



Part Two of a Three-Part Series

The Real Estate Agent's Guide to Social Media

Revolutionize Your Reading RSS

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By Matt Dollinger, Performance Coach, @properties

In part one of this social media series, I discussed the importance of developing your online “network” of individuals. This article will help you learn about—and eventually develop—an informative, valuable and authentic message to this target audience using an RSS aggregator or “Reader.”

What is RSS and What the Heck's a "Reader"?

According to Wikipedia:

"RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is a family of Web feed formats used to publish frequently updated works—such as blog entries, news headlines, audio, and video—in a standardized format. An RSS document (which is called a "feed") includes full or summarized text, plus information such as publishing dates and authorship. RSS feeds can be read using software called an "RSS reader" that aggregates this information."

Picture yourself at Barnes & Noble surrounded by thousands of magazines, newspapers and books by your favorite authors. There are hundreds of titles that interest you, but you would never have time to read them all, right? Now, imagine if you took all of the magazines, newspapers and authors that interested you AND added pictures, videos and interviews that did the same. It would be absolutely overwhelming.

An "RSS Reader" collects information from various sources across the Web and hosts it on a personal Web page that is searchable "Google style" for topics and keywords accessible any time, any place—for free (as shown in the visual below).



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Here's a simple breakdown of the tools:

- An RSS Feed is all the content published live from a source.
- An RSS Reader is an aggregator—your personal, real-time, searchable, online file cabinet of RSS Feeds.
- The Reader gives you the ability to review, process and filter these results before passing them on to your clients.

RSS Feeds are produced by almost every blog, Web site or online service you visit that frequently updates its information. Any time you see the standard RSS icon, you can actually subscribe to that site's information and have it delivered immediately to you.



There are a number of Reader/Aggregator programs available to you for free on the Web, but for simplicity's sake I would recommend Google Reader (www.reader.google.com). It's free, easy to use, and it allows you to share important articles, videos or blog posts with others.

Data Versus Information: Which Are You Providing?

The challenge we face today, especially in the real estate industry, is that we are inundated with data but not provided with enough factual and relevant information. An RSS Reader program will allow you to start creating information from data. Why is this important? Because:

If your clients are not getting information from you, they are getting it from another source.

Data: Typically refers to a collection of facts as a result of an experience, observation or experiment. (i.e. Median home prices are down more than 30% this year over last.)

Information: The creation of a receivable and understandable message from a source to a recipient. (i.e. Median home prices nationwide, including all foreclosures in the top four states of Nevada, California, Florida and Arizona, are down more than 30% as a whole.)

There are hundreds of thousands of news sources available via the Web today, each with varying levels of credibility behind them. We've all seen the conflicting statistics regarding median home prices, foreclosure rates and inventory published by the traditional and online media. Your clients are viewing the same data and are probably more confused than you are. While the argument of data versus information is not the topic of this article, it is our responsibility to know and recognize the difference. Start by asking yourself, "How can I create information from this data?"

Why You Need To Know Everything—And How an RSS Reader Can Help

There are two major reasons that you should use a RSS Reader program:

1. To educate yourself about what is going on in the industry—and what your clients are already reading.
2. To filter and collect those most trusted and most relevant sources and then use them to create a "valuable" message for your clients.

Firstly, as a REALTOR®, you need to be aware of all the changes, statistics and developments in the industry. It's not enough to just "know" about FHA, short sales and finance rates; in this market, you have to be an expert. By subscribing to trusted sources for real estate information (not speculative opinion), such as the C.A.R. blog, the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago news feed (www.chicagofed.org), and many others, your RSS Reader can

serve as an on-demand training program to make you the most knowledgeable agent for both yourself and your clients.

Secondly, by keeping yourself abreast of breaking-news headlines and real estate news that might make its way to your clients, you are able to present these articles to your clients with “professional oversight.” The value that you can provide by educating them on the difference between local versus national (or MLS data versus public record) will solidify yourself as both a professional and a trusted real estate adviser.

By practicing these simple guidelines and utilizing the available technology, it should be easy to present useful, valuable and comprehensible information (as opposed to data) to your clients. For an interactive how-to guide to using Google Reader, check out my video at ChicagoREALTOR.com/social. It will walk you through the various setup, subscription, and sharing steps. You’ll also find a list of my most recommended industry and non-industry news feeds.

Coming up in the August/September issue is part three—Micro-blogging and Communication: Creating Community Engaging Content. **CR**



Matt Dollinger is a performance coach at @properties. Contact Matt at mattdollinger@atproperties.com. Visit Matt’s blog at www.TheYouFactor.com.

Matt will be speaking at the June 16, Member Outreach event “Get Social with Your Marketing.” Visit www.ChicagoREALTOR.com/events for more information.

Chicago Association of REALTORS®
Member Outreach Event

Getting Social with *your* Marketing

With all the social networks at our fingertips it’s hard to know where to begin and end. Join us as our panel of three Social Networking Gurus simplify the Hows and Whys of social media and online marketing. Make the most of your C.A.R. membership and attend this complimentary program to begin strengthening your online brand today!

You will learn:

- Strategic Online Marketing: Incorporating Social Media
- How to use the Brand Checklist
- How to focus your online marketing efforts along a strategic marketing goal, incorporating social media practices/concepts

Tuesday, June 16th

Location: DePaul University Lincoln Park Campus
LPSC Room 120 A&B - 2250 N. Sheffield (Street Entrance)

Time: 8:30 A.M. – Registration and Networking with Exhibitors
9:00 A.M. – Panel Discussion
11:30 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. – Networking with Exhibitors

Panel Members:
Matthew Dollinger, Performance Coach, @properties
Robert Hahn, Vice President, Marketing, Onboard Informatics, LLC
Todd Carpenter, Social Media Manager, National Association of REALTORS®

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