

# REALTOR® AE

REALTOR.ORG/RAE

# Understanding Big Data

To better serve members' needs,  
it's time to connect all we know about them.

Page 12



**Communications that Mobilize Members**

Page 16

**Rethinking the Association App**

Page 20

**Wrestling With Syndication Options**

Page 24



WINNERS p. 17



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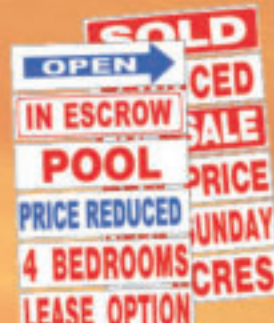
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# features

## Big Data

What it is, who's using it, and how state and local REALTOR® associations can get in the game. [PAGE 12](#)

## Communications That Move Members to Act

There are so many channels for communicating with members. Some members respond to Pinterest, some to Facebook, and some to texting. How many channels can an association be expected to use? If you use only e-mail, how many members are you missing? [PAGE 16](#)



## AE voices

### AE COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATE

Introduction to the proposed new association core standards. [PAGE 2](#)

### PROFILE

Talking tech with Steve Volkodav. [PAGE 28](#)

## news

### SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS, PRODUCTS

Political events, charity fundraisers, and other ideas to inspire you. [PAGE 5](#)

### AE & STAFF

AE honorees, new AEs, and professional development. [PAGE 8](#)

### FROM NAR

Programs, products, events, and initiatives from the National Association. [PAGE 8](#)

### POLITICAL ACTION

Online fundraising tool could double your RPAC contributions. [PAGE 10](#)

## hot issues

### MLS

AEs wrestle with the listing syndication options. [PAGE 24](#)

## need to know

### TECH

How associations can get active on mobile, with or without an app. [PAGE 20](#)

### LEGAL

Action to take if your association is challenged by a patent troll. [PAGE 26](#)

## online

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Association apps, p. 21

# Core Standards, the Beginning



**Andrea Bushnell, RCE,**  
EVP, North Carolina  
Association of  
REALTORS®, 2014 chair  
of the AE committee.

**D**o you ever feel clairvoyant? You know, that feeling that you must have known something was coming but just hadn't been clued in yet? Well, that is how I am feeling this morning reviewing my article from the Winter 2014 edition of *REALTOR® AE* magazine. In December 2013, I wrote, "[w]e must be willing to challenge each other, challenge the status quo, challenge traditional thoughts, and challenge our beliefs about the value of services to our members. In order to move the needle for our members on professionalism, we must first be able to move the needle for ourselves."

Then came January and a critical meeting with NAR's Leadership Team, attended by six very curious and intrepid executive officers. We were asked to be part of a presidential advisory group to think critically about the REALTOR® organization and come up with a "rebuilding" plan to ensure unity within, and the long-term viability of, the 100-year-old REALTOR® organization. We were, in fact, being asked to challenge one another, the status quo, traditional

thoughts, and our beliefs about the value of services to our members.

Since receiving our charge, we have engaged in a whirlwind of "challenge." For those who attended AEI, you heard the resulting conceptual framework for ensuring the unity and viability of the REALTOR® organization. Recognizing the many challenges organized real estate faces from outside influences and influencers, it is critical that all REALTOR® organizations come together as a unified voice and force. To accomplish this, change—and I mean true, fundamental change—must be adopted and embraced. Each association, regardless of size, must reach beyond the concept (often unenforced) of minimum services criteria. We are better than that. We must be better than that.

Fundamentals such as ensuring that your association is in compliance with NAR mandated policies (such as dues collection procedures, gathering information for and sharing all NRDS mandatory fields, adoption of approved bylaws, policies, and regulations, and so on) will be enforced. But beyond these fundamentals, envision a REALTOR® world in which each association provides Code of Ethics education, enforcement, and advancement; envision a world in which each association engages in advocacy efforts to the point that a

culture develops around the REALTOR® Party initiatives and the concept of "Vote, Act, Invest." Advocacy not only becomes what we do but defines who we are as an organization. Consumer outreach and engagement are essential to generating more business opportunities for our members and helping the REALTOR® organization reach its advocacy objectives.

Can you envision all that your association can do to advance this goal? Don't you want to be part of an organization that mandates professional development for its chief paid staff? Testing our members' perception of value will become a standard in the industry. Sharing of information and actively promoting the member benefits, programs, products, and services between the three levels of the organization will become the new normal.

Many details are left to be discussed, but the vision briefly outlined above makes up, in part, the framework for ensuring that the REALTOR® organization maintains its importance and relevance to our members. Action on the final recommendations is expected to be taken at the REALTOR® Party Convention and Trade Expo in May. If you have ideas about how to make the REALTOR® organization stronger and more unified, please send them to [organizationalalignmentpag@realtors.org](mailto:organizationalalignmentpag@realtors.org). We would love to hear from you.



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# RAMCO, Four Years Later

Has the AE-developed association management system delivered on its promises?

**R**ob Authier, CEO of the Massachusetts Association of REALTORS®, was one of the 10 REALTOR® association executives who, six years ago, devised the creation of a flexible and cost-effective association membership management system just for REALTOR® associations and MLSs. He says he's thrilled with RAMCO's progress to date.

"We are proud of the progress RAMCO has made so far and are excited about the things it can do," says Authier. "What we envisioned as one system for all associations, and what once seemed so far out of reach, is now a reality. It's a system that's changing the way AEs and MLSs do their business, and changing it for the better."

Deployed by 73 REALTOR® associations nationwide, with another 20 undergoing installation and training, the cloud-based RAMCO platform continues to innovate.

"When we first started this," recalls Belton Jennings, AE of the Virgin Islands Association of REALTORS® and RAMCO marketing director, "we said, 'In our wildest dreams, what should this system do for us?' We made a list of 95 features that we knew we had to have, and now we have that and so much more."

## RAMCO Innovations

RAMCO's development partner Cobalt has partnered with Sitefinity, a website creation and content management system, to offer RAMCO's associations scalable and mobile-ready association web-

site templates that include discussion boards, blogging, and membership surveys. Sitefinity websites sync instantly with the RAMCO content engine to make updating web content much faster, says Authier, whose association website ([www.marealtor.com](http://www.marealtor.com)) relaunched with Sitefinity in March.

The Missouri Association of REALTORS® was one of the early adopters of the platform and is still a testing ground for new features. "We wanted to take RAMCO out for a spin and see what it could do," says Russ Cofano, CEO of the Missouri Association of REALTORS®. "We wanted a front-end system that could help us capture vital information from REALTORS® to give us a 360-degree view of our membership."

By connecting RAMCO to what Cofano calls his social relationship management system—a sort of Facebook-like, members-only community launched last fall—the Missouri association is able to better target member communications and services because it has a better understanding of members' interests.

Although RAMCO has sophisticated technology behind it enabling the most tech-savvy associations to build in a limitless array of functions, the platform is also popular with very small associations. In fact, Jennings says 54 percent of RAMCO associations were NRDS-only conversions, which means they had no previous membership management system.

On a basic level, RAMCO is a platform that syncs with NRDS and

By 2016, RAMCO is expected to become the self-sufficient, autonomous AE-owned and operated non-profit cooperative that it was always intended to be.

can merge member data into Microsoft Word templates to do things like print mailing labels or event tickets.

It integrates with NAR's e-commerce gateway, making it simple to process the payment of dues, register for events and courses, and make purchases or take care of other payments. RAMCO can also help association and MLS staff conduct polls and surveys to gather feedback from members; track mediation and arbitration processes, complaints from the public, and MLS citations; create and manage committee memberships; track and manage REALTOR® Political Action Committee donations; manage relationships with vendors; and generate orders and invoices for products and services.

"The things RAMCO can do make my job so much easier," says Dave Conroy, director of information technology at the Massachusetts Association of REALTORS®. "Things that used to take me hours now take me just a few minutes. For example, if someone on the association board asked me [when we were using our old system] to run a report about which of our members were in their 50s, which were in their 40s, and which were in their 30s, it would have been exhaustive and time-consuming, but now? I can run that report in a snap. It has cut down on time spent on administrative stuff and allowed us to really focus on better quality for our membership."

Of course, no custom-built software is perfect, and RAMCO took a pause in 2012 to retool and fix bugs that AEs found along the implementation route.

"RAMCO is a collaborative and cooperative initiative, and because we are our own customers, we are committed to making sure the system does what we need for our associations," says Jennings. "So, we listened to those early adopters and decided to pause to let our developers make the fixes and enhancements we needed for RAMCO to become the stable platform it is today."

RAMCO's leadership team is composed of state and local association and MLS executives who are either using RAMCO or in the conversion process.

RAMCO is currently funded by its subscriber associations with a subsidy from NAR, yet Authier expects it to become the self-sufficient, autonomous AE-owned and operated non-profit cooperative that it was always intended to be by 2016.

Arizona Association of REALTORS®



## Members Take to the House Floor

Hearing about REALTOR® political advocacy is impressive; participating in it, especially meeting elected officials and visiting the state or national capital, gives members a thrill they don't soon forget, says Bethany Brannan, communications manager at the Arizona Association of REALTORS®. "When Andy Tobin, speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives, heard that we were holding our annual REALTOR® Day at the Capitol, he extended a personal offer to meet with some of our members and give them a tour of the House floor," says Brannan.

Birmingham Association of REALTORS®, Ala



## Brokerage Team Charity Bowling in Birmingham

The Birmingham Association of REALTORS®' successful "Bowl for Kids' Sake" in March raised funds for the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Birmingham and built REALTOR® spirit as brokerage teams took part in some good-natured competition.

Greater Nashville Association of REALTORS®



Member Rae Thomas pinning her longtime friend and new member Chip Peay

## Bringing Back the Pinning Ceremony

The Greater Nashville Association of REALTORS®' new member-pinning ceremony is reminiscent of a time when nurses, lodge members, and fraternity men wore pins to represent their membership in and allegiance to their exclusive group. And that's the point, says Julie Davis director of communications and membership. "The ceremony, started more than a year ago, was designed to give new members a sense of belonging, of pride," says Davis. "They receive their REALTOR® pin from their broker if present or our board president if not, as well as a membership certificate. We also have new members recite the REALTOR® pledge as a group. In the past year it's become quite the success."

Frederick County Association of REALTORS®, Md.



## Housing Homeless School Kids

With its \$3,000 grant from the National Association of REALTORS®, the Frederick County Association of REALTORS®, Md., will create a resource guide to help find affordable housing for homeless schoolchildren and their families. FCAR's Affordable Housing Committee will coordinate the program.

# MLSs Focus on Cloud, Mobile

After a yearlong exploration of what services and tools its MLS participants really wanted, the Charleston Trident Multiple Listing Service in South Carolina announced a major upgrade to a new mobile-friendly MLS platform from FlexMLS. The new platform features the ability to customize dashboards and gadgets, search in four ways, upload high-resolution photos, get real-time notifications, add and edit listings via tablets, work with clients in a client portal, and generate listing activity reports. What Charleston Trident MLS participants didn't want anymore was a public-facing listing site. CTMLS created a website to keep

participants informed on the new platform ([www.yourmlsupgrade.com](http://www.yourmlsupgrade.com)).

Although no MLS looks forward to a platform conversion and training thousands of members on a new system, several major MLSs recently have announced a vendor switch in order to offer members the latest mobile and cloud functions and customer interface tools. The Greater Baton Rouge Association of REALTORS® and the Memphis Area Association of REALTORS® will be switching to Paragon 5 (Black Knight Financial Services), while the Connecticut Multiple Listing Service is switching to CoreLogic's Matrix.

Eastern Bergen County Board of REALTORS®, N.J.



## Giving Members No Excuse Not to Be Tech Savvy

To ensure that their members know how to use tech tools, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Google+, YouTube, and more, the Eastern Bergen County Board of REALTORS®, N.J., designed and launched a 10-class series of free hands-on workshops. Costs for programming and lunch are offset by an affiliate sponsor, and members receive a certificate upon completion of the series. Attendance so far is strong, says Melissa A. Piccinich, the association's public affairs coordinator.

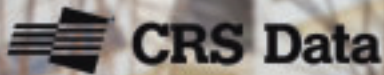
Texas Association of REALTORS®



## Promoting Homebuyer Education

"Get Ready: Making Texans Homeowners for Life" is a new joint campaign of the Texas Association of REALTORS® and the state affordable housing corporation to promote the benefits of taking a quality homebuyer education course before purchasing a home. The web-based Texas Financial Toolbox is the cornerstone of the program, which also includes education for REALTORS® on where they can find resources for their clients seeking affordable housing.





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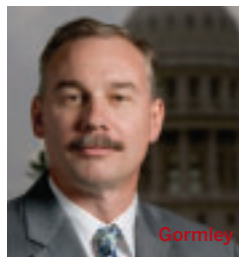
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**Ginger Downs**, chief executive officer of the Chicago Association of REALTORS®, has been appointed the first woman board president of All Chicago: Making Homelessness History, an umbrella organization overseeing three agencies that provide stability and support to individuals and families in Chicago who face crisis and are without a home and its related benefits.



## Congratulations, New CAEs

The following REALTOR® AEs earned their Certified Association Executive designation (CAE) from the American Society of Association Executives.

**John R. Gormley**, RCE, CAE

VP, Communications & Marketing  
Texas Association of REALTORS®

**Ann Londrigan**, CAE

Director, Member & Association  
Engagement, Illinois Association of  
REALTORS®

**Joseph McClary**, CAE

CEO, Kentucky Association of REALTORS®

**Teresa McKee**, CAE

CEO, Nevada Association of REALTORS®



## AEs on the Move

**Teresa McKee**, CAE, is the new CEO of the Nevada Association of REALTORS®. McKee served as the organization's legal counsel and as interim CEO.

**Nancy Shaw** is the new EO for the Durham Region Association of REALTORS®, Ontario, Canada. Shaw comes to the REALTOR® organization from a career in community service and political advocacy.

**Amy DuBose**, RCE, EO of the San Marcos Area Board of REALTORS®, Texas, is the new EO of the yet-to-be-named 1,100 member organization resulting from the merger of her association with the New Braunfels Canyon Lake Association of REALTORS® and the Seguin Board of REALTORS®.



## new from NAR



The Salt Lake Board of REALTORS® is partnering with the Utah Transit Authority to promote public transportation as a way to clean the air.

## 5 Best REALTOR® Political Outreach Ideas

State and local associations with the most successful original public policy, advocacy, or outreach ideas relating to real estate were honored earlier this year with the 2014 REALTOR® Party Game Changer award from the National Association of REALTORS®. Ideas included an open house app from the Coastal Carolinas Association of REALTORS®, a member data RPAC targeting system from the North Carolina Association of REALTORS®, an air-quality awareness campaign from the Salt Lake Board of REALTORS®, a transaction-closing RPAC donation mechanism from the Traverse Area Association of REALTORS®, and a web-based land-use training program for local officials from the Utah Association of REALTORS®. For details on all of these initiatives and how to enter next year, visit [realtoractioncenter.com/gamechanger](http://realtoractioncenter.com/gamechanger).



These AEs have earned their Strategies in Nonprofit Management Certificate from The University of Chicago Graham School of General Studies: **Jean Beck**, RCE, Hilton Head Area Association; **Toni Cockeram**, RCE, Golden Isles Association, Ga.; **Christy Conway**, RCE, Georgia Association; **Paula Hall**, RCE, Central Wisconsin Board; **Sheree Higgins**, Blue Ridge Association, Va.; **Cheryl Meadows**, RCE, Tucson Association; **Nancy Merdzinski**, RCE, CAE, Ann Arbor Area Board, Mich.



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# Online Tool, Strategic Support Boost RPAC Fundraising

## NAR Program Coming Soon to Local Associations May Double Contributions

State and local REALTOR® associations have become experts at the RPAC fundraiser over the years. From country club costume parties to boat cruises to Ms. RPAC men-in-drag comedy shows, attracting members to fun events to focus their attention on a serious topic works.

However, the National Association of REALTORS® has found that a growing segment of members wants a simple online solution to RPAC contributions, and associations want to appeal to a wider membership audience. The solution was developed by NAR three years ago and will be coming to every REALTOR® association soon.

The NAR Online Fundraising Program is a combination of a software solution and personal marketing, branding, design, and tech staff support for electronic RPAC solicitations. Available only to state REALTOR® associations for the past few years, plans are to roll it out to local associations, as well. The online system is fully automated and available at no cost.

Laura Camp, NAR's manager of RPAC online fundraising, has been bringing states on board with the program one at a time; nearly all state associations are now participating. RPAC dollars raised online have doubled since the program began in 2011, and the number of members contributing online has grown to nearly 5,400.

The first year an association uses the online fundraising program, Camp and her team do all the heavy lifting. They

implement the system, manage all the technology, and, working with the association, develop a strategy and timeline. From the association's data, they create the target lists. The team also sets up the bank accounts, establishes branding, creates donation forms, and writes the e-mail copy.

Kristin Miller, RPAC manager of the North Carolina Association of REALTORS®, works closely with her state's 61 local associations to use the RPAC Online Fundraising Program to its best advantage.

"Laura and her team provide us with messaging that is already tailored to various investor segments within North Carolina, but we're finding that solicitation is most effective when it comes from a fellow member, someone familiar, like the

president of your local association. So we go in and further customize our messages and our timing strategies," Miller says.

In Colorado, Government Affairs Manager Jaclyn Dearien reports that her state's RPAC participation rates, which historically have been lower than its annual RPAC goals, have been boosted significantly by the online investment program.

"Offering first-time investor incentives like a mini iPad or a hotel stay has been a great way to get their attention," Dearien says. "The hope is that the good feeling that comes with that initial investment makes it an easy habit to form."

In 2013, Colorado's second year with the online program, the group attracted nearly 70 new RPAC investors.

Kristen Anderson, governmental affairs director of the 4,000-member Nebraska Association of REALTORS®, is an early adopter of the online RPAC fundraising system.

"I don't have expertise in graphic design or marketing—or technology, for that matter. I used to dread putting together RPAC solicitation mailers. The online program not only attracts more fundraising dollars than we ever thought possible," she says, "but it frees me up to concentrate on major investors—and the rest of my job."

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For more information contact Laura Camp, e-PRO®, manager, RPAC Participation Fundraising, 202-383-7531, [lcamp@realtors.org](mailto:lcamp@realtors.org).

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# Big

## What it is, who's using it, and how state and local REALTOR® associations can get in the game

If a company collected the data trail you leave online (every Web site visited, every search term entered, every credit card purchase, every text, tweet, and photo upload) and then added in all of your statistical data (age, income, kids, mortgage, education, square footage of your house and so on), might it be able to predict where you're likely to go on vacation or what car you're most likely to buy? Probably.

That's the idea behind big data analytics: predicting how people or businesses will act based on patterns or models extracted from their data. The more data you have, the more accurate the predictions can be. We can see it today in the array of consumer data that makes up your credit score, which represents your likelihood to repay a loan.

Perhaps only the National Security Agency has access to your full data trail, but REALTOR® associations can make sound member and market predictions based on far less information.

NAR's new Predictive Analytics group, headed by Todd Carpenter, hopes to someday be able to anticipate which REALTORS® are most likely to rise to leadership positions, which are most likely to buy certain products, and which are most likely to respond to a political call to action or contribute to RPAC, for example.

The national association's plan is to compile all the information it collects about members—potentially including data from state and local associations, MLSs, and other sources—in one place and make forecasts based on behavior patterns, as well as develop tools to help REALTORS®, state and local associations, and others make better data-driven decisions.

“But before we really can offer predictive products,” Carpenter says, “we have to focus on gathering all of this data and putting it in one place.”

Unique data about members is collected by every NAR department but not currently connected in a usable way, Carpenter says. “For instance, if you work in community and political affairs, you know a lot about which members vote and respond to calls for action or give money to RPAC, but you don't know if they're taking the ABR course or attending the conference, or

# Data

which NAR newsletters they subscribe to.”

Putting all of this data together—using RAMCO, the membership management software developed by REALTOR® AEs—is the first step toward finding the members who are very engaged in the association, those who are just barely engaged, and those who are engaged in certain ways, like those interested in e-learning.

“So once we collect all that data, we can track it over time. And as we do that, we can see patterns of how someone becomes more engaged in the association,” Carpenter says. As the association identifies those patterns, it can establish which people display engagement tendencies, so that it can deliver to them the information and tools they need to lead them down the path already identified as most likely.

“So instead of blasting every member with everything we have, we can better target our efforts,” Carpenter says, saving the association time and money.

Although initially, NAR will “raid its own fridge” and compile national-level data, any picture of member activity would be incomplete without the local perspective, says Carpenter. Local data ranging from the types of education classes taken to agents’ transaction histories could prove invaluable in developing tools and services to help members boost business.

“Getting information from states and locals is going to be highly valuable to us. With it we can get an even better idea of how members are engaged at the local, state, and national level and put that all in one spot so locals will also have that intelligence on members,” he says.

Acquiring local and MLS member data would be a give-and-take model, Carpenter explains. “Locals and states would benefit from what we could give them in exchange for member data. That would be worked out individually with associations and MLSs regarding how much and what type of information they would like to share.”

## **Predicting Consumer and Market Behavior**

Predicting member behavior for the benefit of the association is only the beginning of the national association’s big data initiative. Carpenter is investigating opportunities to collaborate with NAR’s research department on projects that potentially could forecast consumer trends, real estate market direction, and best business practices so that members can make better business decisions and better serve their customers.

NAR’s new **Predictive Analytics** group, headed by Todd Carpenter, hopes to someday be able to anticipate which REALTORS® are most likely to rise to leadership positions, which are most likely to buy certain products, and which are most likely respond to a political call to action or contribute to RPAC.

## Association executives should look at the types of unique data they are already gathering and then look at what data they could be gathering.

Also harnessing the power of big data is RPR, the REALTORS® Property Resource, which is one of the biggest real estate data collections in the world, if not the biggest. RPR is a data giant, collecting information from a growing number of sources every day on millions of properties. “[RPR] is using predictive analytics now in its ability to predict the marketability of a home,” notes Carpenter.

Carpenter hosted a session at the AE Institute detailing where NAR is headed with big data. “Hopefully, associations can drive down the same path,” he says. “We’re still building out the department and it will be some time before we have products to deliver, but we want to keep AEs apprised of what’s going on.”

### Big Data on a Small Scale

Even if you don’t have terabytes of data on your local members, you can still participate in the big data movement and lay the foundation. To position your organization to reap rewards from big data in the near future, first recognize data collection at the strategic level of your association, advises Patrick Dorsey, vice president of marketing at Avectra association management software, in his e-book “Demystifying Big Data for Associations.” The entire organization, not just the IT department, should have access to and ownership of data.

Association executives should look at the types of unique data they are already gathering and then look at what data they could be gathering.

Associations already use member surveys, Web traffic analytics, e-mail open rates, and a number of other metrics to qualify and quantify program and product

successes. Combine this with member-specific data, and you’re on your way to building a big data profile of your membership.

Contrary to an annual member survey project or focus group program, data collection is not a line item in your budget, but should be built into all processes and practices at your association from now on, notes Dorsey. Every program should have a data collection element and every new technology investment should have robust data-capture capabilities.

One element of data most associations are not currently collecting from members but should, says Carpenter, is social media activity from Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook. “These are the places where members are talking about the issues in real estate. This is where you could track how much a member spoke online about issues, who are the ones that are the strongest advocates for a particular issue, who are the people who may oppose a particular issue. It would help us do a better job of listening if we could isolate not just who’s talking about real estate, but which REALTORS® are talking about it.”

Your association management software is a good place to start collecting and tagging your member data. Systems such as RAMCO have robust capabilities to capture and tag data such as who signed up for events and who called your hot line for information.

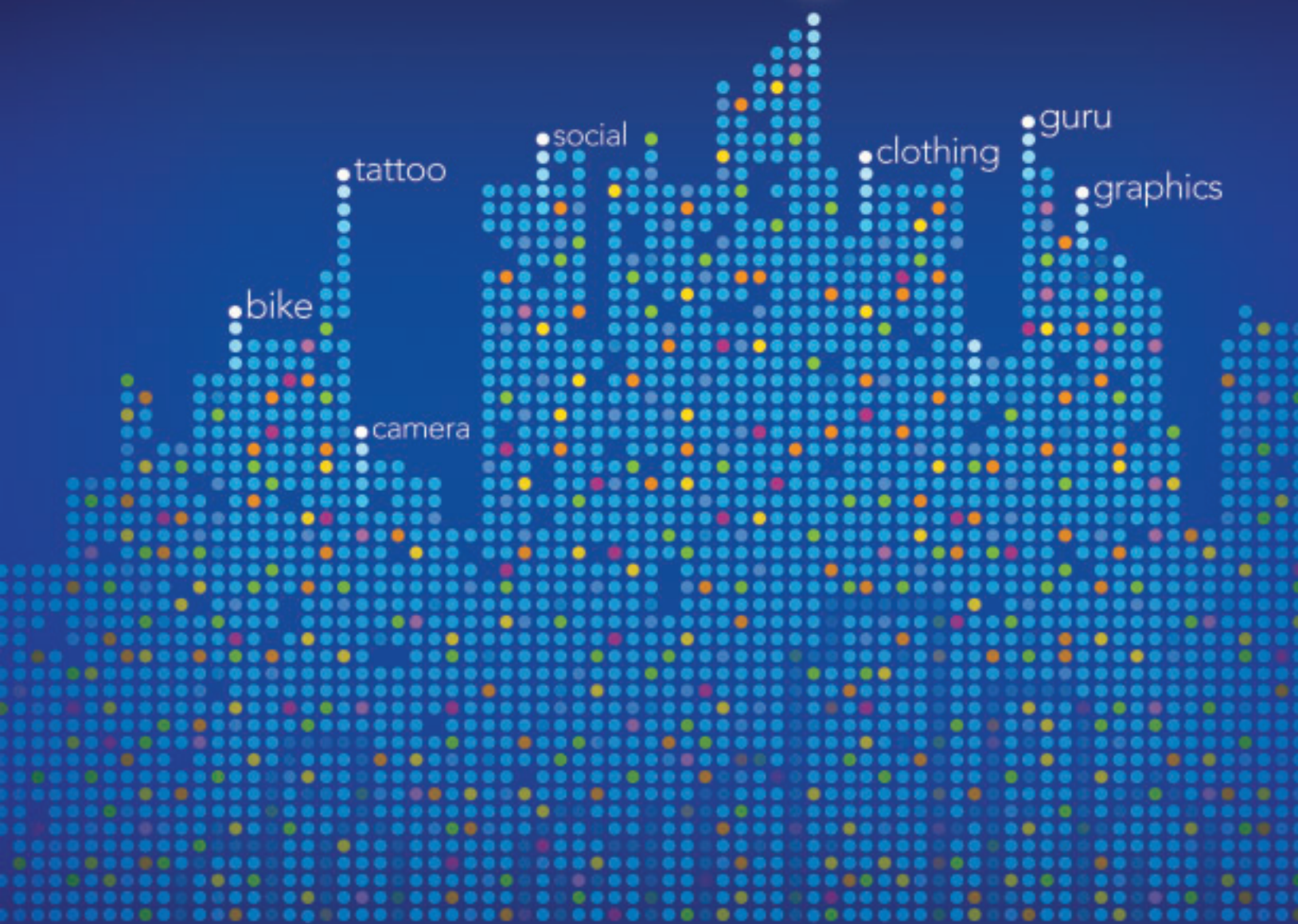
Although “big data” is the much-hyped buzz phrase in business today, Carpenter cautions against state or local REALTOR® associations investing too much in consultants or the latest big data tools just yet. “It’s still a new field and there’s a lot to learn. It remains to be seen who can actually deliver great analytic products at a decent price.”

The revival of NAR’s **Master Member Profile System**, which was abandoned in 2008 for data storage cost reasons, was announced at the AE Institute. The MMPS is a member database incorporating NRDS member data with data from other sources, including public records and data volunteered from members themselves. It is not a replacement for NRDS.



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NATIONAL  
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# Using Social & Traditional Media to Mobilize Members

How do you choose among the many channels for communicating with members.

**S**ome members respond to Pinterest, some to Facebook, some to texting. If you use only e-mail, how many members are you missing? How many channels can an association be expected to use?

*REALTOR® AE* turned to social media guru Nobu Hata, director of social media engagement for the National Association of REALTORS®, for some practical insight.

“Associations really need to treat communications strategies like their members treat lead generation,” he says. “You’re basically trying to do the same thing: get members to buy in to your association through your channels and ‘close’ them by moving a metric, for example more online engagement, higher event attendance, or more participation in calls to action. Like lead generation, go where your target audience is, make sure your content matters to them, use social media to deploy your message, get advocates (like leadership) to amplify the message, and drive folks back to a hub (your website) for action. There is no limit to the platforms associations should be using, nor should there be. The key is to go to where the bulk of your membership is, stop wasting time where they’re not, and most important, be consistent with your message regardless of platform. Don’t be afraid to repeat it if it’s important.”

Just using e-mail means you’re reaching less than 20 percent of your members by most estimates, says Hata.

To understand how associations can successfully move members to action with social media communications, *RAE* issued a call for submissions to our “Mobilize Your Members” competition. These four winning campaigns below exhibited innovation, planning, and consistency. But above all, the end result was that members took action.



# Best REALTOR® Association Campaigns to Mobilize Members

## EVENT

### Put the R on Your Car

Washington REALTORS®, Cara McNeil, communications and publications manager

**Success:** “The campaign was successful in fostering REALTOR® pride throughout the state and setting a benchmark for how members respond to social media engagement campaigns. The ‘R’ sticker concept spawned from trying to provide something of value as a thank you to our members with their dues billing—something with interaction across multiple platforms. Although the bulk of the engagement was through Facebook and Twitter, it carried over to live engagement at events. For instance, when we launched the contest at our Fall business conference, we had members run out to their cars, slap on stickers and take a photo right on the spot. We learned that campaigns of this nature work best if they can provide more than just member engagement, but can evoke a positive, emotional response in our members.”

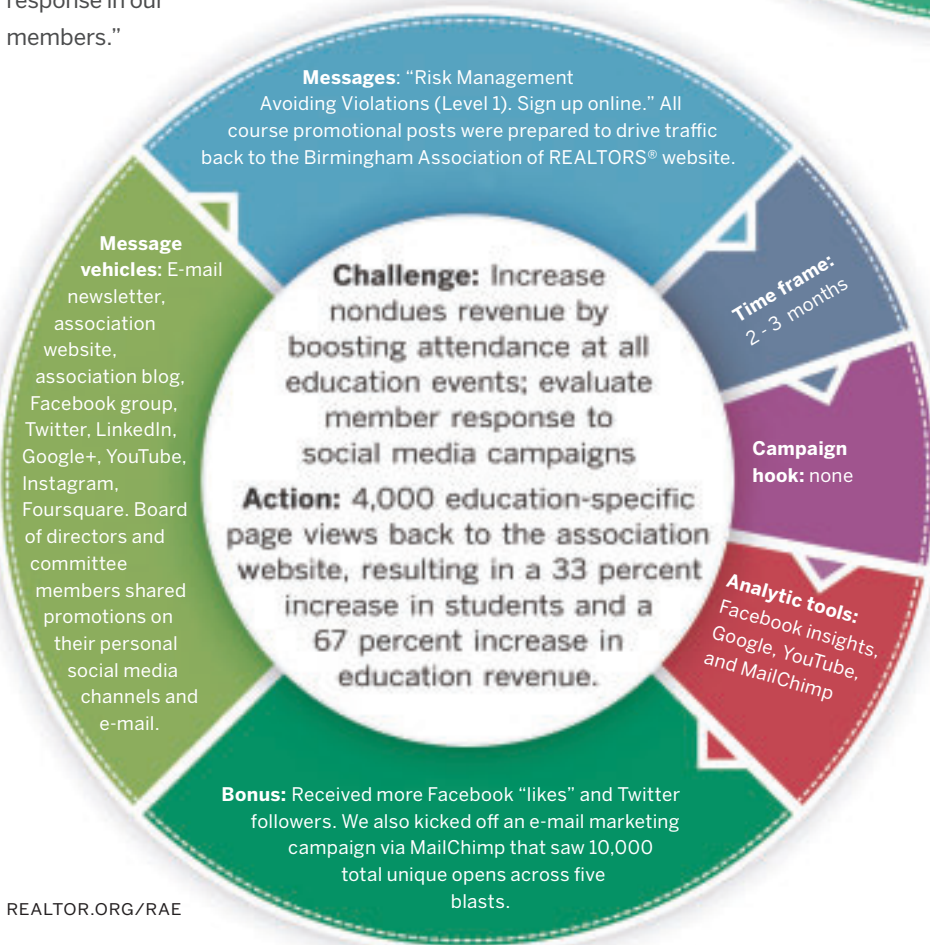


## EDUCATION

### Driving Web Traffic and Revenue

Birmingham Association of REALTORS®  
Andrew Sims, communications director

**Success:** “From this campaign, we learned as an association what channels would drive traffic for us, and that we could, in fact, disseminate class listings, video, and more, organically and see very good analytics. We are now using multiple mediums to reach and grow this association. We also found that e-mails sent from ‘Susan’ (our education director) received a 15 percent increase in open rate compared to those from ‘BAR.’ We’re seeing strong responses and valuable in-person feedback from members saying they’ve never been more connected to the association.”





CHARITY

Seniors Safe at Home

Charlottesville Area Association of REALTORS®, Va., Katie Davenport, marketing and communications

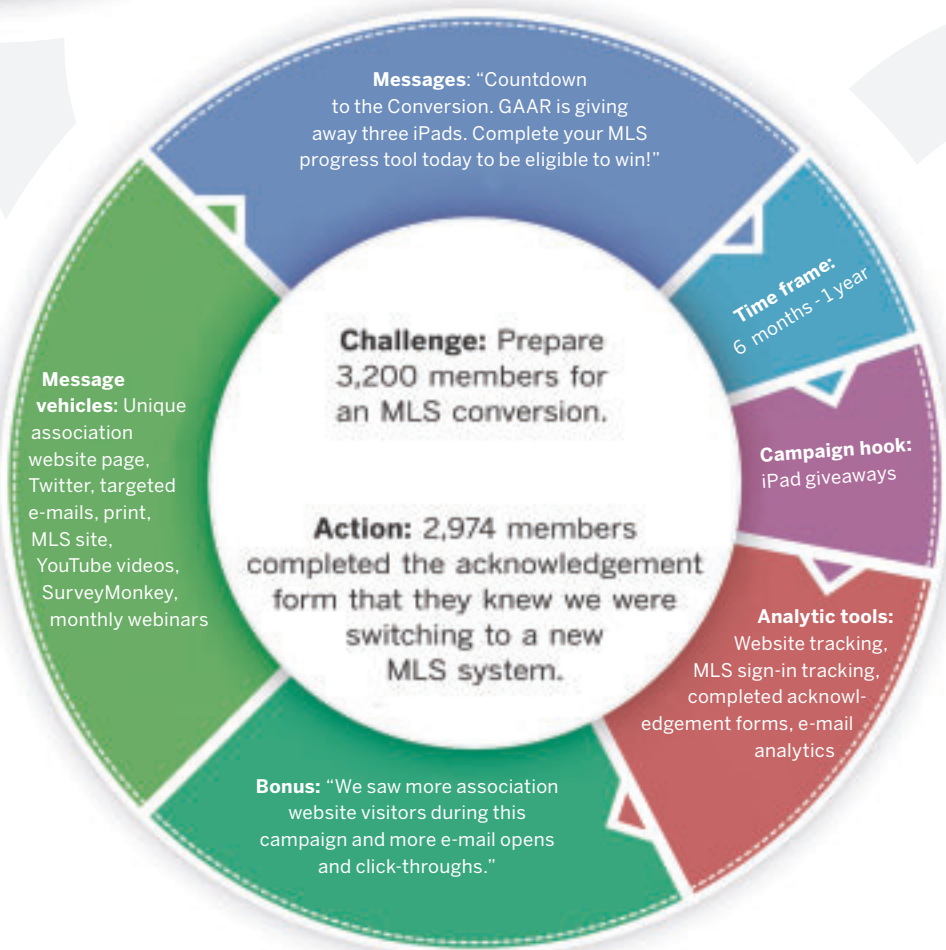
**Success:** "Now when you mention Seniors Safe at Home among the membership or in the community, the campaign is immediately identified with the REALTOR® association. One of the key takeaways was that in order to motivate members, we must 'show,' not just 'tell,' them why it's important to get involved. FundRazr was great in that respect because when CAAR board members made donations, they would repost on their own social media accounts how easy it was to donate and why it's important. We kept a steady stream of information across the weekly member newsletter, two to three posts per week on social media, periodic press releases, and updates at each general membership meeting—all these worked in tandem."

EDUCATION

Seemlessly Switching MLS Platforms

Greater Albuquerque Association of REALTORS®, Heidi Sergel, web and graphic designer

**Success:** "We successfully prepared members for an MLS conversion and, as a result, phone calls on the day of launch were almost normal. We made the campaign a game by making members complete tasks to earn a series of badges and be entered to win an iPad. Judging from our analytics during the conversion, we proved it takes more than just one method of communication to get in touch with members."



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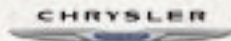


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\*As of January 2014, current vehicle models includes the following 2013/2014 Model Year Vehicles: Chrysler Brand\*: 200 Sedan; 300/300C; Town & Country; Dodge Brand\*: Avenger; Challenger; Charger; Dart; Durango; Grand Caravan; Journey; Fiat\*: 500L; Jeep Brand\*: Cherokee, Grand Cherokee. Ram Brand\*: Crew, Quad, Regular Cab, Mega Cab Models: 1500 (Light Duty - LD); Ram 2500 (Heavy Duty - HD); Ram 3500; Ram 4500; Ram 6500; Ram C/V Cargo Van; ProMaster® Van. Check with your dealer for complete list of vehicles included in this offer. Not all Chrysler Group vehicle models are included in the \$500 cash allowance program for REALTORS® and association/board staff. Check with your dealer for complete details, vehicle eligibility and program compatibility exclusions. \*\*All SRT models of these vehicles are excluded (ineligible). Some program exclusions and limitations apply. See dealer for complete details on all offers related to this program. Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge and RAM are registered trademarks of Chrysler Group LLC. ©2014 Chrysler Group LLC. All rights reserved.

# Rethinking the Association App

## The Apps Members Really Want and How Associations Can Get Mobile

A smartphone app giving busy members association information at their fingertips seemed like a great idea two years ago to Joe Kras, the Michigan Association of REALTORS® communications director. And it was, for a while.

“But now we’re in the process of abandoning our app and moving into a responsive website,” Kras says. “The new website will be compatible on all mobile phones and tablets, making the app obsolete.”

MAR’s IT manager, Andrew Francoeur, says problems arose with the association app when Apple declined to approve it after it was upgraded for the iPad and iPhone 5.

“With all the different operating systems, screen sizes for phones and tablets that are constantly evolving, and Apple’s delay to approve apps, we decided to start looking at redesigning our website instead of trying to keep up with apps for every individual device,” he says.

It’s a similar tale at the New Jersey Association of REALTORS®. Although members can still download the association’s app, Allison Rosen, director of communications, says it’s not used much anymore. “It’s essentially a mobile version of the website, so

it’s really obsolete since our site is already mobile-friendly.”

The Chicago Association of REALTORS® used to have an app that featured neighborhood descriptions, upcoming classes, event information, and member benefits details. CAR got rid of it about a year ago after realizing that members simply preferred using association tools online rather than from an app, says Barbara Matthopoulos, the association’s senior director of communications and media relations.

Whether your association app sinks into obsolescence depends entirely on how you use it, says Clint Skutchan, CEO of the Fort Collins Board of REALTORS® in Colorado.

“The best feature of our app is the ability to push information out to members’ smartphones and mobile devices,” he said.

“When we had a sudden change of venue for an event, we pushed out the new location to attendees via our app and not one person showed up at the old location,” Skutchan says.

Push notifications—having messages pop up on members’ smartphones or devices just like a text message—is a strong benefit of Fort Collins’ app. About 20 percent of members use the app, Skutchan

estimates.

Fort Collins’ app is also a bit different from most. When members open the app on their phone, they choose tabs that redirect them to the association’s website, its YouTube channel, and other resources in the device’s browser. Although this limits the use of the app to only when connected to the Internet, it’s a far less expensive app to build and maintain, at about \$1,000 a year developed by Power Apps That Work. The portal app is becoming the main way members access association information, Skutchan says, adding, “We’re conscious of not pushing too much stuff to members. We don’t want to duplicate our e-mail stream. We push out the market stats and calls to action, not this week’s class or events.”

### Rethinking the Association Website

The popularity of apps in general and their streamlined, user-friendly delivery of information is driving associations to rethink their website design.

Rosen says the New Jersey association’s rebranding campaign in the works now includes a new responsive design association site with features that make it feel and act



NAR’s new member center app is free and customizable for each state and local association, [realtor.org/ae/share-and-promote/member-center](http://realtor.org/ae/share-and-promote/member-center)



Pictured left: Houston Association of REALTORS®’ residential property search app for consumers also enables members to access MLS information and tax records and add and edit listings, leads, and more.



“The most heavily used apps by REALTORS® are those that are purpose-driven—neighborhood information, transaction workflow, CRM, contract signatures, reviews, marketing, video, social media.”

— Nobu Hata, director of digital engagement,  
National Association of REALTORS®

like an app, but without having gone through development on all app platforms.

“The goal for the site is to be streamlined—both in appearance and functionality—and make it quick and easy to find relevant information, sign up for classes, pay dues, etc.,” she says.

A responsive website makes a ton of sense today, says Nobu Hata, director of digital engagement, National Association of REALTORS®, but the value of a site that can be seamlessly viewed on mobile devices hinges on how content-driven and social it is. “Because all associations have a trove of MLS, economic, and market data of value to members, making sure users can ‘like’ or share the content to their own social media is key to a responsive site.”

### Members Love Apps

According to the NAR’s 2013 Member Profile, 86 percent of REALTORS® use a smartphone with Internet capabilities on a daily basis, and 20 percent of *realtor.org* visitors get there via a mobile device.

RAE found plenty of very popular apps from REALTOR® associations and MLSs. The key, however, was content. Apps that provide home search functions and market statistics thrive, while those that just offer class schedules and member directories stagnate.

“The most heavily used apps by REALTORS® are those that are purpose-driven—neighborhood information, transaction workflow, CRM, contract signatures, reviews, marketing, video, social media,” says Hata. “These apps have become part of everyday workflow in a REALTOR®’s business, hence the reasons why association apps aren’t used. Home search functionality within association apps

*Continued on p.23*

## AE’s Favorite Apps : We asked AEs and association staff what their favorite apps are right now.

**EntraPass:** “An app that allows me to check whether doors in our building are locked or not and lock or unlock them, too.”

**CamScanner and CamCard:** “I use the first for scanning and e-mailing copies of recipes to my bookkeeper so I am not walking around with tons of loose scraps of paper at meetings. I use CamCard to scan business cards right into my contact list.”

**Evernote:** “I can keep track of everything from meeting notes to brainstorming ideas, to interesting articles, photos, even my workouts and diet. The Web clipper is a great tool that allows me to grab anything that piques my interest online and tag it for future searches.”

without having to search through their e-mail.”

**Numbers:** “Great for touch spreadsheets on the iPad, where Excel is a bit clunky.”

**LinkedIn Pulse:** “The easiest-to-use app that gathers news from the feeds I select in one place. I have one for real estate.”

**Wunderlist:** “Great collaboration app that we use to share specific to-do lists with staff and leadership.”

**Eventjoy:** “Event app that not only lists sessions and speakers, but we can push announcements to attendees’ smartphones.”

**BombBomb:** “We use this for sending video e-mails to members or quick video messages to staff and volunteers. We really can convey more with images.”

**Facebook:** “I can keep current with my members on Facebook, so when I see them in person I can engage them in conversation because I know a little about what’s going on in their lives.”

**GQueues:** “Task manager that integrates with our office Google apps and lets me assign tasks to others. It has changed the way our staff collaborates with volunteers.”

**Dropbox:** “We’ve been using Dropbox to manage packets for our directors’ meetings. Directors can always find the most current agendas, minutes, and financials





Apps that provide home search functions and market statistics thrive, while those that just offer class schedules and member directories stagnate.

Pictured left: The Richmond Association of REALTORS®, Va., member and consumer home listings app features a “Near Me” search on GPS enabled devices.

is the closest I’ve ever seen to them being useful in the day-to-day workflow.”

In El Paso, the REALTOR® association’s MLS app for members and home search app for consumers have about a 50 percent member adoption and good public use as well, says Jason Sanchez, director of MLS and technology. “The two apps are both real estate-centric; we do not push association information (events, dues bills, etc.) through them,” he notes.

Andrew Sims, communications director at the Birmingham Association of REALTORS® in Alabama, knows how important it is to measure what members want from an app (or if they want an app at all) before building one.

Sims is a former senior mobile strategist at the app development company Appsolute Genius, where he learned planning and the right content are vital to an app’s success.

“As we’ve been rethinking mobile, we’ve been spending time on member surveys geared toward exploring how our members use existing apps on their phones, and how they use our website to determine if there is a way to either provide blog content or news updates via push,” he said.

Even though a responsive website should be a “no-brainer” for associations today, Sims says, mobile apps provide a unique secondary platform for information

sharing, and the costs can be reduced with advertising.

Home search or community-focused apps are a better investment for associations, says Sims, noting the success of the Houston Association of REALTORS® Houston Living app launched in October. “This is a perfect example of investing in community building and area exploration, which is ultimately a hot place to be in mobile,” he says.

The Houston Living App is a partnership between the city of Houston and Houston Association of REALTORS® to better help residents connect to a variety of public services, such as bus routes, libraries, parks, and police stations, as well as find restaurants, events, local deals, and even elected officials.

HAR built the app working with the city and is also working on a neighborhood explorer app.

Few associations have the technological resources of the Houston association. Apps can be expensive to build—and maintaining them is work and the cost is often overlooked.

Although more associations are finding that responsive Web design is their mobile

answer, there are other ways to get on the mobile bandwagon.

“Leveraging existing mobile social media like Facebook is a great solution for associations that have an audience there; however, all platforms require content to drive use,” says Hata. “Ensure that content is short, sweet, succinct, visual, and shareable. Use video and infographics and make sure content answers the question: ‘Does it make or save money?’”

*By Carolyn Schwaar*



Pictured: The Greater Greenville Association of REALTORS®, S.C., offers members an MLS app that delivers up-to-the-minute property notifications, valuations, and feedback options to clients.



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# Wrestling With Syndication Options

## MLSs and their Members Struggle to Weigh the Pros and Cons of Syndication Options While Seeking More Control Over Listing Data

**R**EALTORS® want something done about the perceived injustices within the online property listing ecosystem (Zillow, Trulia, ListHub, Point2, and others), many AEs say. They complain to their MLSs about listings appearing on sites where they didn't expect them, paid ads for agents next to their listings, leads are sold back to them, property information that is often misleading, and advertising program rules that constantly shift. While many MLSs say it's not their responsibility to do anything about it, others are taking on these issues with a variety of approaches.

A few MLSs have stopped syndicating members' listings, and at least one is sending listings only after a 48-hour delay. Some MLSs have expanded their syndication services and others actively negotiate with syndicators or portals over how member listings are displayed. There's movement in all directions. Yet one point is clear, MLS executives say: Members must drive the decisions about their own listings.

"Even if you don't end up making changes, the syndication decision is something every MLS should be thinking about," says Marilyn Wilson, founding partner of WAV Group, a real estate industry consult-

ing firm. She recommends reaching out to members—not only large brokers but a healthy sample of the smaller, independent brokers who are more reliant on MLS support—to find out not only what they know about where their listings go, but also what they want the MLS to do. If there is a diversity of opinions, consider forming a task force with all sides well-represented.

### "A Lot of Folks Thought We Were Crazy"

Complaints from members and customers about incorrect listing data on portal sites pushed the issue of syndication to the forefront at the Huntsville Area Association of REALTORS® and its subsidiary, the North Alabama Multiple Listing Service, CEO Kipp Cooper says.

In response, NAMLs set up a task force that polled members about what they wanted from the listing portals. Based on the responses, the task force drafted a model agreement that required each portal receiving MLS data to prominently display the name of the listing agent, to prioritize MLS data above any competing data source, and to include a link back to the NAMLs site for more detailed information.

"A lot of folks thought we were crazy,"

Cooper says, and for a brief period in fall 2013, NAMLs was "dark in the market" after it pulled the plug on feeding data to the portals. However, once the major portals understood that they were not going to receive any more data from NAMLs, they agreed to the terms.

"To date, we've earned well over a quarter of a million dollars for members in free advertising," Cooper says referring to the display of the listing agent's name with the listing, which is typically a paid premium feature on most portals.

"In the very beginning, there were some concerns with the major franchises, which have their own private agreements with the portals, but we don't interfere with that. We don't dictate to anyone," Cooper says. Broker participation in the MLS data syndication is steadily increasing, which makes it a win for the portals as well, he notes.

"The biggest issue was making sure that we had member buy-in and that members understood the consequences of doing nothing versus doing something."

### Understanding the Portals Role?

"The manner in which some third-party listing portals manipulate the brokers' data is harmful to all of us in real estate,"

Negotiating terms of display with syndicators and portals in exchange for listing information is on the rise nationwide as more MLSs, franchises, and brokerages seek to regain a bit of control over the display of listing data online.



“We put together a more thoughtful listing procurement agreement, and we’re spending money on it. We’re paying to have syndication implemented the way we want it implemented.”

—Bob Hale, CEO, Houston Association of REALTORS®.

says Paul Hilgers, president of the Austin Board of REALTORS®. This was part of the reason the association’s MLS decided to no longer play an official role in syndication to non-REALTOR® listing portals, yet not stand in the way of members who felt these portals were the right choice.

Austin’s listings will appear on realtor.com® and member websites, and many large brokerages have separate syndication agreements directly with the major portals. Hilgers says it’s too early to tell how many brokerages will syndicate their listings to the major portals on their own. “We are working to develop the systems necessary to monitor this and will keep a close eye on our membership’s response to this transition.”

The Wilmington Regional Association of REALTORS® in North Carolina recently announced that it is following in Austin’s footsteps and ending its relationship with syndicator ListHub. Yet in 2013, roughly three dozen MLSs signed on with ListHub making it the company’s best year for attracting new partners.

### Negotiating Terms with Portals

The Houston Association of REALTORS® technology task force broke new ground this year while negotiating a unique deal with ListHub. In the arrangement, ListHub feeds listings from other Texas MLSs to HAR’s popular public-facing listing website HAR.com, turning it into a statewide portal. In return, HAR syndicates its members’ listings via ListHub, not directly to the portals.

ListHub will provide weekly referral reports to participating agents that are far

more detailed and useful than its standard reports, says Bob Hale, HAR’s president and CEO.

“We put together a more thoughtful listing procurement agreement, and we’re spending money on it. We’re paying to have syndication implemented the way we want it implemented,” says Hale.

Negotiating terms of display with syndicators and portals in exchange for listing information is on the rise nationwide as more MLSs, franchises, and brokerages seek to regain a bit of control over the display of listing data online.

Last year, The Realty Alliance, a national network of large residential brokerages, issued its “Fair Display Guidelines” for MLSs’ public-facing websites, which many MLSs have been using as a model to negotiate terms with syndicators and portals. Houston says its agreement with ListHub adheres to The Realty Alliance guidelines.

Craig Cheatham, president and CEO of The Realty Alliance, however, sounds a cautionary note, raising questions about whether dealing with syndicators is an appropriate function for an MLS.

“Associations and MLSs should be wary of making blanket business decisions for brokers, and this would be true no matter the firm size or business model. Ideally, practitioners would have local control on all aspects of data sharing, from where it goes to the terms of the agreement the recipients of the data must sign,” he says.

### Keep Members in the Know

Educating members on their syndication options and monitoring their use and

opinions of syndication is key to making informed decisions about which role an MLS should take in the issue.

“We monitor members’ use of the ListHub syndication dashboard and graph on a monthly basis the number of listings going to syndication versus direct feed to realtor.com® or IDX,” says John Holley, CEO of the North Texas Real Estate Information System.

Although the syndication debate is not a hot topic among his members, Holley still plans to set up a task force to monitor the issue.

Allan Hetkowski, RCE, CAE, CEO at the Greater Scranton Board of REALTORS®, Pa., recently switched his MLS syndication agreement with ListHub from “opt out” to an “opt in” to ensure members make more informed decisions. Many agents don’t always realize they can select which portals, if any, receive their listings, he notes.

At Metro MLS in Milwaukee, CEO Chris Carrillo says, “We have found that often brokers simply create an account on ListHub, ‘select all’ on portal destinations and forget about it. This creates a real education disconnect on new portals added by ListHub and brokers not knowing where their listings are going.”

MLS executives should monitor portals added and removed to the syndicator menu on a monthly basis, he says. “You may find some portals that have been added do not fit into your market in a complementary way. MLSs are still responsible for where their content ends up.”

By Masha Zager with Amy DuBose



RISK AVOIDANCE

# How Associations, MLSs Battle Patent Trolls

Join forces, settle, license, fight back: There are many ways to respond to a claim that your association or MLS is violating another party's patented technology or practice.

In recent years, several REALTOR® associations or the MLSs they operate have received letters alleging patent infringement. These letters, sent to thousands of businesses every year, are often vague and merely state that the sender owns a patent and that the business has infringed on their technology or on some other aspect of their business.

Last year, many REALTOR® organizations received such letters related to the method of using a printer device to scan and e-mail documents through a network\*. Other letters have related to the display of property information on websites and methods of making that information available to consumers. Associations are left wondering why they've received these letters and what they should do about it.

The increase in patent license demand letters has been attributed to increased activity by patent trolls. "Patent troll" is a

pejorative reference to an entity that does not produce anything but asserts patent rights on behalf of patent owners. This term is often used interchangeably with "nonpracticing entity," "patent assertion entity," and "patent monetization entity." Patent trolls purchase or license patents from inventors in order to have the right to demand license fees from businesses that may be using the invention.

The cost of defending against a patent infringement lawsuit can easily reach into the millions, even if the lawsuit is successful. Defendants often settle lawsuits they may consider frivolous because settlement or licensing costs are typically far less than trial costs.

Due to the rise in software and business-method patents granted by the United States Patent and Trademark Office, no business or association is safe from patent trolls.

For example, in 2007, many associations and MLSs across the country received demand letters regarding a patent being asserted by a patent troll commonly referred to as "CIVIX." CIVIX claimed to own enforceable patents for an online system that allows MLS systems, and those who use them, to locate, search for, and transmit to others information about homes such as the location, property characteristics and detail, local school district, and photos or other graphical displays.

CIVIX claimed that essentially all MLS systems infringe on its patents. In that case, those entities that received the

Due to the rise in software and business-method patents granted by the United States Patent and Trademark Office, no business or association is safe from patent trolls.

## Members under patent troll pressure

In February, more than a dozen of the nation's largest brokerages, including Coldwell Banker, RE/MAX, Century 21, Keller Williams, Prudential, and Weichert Co., were named in a patent lawsuit filed by Property Disclosure Technologies LLC, the owner of a patent on "Real Estate Disclosure Reporting Methods." The lawsuit is ongoing.

\* For more information on that scanner patent, see <http://speakingofrealestate.blogs.realtor.org/2013/06/04/beware-of-patent-troll/>.

## Your options: Responding to a patent troll

Often there is no evidence that the patent troll knows of any infringement at your association or MLS before sending letters asking for a license fee or threatening legal action. If you receive a letter from a patent troll, you should discuss your options with your legal counsel. Your options include:

- Ignore the letter.
- Respond with a request for specifics. Ask how your practices infringe the patents.
- Deny in writing that there is any infringement.
- Pay a license fee, if the patent claim seems plausible.
- Challenge the patent's validity in court.
- Ask the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to invalidate the patent.

demand letter formed a joint defense group and determined that the best business decision was to negotiate an industrywide license for use of the patent covering all MLSs. Although paying the \$7.5 million demand may have been the best business decision in the Civix case, it's not the only option when responding to demand letters.

One option is to ask the patent owner to provide specific details and evidence as to why your equipment or software infringes on the patents and how that alleged infringement actually occurs. Draft legislation recently proposed by Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., would require patent asserters to include these specific details in every demand letter they send. The draft legislation would also give the Federal Trade Commission and state attorneys general the authority to bring actions against patent owners who fail to include such information in their demand letters.

Even though patent trolls are not currently obligated to provide the specific information you request, any information, or even a nonresponse, could assist you in deciding your next step.

If the association decides that the infringement allegation has merit, it may consider negotiating a license for continued use of the patent.

If there is no basis for the alleged patent infringement claim, the association may consider options such as ignoring the letter, responding by denying any infringement, or suing the patent owner for a declaratory judgment that the association does not

infringe on the patent claims.

Some software and method patents are described so broadly in the demand letters that they appear to be obvious and not unique inventions. A patent has to be novel for it to be valid. If it can be proven that the invention was not novel at the time of creation asserted by the patent owner, then the patent can be invalidated. If an association believes that the alleged patent is obvious or not novel, then it may consider pursuing invalidation of the patent by filing a lawsuit or initiating the appropriate action with the USPTO.

Recipients of patent troll demands may want to contact their state's attorney general to find out if any resources are available from the state. Combining forces with other companies that may have received the same demand letter pursuant to a joint defense agreement could also be an effective way to combat patent trolls. The state and national associations may be able to put you in touch with other entities that have received similar demands.

The National Association of REALTORS® is helping associations, MLSs, and all

The National Association of REALTORS® is helping associations, MLSs, and all members by working to effect change on the legislative front.

members by trying to effect change on the legislative front. Late last year, the House of Representatives passed a comprehensive patent litigation reform bill. Now the Senate must act. Under the direction of Melanie Wyne, NAR's senior technology representative, NAR has joined the Main Street Patent Coalition to urge Congress to stop abusive patent troll litigation. Information about NAR's government affairs efforts is available at: [realtor.org/topics/patent-litigation-reform](http://realtor.org/topics/patent-litigation-reform).

Anyone who receives a demand letter for these patents should discuss all options with local legal counsel. Resources are also available on the USPTO Website, [www.uspto.gov/patents/litigation/index.jsp](http://www.uspto.gov/patents/litigation/index.jsp).

To learn more about what information patent trolls may soon be required to disclose, the draft legislation is available at [Realtor.org/articles/senate-introduces-patent-demand-letter-legislation](http://Realtor.org/articles/senate-introduces-patent-demand-letter-legislation).



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PROFILE

# Keeping Members Up to Speed With Technology

Steve Volkodav has built a reputation for delivering technology solutions to meet members' business needs, positioning his association as one of the most technologically advanced in the nation.



Steve Volkodav

**B**efore Steve Volkodav took the helm of the 3,300-member North Shore–Barrington Association of REALTORS® in Illinois last June, he was its chief information officer for nearly 13 years. During that time, he oversaw the association's conversion to a digital records system, launched the first REALTOR® association mobile app, and rebuilt NSBAR's telecommunications system. As CEO, he teaches classes on technology nationwide and offers members a customer support Web chat, online education, a technology hot line, computer repair, and much more.

**Q. What is the biggest technological challenge your members face today and how is your association working to address it?**

**A.** I think technology is outpacing most of

the membership. Many members don't know how to secure the products they use or what products are relevant to their business. They see so many different products that they don't know which way is up. Our tech department works to make it as painless as possible for members by focusing on what members need to get out of technology, not what the technology does.

**Q. How do you ensure that money is well-spent (and not wasted) on technology?**

**A.** Research and planning is the short answer. Make sure your technology investment solves a clear need. Purchase software that has multiple purposes, whenever possible, along with strong company support. Just simply asking a technology vendor for a 30-day trial version will answer many questions. Then ask your peers, other association AEs, and their staff about what works and what doesn't. Even if they haven't used the technology, they may have valuable research.

**Q. If we were given a grant to completely fund a new association technology investment, what would you spend it on?**

**A.** Well, since I serve on the 2014 AE committee, let me take a broader view and give you my idea for the entire REALTOR® association community. The problem we need to solve among REALTOR® associations when

it comes to technology is collaboration. For example, AEs getting together to design the ideal association management software solution, then working with NAR to build it with a technology vendor, then making it available cost-efficiently to all associations was the genius behind RAMCO (REALTOR® Association Management System Cooperative). But what if that type of teamwork and partnership from concept through implementation and support was used to create a wide variety of technology products and initiatives for associations? A critical component of this technology collaborative would be advice and practical help—somewhere AEs could call whenever they had a question about what technology to buy and how to use it. Individual REALTOR® associations spend enormous amounts of time researching products when sharing or pooling information would ensure that each of us isn't reinventing the wheel.

**Q. What piece of software, cloud service, or app has most changed the way your work in the last year?**

**A.** Cloud services are probably the biggest improvement we've seen. I can store, view, and work on all of our data on the Web. It's easier than ever to immediately share with staff while I'm on the road. I can use multiple services over multiple devices that all sync with each other, with staff, and with the office.

Encourage your members to access their benefits on-the-go with NAR's

# Member Center App!



## STEP ONE

Update your custom message, logo, social media links and events by logging in under **"State and Local Associations"** at [MemberCenter.REALTOR.org /admin](http://MemberCenter.REALTOR.org/admin)

Encourage your members to download **NAR's Member Center app** to see the benefits you provide. NAR's Member Center app features:

- Their personalized digital membership card with 5 designs to choose from
- Discounts on products and services they use every day through the REALTOR Benefits® Program
- National, State and Local benefits, and events on their calendars
- The latest industry news and housing reports

## STEP TWO



NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION *of*  
REALTORS®

## Real-time showing alerts...



...enable your members to monitor activity at their listings, answer questions quickly, and keep home sellers informed. These are just a few examples of how Supra's system simplifies home sales.



[supraekey.com](http://supraekey.com)

02/12/2014 9:31AM  
New Showing Update.  
Jane Brown showed listing  
123 SW Best Dr, Villa, OR  
(KeyBox# 30900002) on  
02/12/2014 9:28AM  
(555) 555-0100  
buyers.agent4011@gmail.com



**Visit Supra Booth #310 at the  
REALTOR® Party Convention & Trade Expo**

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