may frame their IDX Participant's site only with their IDX Participant's permission, and all such displays are subject to Section 17.1.16. Secondary sites may not modify the display of IDX data appearing within the brokerage's primary IDX site, including re-sorting data, adding email links, etc.

### **SHOULD I CONTINUE TO SEND MY LISTINGS TO OTHER WEB SITES LIKE THE NEWSPAPERS AND REALTOR.COM?**

That's a business decision you have to make for yourself. Some brokers feel their listing data is being used by third party Web sites to draw consumers away from the brokerage community. Others feel that the exposure available from such Web sites is well worth any purported loss of control of the data. You should examine this situation carefully and decide for yourself.

### **WHAT HAPPENS IF SOMEONE DOES NOT FOLLOW THE IDX RULES?**

CMLS will monitor brokers who develop Web sites using the IDX data. It will also monitor other real estate Web sites. If CMLS finds that an IDX Participant is misusing data, that broker will be notified of the infraction and required to correct the problem. If the broker fails to correct the problem, he or she will lose access to the IDX data feed, be fined and possibly even suspended from CMLS.

### **WHY WOULD I WANT TO ALLOW OTHER BROKERS TO DISPLAY MY LISTINGS ON THEIR WEB SITES?**

This is a great question. The answer lies in a desire to strengthen the brokerage industry. Long-term, if real estate brokerages want to compete with other industry segments for the business of Internet consumers, they will need to have Web sites that are attractive to consumers. That means having the most data. If you don't want your listings on the Internet at all, then you don't want to participate in Internet Data Exchange. If you currently provide your listing data to one or more local or national Web sites on the theory that more exposure is better, why wouldn't you want your listings exposed on other brokers' Web sites?

### **WHY WOULD I WANT TO LET OTHER BROKERS DISPLAY MY LISTINGS IF I DON'T HAVE MY OWN WEB SITE?**

See the answer to the previous question. The rationale is equally strong in this case. In addition to those arguments, sellers will want to know why your listings do not show up on Internet Data Exchange Web sites when the listings of other brokers do.

### **WHY WOULD I WANT TO DISPLAY OTHER BROKERS' LISTINGS ON MY WEB SITE?**

Because by displaying the complete CMLS inventory of active listings, you are providing a service to consumers that can help keep them coming to your Web site. If you want to be able to sell services on-line, you need a way to keep consumers at your site once they get there. (Industry folks refer to this as having a "sticky" site – the "stickier," the better.)

### **HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?**

Internet Data Exchange costs you nothing. A Web site? That's another matter. See Appendix D for some rough estimates of the cost to put up and maintain a Web site including the Internet Data Exchange Data.

### **WILL THIS ALLOW BIG BROKERS TO HAVE MORE SUCCESSFUL WEB SITES? WILL THIS MAKE LITTLE BROKERS LOOK LIKE BIG BROKERS?**

Brokers will get out of Internet Data Exchange whatever they put into it. Very large brokerages may have more money to put into their Web sites. They may spend more marketing dollars to get consumers to visit their sites. However, small firms that focus on Internet strategies and marketing may be able to look as “big” on the Internet as their much larger competitors. Internet Data Exchange is designed to make *all* broker sites more attractive to consumers. CMLS can only give you the tools. What you make with them is up to you.

### **WILL CONSUMERS CALL THE LISTING AGENT ON LISTINGS BELONGING TO OTHER IDX PARTICIPANTS?**

Maybe. The listing firm's name must appear on any detailed display of data for listings that don't belong to you. You cannot display the listing agent's name. (This isn't true with regard to your own listings. See the question below about agent links.) An interested consumer could call the other brokerage and ask which agent has the property listed in order to reach him or her. However, this is a great deal more difficult than just e-mailing you. This phenomenon is also just as likely to benefit you, as your firm name appears on your listings on other brokers' Web sites.

### **WHAT DATA WILL CONSUMERS SEE? WHAT PROPERTY TYPES, STATUSES, DATA ELEMENTS, ETC.?**

IDX Participants may only display active, conditional, contingent, and pending listings. They may display any or all of CMLS' several property types. The fields supplied in the Internet Data Exchange download (Appendix B) were determined by the Internet Data Exchange Committee. In any case, no more fields will be provided than appear on the MLS system customer report.

### **HOW DO I KNOW SOME AGENT FROM ANOTHER OFFICE WON'T END UP ADVERTISING MY HOT NEW LISTING AS HER OWN?**

You don't. But it would be just as much a violation of the Rules under Internet Data Exchange as it was previously. Such an act would violate the Code of Ethics and state real estate law as well.

### **CAN THE CONSUMER LINK DIRECTLY TO THE LISTING AGENT'S E-MAIL?**

An IDX Participant can provide linking on its own listings to its agents. It need not do so. This is a matter to be determined between the IDX Participant and his/her agents.

### **WHAT KIND OF ADVERTISING FOR OTHER SERVICES OR COMPANIES CAN BROKERS HAVE ON THEIR WEB SITES WITH IDX DATA?**

An IDX Participant shall not co-brand with, or post advertisements on the listing search screen or any page of the Web site that displays IDX data for, any individual or company that is not a Member Participant of CMLS. This will result in the IDX data feed to the IDX Participant being terminated.

### **DO I NEED A WEB SITE?**

What do you think? CMLS is providing the greatest flexibility so you can compete in an increasingly complex industry. But CMLS cannot compete for you. You must decide what your own business strategy is and whether Internet Data Exchange and a Web site with IDX data would support that strategy.

