# SentriLock Integration and Report Improvements: Coming Soon on RMLS*web*

Ever had clients confused by the abbreviations on a Client Full report, or wish that you could assign a new listing to a lockbox within RMLS*web*? RMLS™ is pleased to report upcoming improvements to RMLS*web* designed to make things easier for our subscribers.

SentriLock Integration

Beginning November 20th, subscribers will be able to perform basic SentriLock functions on the site such as assigning/unassigning a lockbox to a listing and viewing lockbox access information.
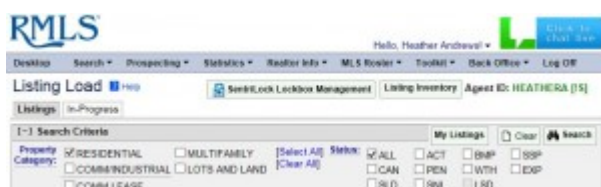
 Access this new feature in Listing Load using the SentriLock button below the RMLS*web* navigation menu (above).

In "My Lockboxes" (above), a list of your lockboxes will appear along with the ML# and the address they're currently assigned to. Click the X to unassign the listing, but be aware that showing surveys will be cleared out once the lockbox has been unassigned.

To assign a lockbox to a listing, click on the "My Unassigned Listings" tab. Active listings will be displayed, and subscribers can click the link to assign a lockbox to a particular listing.

If you'd rather have a look at the history of lockbox accesses, click the lockbox serial number in the "My Lockboxes" tab (above).

RMLS*web* communicates lockbox changes back to SentriLock almost instantly, meaning that it's even more important for subscribers to *keep their SentriCard® updated by using their RAD*.

Report Improvements

When the SentriLock integration is released, subscribers may also notice a few improvements to reports on RMLS*web*. Print buttons will now be available on all tabs in detail view.

We're also adding two new unabbreviated reports to the list of available reports: Agent Unabbreviated and Client Unabbreviated. These reports are self-explanatory: no abbreviations to look up or need to cross-reference the RMLS*web* Listing Abbreviations document! Keep in mind these unabbreviated reports will require more room and pages to print out—we'll hope you'll keep the environment in mind. An Agent Unabbreviated tab will also be available for easy onscreen viewing.

RMLS™ hopes this latest batch of improvements to RMLS*web* will help subscribers execute their business. As always, feedback about this latest round of improvements is welcome. If you have ideas or suggestions to make RMLS*web* even better, contact the RMLS™ Help Desk at (503) 872-8002.

MLS Insight: Thinking About an RMLS™ Without Area Numbers

This post is part of MLS Insight, a series about how things work at RMLS™.
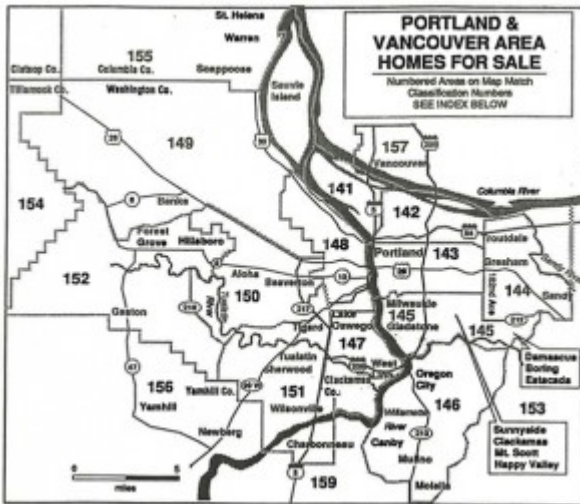
An MLS without area numbers: this idea might strike terror in your heart….or you might say to yourself, "it's about time!" In any case, it is not a proposal that is currently on the table, but with the changes in technology and the way people think about location, it is probably not too early to start the conversation.

When RMLS™ opened its doors in 1991, it was to the REALTORS® in the Portland metropolitan area in Oregon. At that time, the major advertising vehicle for homes for sale was the newspaper—*The Oregonian*, in our case. RMLS™ based its MLS area numbers on the map and classified ad numbers of *The Oregonian*. The 12 core areas for Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties have remained basically unchanged for 23 years.

When regions were added, local preferences regarding area numbers were retained. Clark County, for example, is divided into more than 30 areas, while Coos County is contained in one area.

The end result is more than 200 area numbers in RMLS*web*, without a common reason why each geographical area is an "Area Number." In some cases, a single area comprises several large but dissimilar communities. In others, areas may have so few listings and sales as a sample size that few, if any, conclusions could be drawn from looking at their data. In fact, there are rural areas that had no new listings and no closed sales in all of 2013.

In the world of today, *The Oregonian* posts its real estate ads online and there is no search option for area numbers. GPS location services have replaced maps to a large degree. It is a very different world than the world of 1991, when there was a Thomas Brothers map in the car of virtually every REALTOR®.

Here are some things to think about:

> *What role do area numbers play in the life of an RMLS™ subscriber today?*
>
> *Has map search replaced searching by area number? Could it?*
>
> *What could replace area numbers for searching besides map search—counties? zip codes? There should be something to narrow the initial search that pertains to location.*
>
> *What about* Market Action *and other statistical reports? (Some counties are already reported in terms of zip codes in Market Action.)*

If and when we ever do move away from area numbers, we need to have a good plan to meet the needs of our subscribers. Ideas?

Thanks for voyaging into the future with me. Next month we will talk with the various departments at RMLS™ and their plans for the upcoming year. If you have any questions you would like to have answered about how things work at RMLS™, I encourage you to post a comment to this blog.

UPDATE (November 20, 2014): RMLS™ is not the only MLS engaging in this interesting discussion. Here's an article from the Seattle Post-Intelligencer about NWMLS area numbers.

Bulk Delete and More Frequent Auto-Emails: Coming Soon on RMLS*web*

Ever wanted to clean out your saved searches, prospecting profiles, or hotsheet profiles? It has previously been an arduous task, requiring each saved item to be deleted separately.

Bulk Delete of Saved Searches on RMLS*web*

Starting September 25th, RMLS™ subscribers will find an exciting new feature on RMLS*web*. Users will be able to delete multiple saved searches quickly with our new bulk delete feature!

Whether a user is looking at a regular saved search, a prospecting profile, or a hotsheet profile, checking the box above the list of saved searches will select all searches listed on the page. When the desired searches are selected, simply click the Action button above, then Delete.
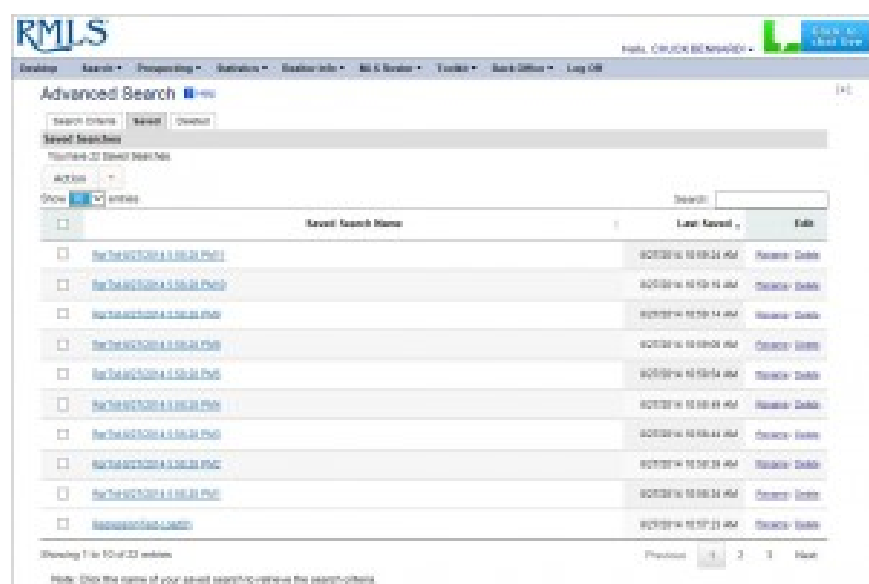
(Here's what it looks like on Prospecting Profiles.)

What if you didn't mean to delete one or more of the selected searches? Use the Deleted tab to access deleted searches, then use the Action button to return the searches back to the Saved tab. Keep in mind, after a search has been in the deleted tab for 30 days, it will be purged from the system.

Subscribers are advised to take advantage of this new feature as soon as this is released. Log in to RMLS*web* and weed out saved searches, prospecting profiles, and hotsheet profiles that are no longer of use, and take time on a regular basis to clean these items out.

The enhancements committee has noted regular requests to make deleting these saved searches easier. Honoring that request in the past created more problems than it solved. RMLS™ hopes this new feature will be helpful to all users of RMLS*web*.

Increased Frequency of Automatic Emails and Prospecting Notifications

Responding to subscriber feedback, the RMLS™ Board of Directors voted to increase the frequency of auto-emails (to clients) and prospecting emails (to subscribers) on RMLS*web*. You may have already noticed an uptick in notifications, and RMLS™ will continue to look into increasing the frequency further.

As you can see subscriber feedback drives improvements to RMLS*web*, and these latest developments are no exception. If you'd like to suggest an improvement to RMLS*web*, contact the RMLS™ Help Desk at (503) 872-8002.

MLS Insight: How to Find the Information You Need to Enhance Your MLS Experience

TOP TEN RMLS™ HELP DESK CALL SUBJECTS

May 2014
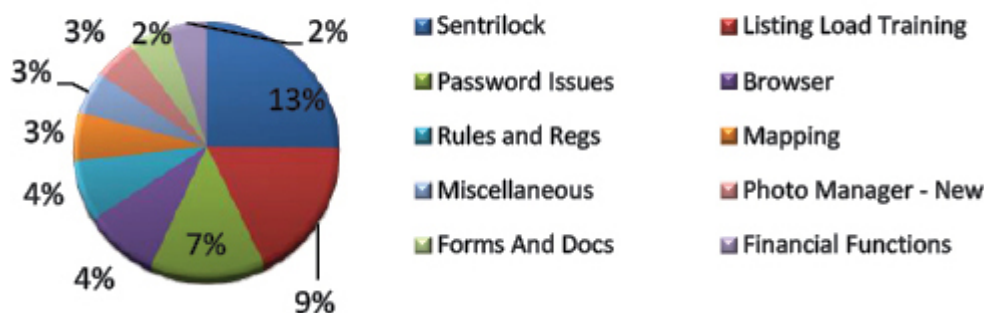
This post is part of MLS Insight, a series about how things work at RMLS™.

RMLS™ provides information in many ways, so no matter what your learning style or level of expertise, you can get answers to help you maximize the usefulness of RMLS™ services in your business. I am going to describe some of the ways that you can empower yourself with information online and some of the ways to interface with RMLS™ staff to get answers.

Getting Answers for Yourself Online

The desktop of RMLS*web* has a wealth of information. In addition to the timely news displayed in the center, both the left and right hand sides of the desktop have information for you. Information about your personal listings, hotsheet prospects, and RMLS™ account appears at the top left, but scrolling down brings you to a list of helpful links to other RMLS™ sites, such as our blog site (that's where you are now) and Facebook page. You can also connect with OAR, NAR, and many other locations outside RMLS*web* that might be helpful. Below the links section is a pop-up that shows all the RMLS™

contact information — phone numbers, office addresses, hours of operation, etc. The right sidebar is collapsible. If you are not currently displaying it, you will see a + in the upper right corner of your screen. Press to open the sidebar which has easy links to locations inside RMLS*web*, like the spot to go to to change your email address or banner (User Preferences), and other helpful tools.

To explore all the documents RMLS™ has available, go to Toolkit on the nativation menu of RMLS*web* and select "All Documents" under Forms and Documents. There is a search function where you can insert keywords or document numbers, and also a tag cloud to select all documents relevant to popular search words. By scrolling down and looking at the lower left corner, you can also find the folder structure which contains the documents (illustration at right), and you can navigate to to individual documents from the folders. Finally, there is an alphabetical list of all documents, if that is the way you like to see things. Access that document by highlighting 1000-1069 General Information Menu in the Folder list and selecting the "Forms and Documents Alphabetical Index" or by typing "indices" in the search box. Forms and Documents has e-forms for many of the documents you might need to fill out as an RMLS™ subscriber, as well as regular PDF documents.

Have you ever noticed the Help icons on various pages of RMLS*web?* The example on your right is from Listing Load. By clicking for help, you can access the video tutorial "Adding a New Listing" as well as other helpful documents.
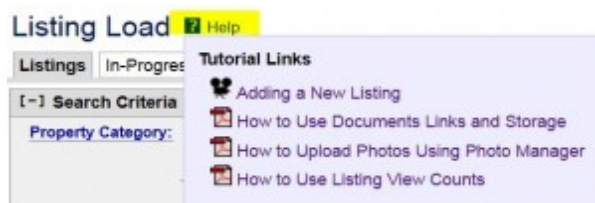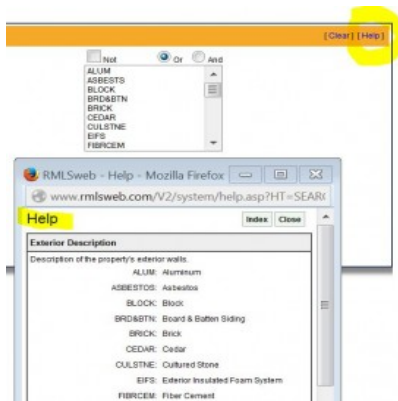
Have you ever had trouble deciphering one of the seven-character feature abbreviations? The full list of abbreviations is in Forms and Documents. Just type in the document number 1210 in the search box. However, there are easy ways to access this information right from the RMLS*web* Advanced Search and Listing Load pages. At left is an example from Advanced Search. By clicking the Help link in the upper right corner of the feature selection box, the definitions for those abbreviations will appear in a pop-up box, and BRD&BTN will be defined as Board & Batten Siding. In Listing Load, hovering over the field labels will display a **?** — click and the definition of the field will be shown.

Getting Help from RMLS™ Staff

By phone. In person. On chat. Via email. ***We are here to help you!***

The pie chart at the top of this post represents the top 10 call topics handled by our fabulous Help Desk in May 2014. The top ten call topics were about half of the total calls, which span a huge range of topics, from hardware troubleshooting to the use of any RMLS™ system. Our Help Desk will do their very best to find the answers to your questions, or direct you to other sources if they can't. Help is available toll-free from 8AM-7PM on Monday through Thursday, 8AM-5PM on Friday, and 10AM to 2PM on Saturday.

You can even ask us questions via chat, our most recently added tool! Look in the upper right hand corner anywhere in RMLS*web* and click on the icon. You can choose the department you need to talk to — Help Desk, Training, Accounting, or Front Desk/Membership. The hours available generally coincide with the corporate office hours.

Visit us in person at any one of our offices in Brookings, Eugene, Florence, Hermiston, Hood River, North Bend, Portland, Roseburg, Salem, and Vancouver. RMLS™ contact information and office hours are available on RMLScentral or can always be accessed via the RMLS*web* desktop. If you want us to come to you to answer your questions, contact RMLS™ Training and we can visit your office.

Thanks for taking this brief tour highlighting some of the information available to enhance your RMLS™ experience. Next month we will talk about statistics—what does RMLS™ provide? If you have any questions you would like to have answered about how things work at RMLS™, I encourage you to post a comment to this blog.

Ruleschool: SNL Listings and Manufactured Homes

This article is part of our series Ruleschool, where we take a closer look at selected parts of the RMLS™ Rules and Regulations.

We're going to take a closer look today at a couple of rules we commonly speak to subscribers about: Sold, Not Listed (SNL) listings and manufactured homes.

Sold, Not Listed (SNL) Listings
Do you know when to enter a listing as SNL?

3.27 Sold, Not Listed Records. *RMLS™ subscribers may enter information on properties sold to a represented buyer that*

were not listed in the RMLS™ system, which can include properties offered for sale by owner, through a non-RMLS™ broker, or listed with an RMLS™ participant office as an office exclusive where the listing office declines to enter the information after the sale. The selling agent entering the information is responsible for the accuracy of the content. These records will be clearly marked with a status "Sold, Not Listed" and display "Non-RMLS" as the listing agent and office. Submission of listing of sold properties not filed with RMLS™ by participants for comparable purposes requires the authority of the buyer or seller. This section does not apply to the Commercial Lease category.

The most common question asked about this status is, "can I enter the listing as SNL if I represented the seller?" The answer is no since the listing would automatically default the listing agent and listing office to non-RMLS™. The proper use of an SNL listing would be if the seller/owner was not represented, they were represented by a non-RMLS™ broker, or the listing was an office exclusive and not entered into RMLS*web*.

Manufactured Homes

On just one morning this week, our office had six conversations about entering manufactured listings into RMLS*web*! Here's what the RMLS™ Rules and Regulations say:

3.6 Manufactured Housing. *Listings involving manufactured homes must be identified. These listings are denoted as either including the sale of real property or not including the sale of real property by using the correct abbreviation in the Property Type field.*

In the Property Type field you would either use RES-MFG (including real property) or IN-PARK (not including real property). By using either of these property types, the style

field allows you to mark either DBL-WIDE, MANUFHS, SIN-WIDE, or TRI-WIDE to define the type of building.

There have been several inquiries recently regarding these types of listings. Be sure to accurately describe the property for sale by checking the appropriate boxes and using the drop down menus when available.

Confused by one of the RMLS™ Rules and Regulations? Leave a comment below or contact us via email to suggest a topic you'd like to see next time.

Find□: Bringing REALTOR.com to Your Professional Fingertips

Get ready—on Monday, June 9th, Find□ will make its debut on RMLS*web*!

Find□ gives RMLS™ subscribers professionals-only access to data contained on REALTOR.com. Access is integrated within RMLS*web* meaning it's fast, flexible, and *easy*.

Using Find□ to Find Property Details About an RMLS*web* Listing

In RMLS*web*, click one of the Find□ buttons (Property, Schools, or Community) at the bottom of an

Agent Full or Data Only listing report to be taken to the selected report in Find™.

Closing that report will give you access to the full record for the listing, where you can quickly find map links, nearby comparables, information about local schools, an archive of listing photos, reports, and maps with layers such as flight patterns and nearby amenities.

Searching Find™

The other way to access Find™ is via the Toolkit menu on RMLS*web*, under "Links."

Searching via Find™ is nearly as intuitive as Google. Simply type what you're searching for into the search bar—Find™ knows common REALTOR® shorthand and will classify the parts of your query into search fields when you press Enter. If you want to adjust your search, all fields can be changed by clicking to reveal a drop-down menu.

In instances where a term may be confusing or have multiple meanings, a box will appear to allow the user to specify what they're looking for. As an example, searching for "granite" may refer to Granite City, CA, granite countertops, or houses on Granite Street. The box that will appear helps the agent search for just the right thing.

Find™ gives RMLS™ subscribers the ability to search any property, whether it's on the market or not. Find's public records means you can access tax data and AVMs even on non-listed properties.

Helping clients relocate outside the RMLS™ region? Find™ makes it easy to find a listing anywhere in the US—other MLSs belonging to Find™ provide complete data, and MLSs not belonging to Find™ still have the same basic consumer information available on REALTOR.com.

Check out a five-minute tour of Find™:

Thirsting for more information about how Find☐ can bring information to your fingertips in a flash? Check out the training button on the upper right corner. Regularly scheduled webinars cover the basics, mapping, and advanced capabilities of Find☐.

RMLS™ is proud to bring Find☐ to our subscribers, and hope you'll find it to be a powerful tool that can help your business.

Ruleschool: New Construction and Photographs

This article is the next in our series Ruleschool, where we take a closer look at selected parts of the RMLS™ Rules and Regulations.

The RMLS™ Rules and Regulations are key to maintaining accurate data on RMLS*web* and a smooth-running real estate marketplace. Just like in last month's blog post, Things the Rules Committee Wants You to Know, we're going to take a closer look today at a couple of rules we commonly speak to subscribers about: new construction and photographs.

3.5: <u>**New Construction Listings.**</u> *Listings involving new construction shall classify such construction as:*

   a. "NEW" — construction completed, but property has never been occupied;
   b. "Under Construction" — ground broken and construction actually under way; or
   c. "Proposed" — not yet under construction

When entering a new construction listing, the Year Built Description field may start with "PROPOSD" which means no construction has started. Once ground is broken and construction begins, the field will need to be changed to "UNDRCON". If construction is completed before listing is sold, the field will need to be changed to "NEW". These changes will accurately reflect the status of construction in a listing.

If for some reason you are not able to make the appropriate change before the listing is changed to SLD status an email will be sent to verify the status of the Year Built Description field if other than "NEW". When you respond, we will adjust the Year Built Description field as needed.

3.7: __Photographs:__ *Listing Brokers may submit up to sixteen (16) photographs for all listings to be Published in the RMLS™ System. The photographs are to be submitted without any added text or graphics, or any alterations that misrepresent the property. At the time of publication, listing submitted to RMLS™ are required to have one (1) photograph of the exterior building view, except for bare land, which must have a photograph of the land. If the seller does not wish to have a photograph published, a Photograph Omission Form or equivalent document signed by the seller is required and must be submitted to RMLS™ within 72 hours of listing publication.*

The exterior building view is to be photograph number one (1) if multiple photographs are submitted. Residential new construction is required to have a photograph, which may be of the floor plan or exterior elevation until the building is competed, at which time a photograph of the exterior building view must be added.

We receive numerous complaints when the first photograph is not the exterior building view. This photograph does not need

to be only of the front of the building but can be the side or the back depending on which best highlights the features of the building. The photograph should not be of the deck or the view of the river/ocean or mountains.

When working with new construction, don't forget to load a photograph in the first position of the completed building before changing the status of the listing to sold. If the listing has been changed to sold before a photograph was entered, you can send the photograph to RMLS™ and we will post it for you.

Check in again next month for more rules information you can use!

Detail View is Expanding on RMLS*web*

RMLS™ is adding a detail view tab to several searches on RMLS*web* as part of the regular monthly outage scheduled for Wednesday, April 30th. Detail view provides a list of properties on the left and a window showing selected reports on the right. (In the sample below, the Agent Full report is shown.) Users can select tabs to navigate through the various available reports.

Listing Load got the detail view treatment last summer, and this spring we'll be expanding the feature to the following areas:

- Map Search
- Quick Search
- Advanced Search
- Street(s)/Address Search
- MLS Number Search
- Actual Expireds Search
- Radius Search

The RMLS™ development staff expanded the use of detail view on RMLS*web* as it offered an answer to some common problems. Users will be able to switch between reports without reloading the whole page. Not only is this process faster than waiting for each to reload when browsing listings, but the user won't lose their place in a long search results list after reading details in each listing.

RMLS*web* will remember which view the user used last. This means that if you find yourself using detail view more than list view, you won't need to toggle to your preferred setting each time you run a search!

Detail view makes browsing easier for users, but doesn't have the same capabilities as list view. To print search results, you will need to use the list view tab. Also, detail view

doesn't support printing reports directly—if you want to print a report from detail view, you'll still need to navigate to the report using the report menu (upper right hand of the screen) and then use the print button. And if you have custom columns set up, you'll only be able to use them in list view.

This is the first rollout in this year's search improvement project—one of the main projects RMLS™ will be implementing this year. (More on the RMLS™ development process here.)

We hope you find detail view to be helpful as you're browsing properties for clients. Keep watch on RMLS™ this year, as we have more improvements in the works!

Ruleschool: Things the Rules Committee Wants You to Know

The Rules and Regulations Committee wants to make sure that all of our subscribers understand the RMLS™ Rules, because they are a key ingredient in accurate data and a smooth-running real estate marketplace. Our new blog series Ruleschool will periodically highlight rules, starting with the following two.

3.26 <u>Availability for Showing.</u> *With the exception of Commercial Lease and Auction listings, all active listings shall be available for showing immediately upon entry into the RMLS™ system, excluding listings which require all offers to be made contingent on interior inspection. Listings cannot restrict showings until a future date.*

There are several complaints sent in each week because the remarks say, "No showings until broker tour…" which is not

acceptable based on Rule 3.26.

There are several other reasons that have been given when the listing has "No showings…" in the remarks field, but unless the listing requires all offers to be made contingent on interior inspection, the listing must be moved to WTH status if it cannot be shown.

Section 7: <u>Showing Procedures</u>

a. A Cooperating Broker or Appraiser may use the lockbox system access device to enter a listing whose status is Active, Bumpable, or Short Sale Pending, only in accordance to the instructions on the RMLS™ Listing Data Input Form or in accordance with the express instructions of the Listing Broker or Owner.

b. A Cooperating Broker or Appraiser may use the lockbox system access device to enter a listing whose status is other than Active, Bumpable or Short Sale Pending, only with the express permission of the Listing Broker or Owner.

The formal violations received so far in 2014 were for not following showing instructions or entering a property without permission when the status was not Active, Bumpable, or Short Sale Pending.

There are so many reasons to be careful to follow the showing instructions and the status rules! Even if the house is vacant, there can be big problems. In one case, an alarm system was activated and the home owner had to pay for a visit from the Police Department.

If the house is not vacant there could be teenage children alone, dogs, alarms systems, etc. If you are out viewing properties and you see one for sale that you don't have on your list, use your smart phone to check the status of the listing and the showing instructions before using your key to enter the property!

Stay tuned! Later this spring, there will be more rules that

will be the focus of this blog.

MLS Insight: The RMLS*web* Development Process
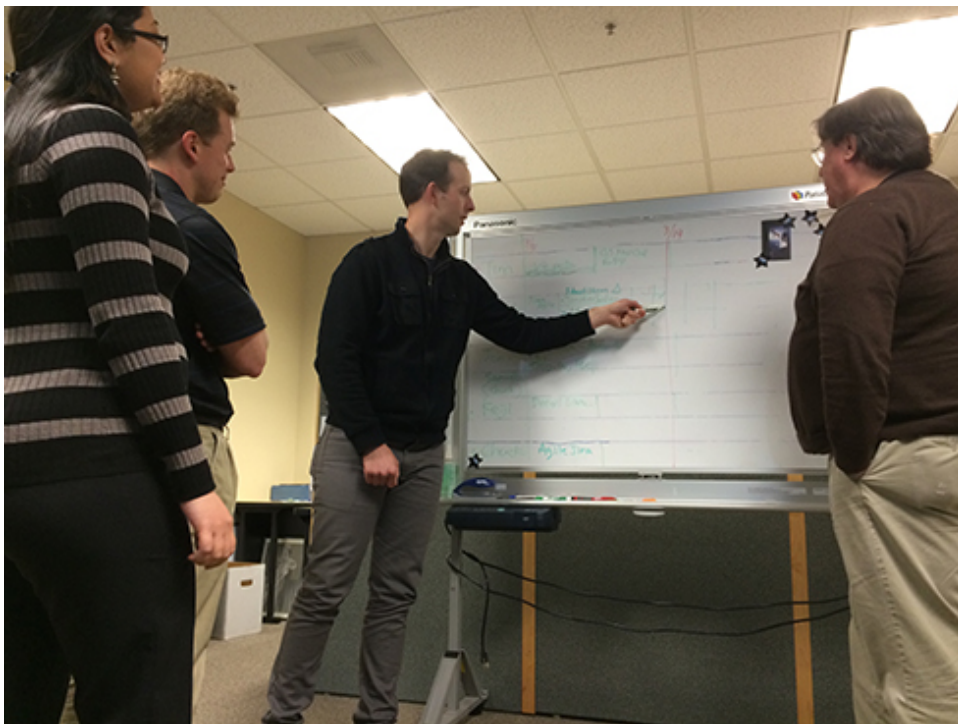
Above: The RMLS™ development team discussing upcoming deploys to RMLS*web*.

This post is part of MLS Insight, a series about governance issues at RMLS™.

The RMLS*web* system that provides our subscribers with the tools they need to serve sellers and buyers is an in-house system. That means that RMLS™ employs development and programming staff, and does not have a vendor that controls the features available to our subscribers. We have been developing and refining the RMLS*web* system in-house since 2001.

Using a custom in-house system has both great benefits and some challenges. We are able to improve our system based on the input of our subscribers about their wants and needs for both data about listings and system features. Early on, we determined that we needed a way to prioritize competing enhancement requests, and I wanted to describe that general process for you.

We collect all comments and suggestions we receive from our subscribers. They are reviewed monthly, because sometimes the requested functionality already exists and therefore presents a training opportunity. When a suggestion is made about new data to collect on our forms, it is delivered to the RMLS™ Forms Committee for their discussion and recommendation.

If a suggestion is small enough, and would benefit a majority of subscribers we may work on it right away. Bugs that are found are also worked on immediately. Each fall, enhancements requiring a significant amount of work are grouped generally into project buckets—mostly according to what part of the system is involved. Sometimes, as in last year's brower/tablet compatibility project, all parts of the system are involved. Subscriber interest is gauged with a brief description of the potential projects in the annual Subscriber Satisfaction Survey. (Subscribers are also asked to rate the projects completed since the last survey.)

At the end of the year the RMLS™ staff prepares a more detailed report about potential projects for development in the coming year. Usually six to ten projects are proposed. Each project summary includes a description of the business need or opportunity, lists specific examples that come from the enhancements requested by subscribers, and estimates the project duration and resources needed. The Technology Committee reviews the report and adds their comments and a grade to the rating obtained in the Subscriber Satisfaction Survey.

The final step of the process is prioritization by the RMLS™ Board of Directors. This occurs during their annual retreat in February, when there is plenty of time to discuss and deliberate about the options. The three top priorities that the board directed our development team to work on this year are:

- *Search and report improvements* *to allow easier ways to manage saved searches, prospects, and search results. Examples include improving the MLS#/Address Search on the desktop sidebar with a better parser and more prominent location; saved search integration with contact manager; the ability to hide the map in Advanced Search; search results modernization with a "detail" view mode like the one in Listing Load; and enhancing the search results with a map view.*
- *SentriLock API integration* *to allow single sign-on to manage some of the functions of the lockbox system, including assigning a lockbox to a listing, retrieving information about who has accessed your lockboxes, as well as properties you have viewed.*
- *RMLSweb usability* *to improve the appearance, behavior, and performance of RMLSweb on tablets. This would take the browser compatibility project one step further with features like geolocation awareness in map search on mobile devices.*

If you are curious to see a history of software we have released, check out RMLS*web* Deployment History in Forms and Documents on RMLS*web*. To check on what is coming up, go to RMLS™ Future Enhancements.

Next month we will cover the RMLS™ service area. If you have any questions you would like to have answered about RMLS™ governance or operation, I encourage you to post a comment to this blog.