

The Palm Beach Post, which covers Palm Beach and the greater West Palm Beach area, released their new version of their real estate section this week. It's kept at: <http://floridahome.palmbeachpost.com>

We'll look at the web site a little and point out the good and the bad.



DESIGN

First the good, I really like the look and the feel of the site. In fact, we were trying to do something similar with a recent client of ours. The rotating professional images of the area across the entire screen is a dream that many web sites should have done a long time ago. The fact that the main search is directly on top of this photo is also superb. I wonder if this spot is for sale?

SEARCH



The search box is becoming very common these days on national search sites and this search box takes the liking of the search box at Trulia. There's a reason the search boxes are becoming similar across all sites. Everyone's research is turning up the same results. So again, this is superb.

RESULTS



The search results gets a little more complicated as a full third of the page becomes advertising as well as traditional banner advertising shows at the top. This web site model, charging agents for advertising on information that they already own, is very common place and I cover this in a different article.

IDX

The site uses an IDX feed called [RETS](#) . According to PBpost.com sources, it took a full year to get a RETS feed from the Regional MLS. What's interesting is that the PBpost.com RETS feed also includes SOLD data. This is the first time we've heard of anyone getting sold data from the Regional MLS (although it's common among other MLS systems across the country). I don't have an answer why the PBpost.com can get sold data and our other clients can't, despite repeated attempts.

IDX DATA USE

The second interesting item is that neither PBpost.com nor its parent company *Cox Newspapers, Inc* is licensed in real estate activities in the state of Florida. It's been an understanding that IDX data, real estate information flowing out of the MLS, should only be available for the use of licensed real estate brokers and their agents (including web companies that provide service to that group). Not for the use of a media giant to benefit by commercializing the data. Data that isn't gathered by them (like a normal news story) but rather given to them for a fee.

If the data is available to non-licensed real estate companies, where does the MLS draw the line as to who gets the data and who doesn't? One obvious answer is the highest bidders. I'm sure there are other answers.

The IDX agreement works between brokers that if Broker A shows Broker's B listings, Broker B can show Broker A listings. So what do brokers and agents get out of having their information on PBPost.com? Exposure. This is the stock answer for any web site.

FUTURE PLANS

PBpost.com only includes listings from the Regional MLS. According to PBPost.com sources, they want to include IDX data from other area MLS's including, Palm Beach and Martin County.

I didn't have the heart to tell them but doing this is against Regional MLS IDX rules, as there is with other MLS's across the country. Combining MLS information together with other MLS systems is called comingling. Most MLS's have a no comingling clause in their terms of use. Brokers can't do this and neither should anyone else.

HISTORY

We sat down with PBpost.com years ago on a friendly basis to explain IDX options to their online team. Back then RETS options didn't exist and only FTP options directly from the Regional MLS or FAR were available. We directed them on the issues with the IDX feed from FAR which they were reportedly using.

Much has changed since that time. Regional MLS directly offers RETS version 1.5, Regional MLS pulled out of offering the IDX feed from FAR and the Department of Justice cut a deal with Realtor.com that allows the dotcom giant to continue to have a monopoly.

CONCLUSION

More web sites of the same realtor.com (displaying public information from the MLS and charging agents to advertise on it) model are showing up. NAR release the new version of realtor.com. Regional MLS released its home2florida.com. Now PBpost.com is releasing its floridahome.palmbeachpost.com.