New Year, New Listing IDs

RMLS listing IDs to increase by a digit to accommodate new decade

Remember when everyone was worried about Y2K in 1999? Well, this year is nothing like it, but you might be curious to know what will happen with listing IDs on RMLS™ when we leap into 2010.

As you may know, the first number currently indicates the year (ex: 9000002) but what will happen when we hit the new decade? It will still indicate the year, but the listing IDs will increase from seven digits to eight. So, for example, in 2010, listing IDs will start at 10000002.

For our subscribers with IDX feeds, we have notified your providers about this change, so they should be prepared and you won't need to stock up on emergency supplies like I did for Y2K.

Photo courtesy of jagarts.

Are You Disclosing Your Disclosures on RMLSweb?

Only 16% of Listings in RMLS*web* Have Documents Attached

When entering a listing in RMLS*web* you can attach up to five PDFs of documents that would be useful to other agents such as:

- Lead Paint Disclosures
- Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions
- Floor Plans
- Feature Sheets
- Platt Maps

It's pretty simple to do and we've been told that it's incredibly important to provide this information, but it appears that only a handful of agents are using this feature of RMLS*web*. In fact, only 16% of active listings have documents attached.

We're curious why that number is so low. Are any of those 6,500 listings yours? If so, what kinds of documents do you normally attach? If not, why don't you use it? How do you share that information with your fellow agents? Leave a comment below and let us know.

How Should Agents Use the Private Remarks?

What Information Do You Want To See There?

We often get requests to post messages on RMLS*web* suggesting that agents use the Private Remarks in a certain way. For example, I received these two requests this week:

1. Please ask agents to include when there is no water or power in the Private Remarks.
2. Please remind agents that adding "No showings till MM/DD" in the remarks field is a rules violation.

As a general rule of thumb, we recommend that the Public Remarks be used for information about the property and the Private Remarks be reserved for information pertinent to other agents. But, apart from the following two sections of RMLS™ Rules that mention the Private Remarks directly, we don't have any official guidelines for how to use these fields in the listing input forms:

- 3.12: … "A listing which excludes individually named prospective Purchasers, as may be agreed to by the Seller and Listing Broker, shall clearly indicate such exemption in the Agent/Private Remarks when loaded into the RMLS™ System by the Listing Broker or (in the case of RMLS™ load) on the Listing Data Input Form. Commercial Lease listings do not have the List Type field."
- 3.25: … "How the reduction is allocated in a Short Sale is at the listing broker's sole discretion, as long as the method (not the amount) of such allocation is set forth in the Listing's private remarks, or the cooperating broker, in his discretion, has agreed to the allocation in writing after the offer has been presented. This section does not apply to the Commercial Lease category."

So, what do you think? What are some examples of your best practices regarding Private Remarks? What would you like to see from other agents? Let them know by commenting below.

Save Time with Listing Load

in RMLSweb

RMLS™ Subscribers: Use 'Finish Later' in Listing Load

Our latest release brought some relatively minor changes to Listing Load on RMLS*web*. The first change is that the "Save and Add" function is now called "Publish". The other change is that we now allow you to enter a future list date.

We thought this would be a good time, however, to re-introduce you to a time-saving feature in Listing Load. This feature has been around for awhile, but we often hear that subscribers don't know about it.

When you're entering a listing, you can click "Finish Later" and it allows you to print the listing agreement form with the information you entered in Listing Load on the form.

So, instead of having to fill out a listing agreeement form prior to entering it in Listing Load, you can actually just start by entering the information that you know in Listing Load and if you need more time or more information from your clients, you can click "Finish Later". Just follow these steps:

1) Enter your listing information in Listing Load and click the Finish Later button to save it for your eyes only.

2) Then, with the Preview/Print button, print out the Listing Input Form, as well as the Contract, and present it to your seller.

3) After reviewing the forms with your seller, you can make any necessary changes to the In-Progress listing in Listing Load.

4) Next, simply click the Publish button when you're ready to start marketing.

Watch "Printing Listing Agreements from Listing Load" for a short demonstration. If you have questions the staff at the RMLS™ Help Desk is happy to walk you through this process. Call them today at 877-256-2169.

Open House Info Coming to RMLS.com & IDX Feeds Soon

Look for it on October 1

Effective October 1, open house data will be available on RMLS.com and in IDX feeds to your personal websites. What does this mean?

IDX feeds: your IDX provider now has access to these fields. They may be able to set up an open house search feature for you — ask your IDX provider about what they can do with the new data.

On RMLS.com: users will not be able to search exclusively for open houses, but if there is open house information for a listing, it will be displayed in the listing information. So, if someone sees a house they like, they can look to see if there are any open houses coming up for it.

Benefits? Get more exposure for your open houses! Make sure to enter specific open house data on RMLSweb — here's how:
1. Go to Listing Load on RMLSweb.
2. Find the listing you want to enter an Open House for and click on the OH/BT button (Open House/Broker Tour).
3. Click "New Open House".

4. Enter all of your Open House details & click Save.

New Terms of Service for RMLSweb, RMLS.com & RMLSweb Mobile Coming Soon

New Process for Reporting Copyright Infringement

Starting on October 1, you'll notice that you have to accept new Terms of Service (TOS) for RMLS*web*, RMLS.com and RMLS*web* Mobile.

Note to RMLS*web* Mobile users: you will need to login to RMLS*web* first to accept the TOS, otherwise; you will not be able to use RMLS*web* Mobile until the new TOS are accepted.

The changes to the TOS are in accordance with Title 17, United States Code, Section 512(c)(2) Digital Millenium Copyright Act. As part of the new TOS, if you feel a photo or other content acquired by another subscriber is in violation of copyright, you can now e-mail copyrightagent@rmls.com.

By e-mailing us we can start an investigation, but before we take any action, we need to receive a signed statement with specific information about the infringement by mail or as an attachment to your e-mail. For more details, you can preview a copy of the Claims of Copy Right Infringement instructions.

As a reminder, section 10.3 of the RMLS™ Rules & Regulations states:

  "By the act of submitting any property listing content to

RMLS™, the Participant represents that Participant has been authorized and also thereby does grant authority for the MLS to include the property listing content in its copyrighted MLS compilation and also in any statistical report on comparables. Listing content includes, but is not limited to, photographs, images, graphics, audio and video recordings, virtual tours, drawings, descriptions, remarks, narratives, pricing information, and other details or information related to listed property."

RMLSweb and Non-IE Browsers

We know there are a lot of you out there who use Web browsers other than Internet Explorer… and as you are well aware… RMLS*web* primarily supports Internet Explorer (IE).

However, we do want to clear the air about this situation, because things have changed a bit.

RMLSweb is now accessible utilizing most browsers. By accessible, I mean that you can log in and use the website, but *we still highly recommend that you use Internet Explorer*. We haven't talked about it much because you should bear no expectation of being able to do all the same things that you can when using RMLS*web* on Internet Explorer. *But you can do many things and here is a list of what.*

One omission you'll notice is Listing Load. We aren't allowing access to Listing Load in non-IE browsers because we know it has some limitations and we don't want the listing content to suffer.

For Simplicity Sake: Scenarios When You Shouldn't Use RMLSweb on Another Browser & When You Can
— If you want to get down to serious business (send reports, create a CMA, run statistics, enter a listing, prospecting/hotsheets), you should still use Internet Explorer.
— If you're using a non-IE browser and just want to view a listing, do a search, or view a document — you should be okay.

But Why? Why is RMLS*web* not compatible with all browsers?
Our focus has been and continues to be on updating RMLS*web* in ways that will benefit all of our subscribers. But, while we've been doing that, we've also been working on browser compatibility — we're just not doing it in one fell swoop.

RMLS*web* was originally a system that we purchased. We then brought on our own development staff and through the years, they have been making RMLS*web* our own system. However, there are still parts of it that are all written in the original code — which means those parts don't work with other browsers.

However, each time we update something (like the recent mapping upgrades and new Forms & Documents search) we are writing it in code that should work with Firefox and other browsers. And, we still have some big updates to do, including CMA & statistics, which we tentatively plan to release in the next six months.

In other words, we could spend time rewriting the dated features of RMLS*web* in code that will make it work with other browsers — but why spend time reinventing a dated product? Instead, the approach is to improve our existing product, and as we're doing that, we are taking steps toward compatibility with each improvement.

You Can Help!
While we continue to work toward compatibility, there is

limited functionality on non-IE browsers and we have not officially tested anything on them. So if you use a different browser and notice any issues — please e-mail those issues to helpdesk@rmls.com.

Forms & Documents Keyword Search Added to RMLSweb

We've added a new Keyword Search to our Forms & Documents menu on RMLS*web.* Our Forms & Documents menu has always been filled with lots of useful information, along with the documents that you need in your day-to-day business.

Now, instead of navigating through a list of folders, you can type in a keyword and search! Here's a short demonstration:

In addition to the Keyword Search, you can also browse by Tags or by the old "folder"-style organization. Oh, and you can also search the archives of Newsletter articles as well (we'll have more on that later!).

New Short Sale Fields Added To RMLSweb

As we previewed in an earlier post, to help you handle short sales more efficiently and to help the other types of

properties that require 3rd Party approval to get fair exposure, we've added **Short Sale Yes/No** and **Short Sale Offer (Seller Accepted; Submitted for Approval) Yes/No** to Listing Load.

Watch this short tutorial to learn more about how to use these two new fields.

For more information on short sales see the National Association of Realtors Short Sale Field Guide.

New Keyword Search Will Help You Find RMLS™ Forms & Documents

Later this month, we'll be adding a feature to RMLS*web* that allows you to search our Forms & Documents menu by entering keywords or phrases like "short addendum" or "listing abbreviations." We'll post more information about this new keyword search soon.