

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Presented by: Southwest Multiple Listing Service, Inc.

THE ORIGINS OF 3RD PARTY DATA DISTRIBUTION AND LISTHUB

In June of 1996 Southwest MLS (SWMLS) signed an agreement to send listings to the REALTORS® Information Network (RIN). That agreement is what allows the direct data feed of listings from SWMLS to REALTOR.com. If you are a broker who inputs listings into the SWMLS listing service, your listings are sent to REALTOR.com automatically. There is no need to opt-in to a feed in this case. This is currently the only agreement that SWMLS has to send listing data directly to a 3rd party listing portal.

Around 2006 SWMLS started to receive more and more requests from additional 3rd party listing portals for active listing data. During that time many new listing websites were popping up and MLSs were being asked to review and negotiate agreements. Seeing the need for an intermediary, a company called “Threewise” created and marketed a product called “ListHub” to MLSs. ListHub acts as a syndication service and allows brokers the ability to choose to send their listings to 3rd party listing websites.



In late 2008 SWMLS signed an agreement with ListHub to provide syndication options to its Participants. When ListHub was setup by SWMLS, it was setup as an opt-in service. This means that no Participant’s listings are sent to any 3rd party sites without the Participant specifically choosing to send them to that 3rd party. If your brokerage’s listings are currently going to Zillow or Trulia

through ListHub, it is because you as the Participant, chose to have them sent. SWMLS has never sent any listing data directly to Zillow or Trulia. SWMLS has only sent listing data to ListHub, and ListHub has only sent listing data to the 3rd party sites that a Participant has opted in.

Since ListHub will stop syndicating listings to Zillow and Trulia in the near future, it is important that you know where your listings are currently going and how they are getting there. It is also important that you understand what SWMLS is doing to help its Participants during this change.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF EVENTS

- In January of this year, ListHub announced that it would no longer syndicate listings to Zillow after April 7, 2015.
<http://realtormag.realtor.org/daily-news/2015/01/07/zillow-ListHub-end-listings-agreement>

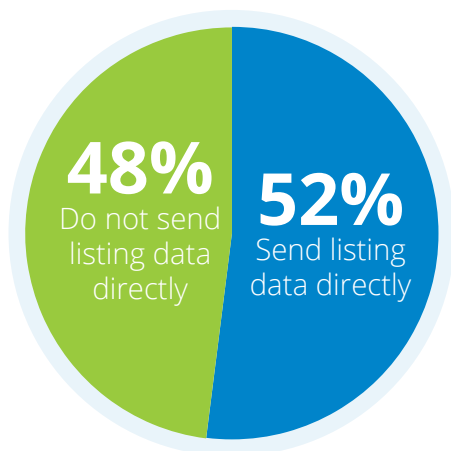
- On February 13, 2015, the merger of Zillow and Trulia was approved. <http://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/ftc-clears-zillow-trulia-merger-without-91507/>
- On February 19, 2015, ListHub invoked an option to terminate its contract with Trulia and announced that it would no longer send listings to Trulia. Listing data would stop being sent on February 26, 2015. <http://realtormag.realtor.org/daily-news/2015/02/20/ListHub-cuts-trulia>
- On February 20, 2015 Zillow filed a restraining order to keep the flow of listing data going to Trulia. <http://www.geekwire.com/2015/zillow-group-files-for-restraining-order-against-ListHub-to-keep-listings-on-trulia/>
- On February 24, 2015 ListHub notified Southwest MLS, Inc. via email that it would keep listing data flowing to Trulia until the court hearing, in regards to the Zillow filing, on March 12, 2015. Whether ListHub continues to feed data to Trulia after March 12, 2015 is dependent on the outcome of that court hearing.

As of the writing of this paper, ListHub data to Trulia will cease on March 12, 2015 and ListHub data to Zillow will cease on April 7, 2015.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO YOU AND YOUR LISTINGS?

Brokers who are affiliated with a national franchise

Out of the current 4,549 active residential listings, 2,367 (52%) are from companies whose franchises send listing data directly to Zillow and Trulia.



The following national franchises have direct data feeds to Zillow and Trulia:

1. Coldwell Banker
2. Berkshire Hathaway
3. Re/Max
4. Keller Williams
5. Century 21
6. ERA
7. United Country

If you are a broker at an office affiliated with the franchises listed above, you will probably not be affected by the ListHub feed terminations to Zillow and Trulia. It appears that the franchises listed above have direct data feeds to Zillow and Trulia that do not involve ListHub, but it is strongly advised that you verify how your listing data is being transmitted to Zillow and Trulia. If you are a part of a national franchise you do not see listed above then it is recommended that you contact your franchise to see if they have anything in place other than ListHub.

Brokers who are not affiliated with a national franchise

Out of the current 4,549 active residential listings, 2,182 (48%) are from companies who do not have direct data agreements with Zillow and Trulia.

If you are not affiliated with a national franchise, have previously chosen to syndicate your listings to Zillow and Trulia through ListHub, and have not setup any other syndication method to Zillow and Trulia, then your listings will stop appearing on those sites on the respective dates.

As of the writing of this paper, ListHub data to Trulia will cease on March 12, 2015 and ListHub data to Zillow will cease on April 7, 2015.

WHAT SOUTHWEST MLS IS DOING

The news that data feeds from ListHub to Zillow and Trulia would no longer be in place was very sudden and unexpected. The entire MLS industry is having to consider how to move forward and to act very quickly in order to meet the cutoff deadlines.

The SWMLS Board of Directors will be meeting on Wednesday, March 18, 2015 to consider different options and make a decision on whether or not to enter into MLS wide direct feed agreements with Zillow and Trulia. In order to gain valuable feedback from SWMLS Participants, the SWMLS BOD has requested that a special town hall be called. The town hall will be held on Thursday, March 12, 2015 from 2PM to 4PM at the GAAR offices. MLS industry consultant, Marilyn Wilson, of The WAV Group will facilitate the event and provide useful insights from an industry wide perspective.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

1. Signup for the Zillow/Trulia town hall being held on March 12 at 2PM @ GAAR.
2. Determine if you are currently sending your listings to Zillow and Trulia.
3. Check to see how your listings are getting to Zillow and Trulia today. Are you using ListHub or not? (If you look at any of your listings on either site, you will be able to see the source of the listing.)
4. If you are only using ListHub to send your listings to Zillow and Trulia, prepare an alternate method to get your listing data to them.
 - a. Southwest MLS is working with FlexMLS to prepare an easy to use transport mechanism of your listings to Zillow and Trulia that will be built straight into the listing input screens.
5. Understand the terms you are agreeing to when you send listings to either Zillow or Trulia.
 - a. Southwest MLS is working to negotiate terms on an MLS wide basis for all of its Participants, but if a contract is not reached, it is important for each Participant to understand the terms that apply to their companies. (Terms will vary from company to company as some companies have negotiated specific terms with Zillow and Trulia.)
 - b. If no special terms are negotiated, either by the Southwest MLS or your company, then you will be agreeing to the general terms of use that Zillow and Trulia have in place for any listing content that is uploaded to their websites.

As the Participant/Qualifying Broker of your office, it is important that you understand how this ListHub transition will affect your listings. Stay tuned for more information on this subject, coming from SWMLS, in the weeks leading up to the transition.

For any specific questions on this topic, e-mail Michael Bustamante at michael@gaar.com.