

## Must Real Estate Technology Be Complex?

BY PETER G. MILLER, *Publisher*

There was a time when the Internet and software were far more interesting than today. Several years ago there were fewer sites, no media that streamed or screamed, and software programs that readily fit on a single disk — usually with space to spare.

If you wanted information on the Internet the process was fairly straightforward: You went to a site and one or two clicks later what you wanted was there.

Those days are largely over, and what was once simple has become needlessly complex. There are more and more layers to wade through to find what you want online, and the utility of the Internet has been diminished. Were it not for Google.com and similar services, much that is online would be too cumbersome to find.

All of which brings us to NAR's mid-year convention in Washington, generally a good place to find the latest innovations. Yet this year there seemed to be no new technologies that represented a quantum leap into the future for either brokers or consumers.

Instead, there was something better. A quantum leap back to common sense.

The new desktop system from Interealty does not buzz, twinkle, flash, revolve, or blink. A handbook the size of the Manhattan phone directory is not required to understand what it does. If you can operate a toaster this will make sense.

Called MLXchange, the system takes what brokers need to be in business and sticks it on a single screen. A click here, a click there, and what you want is in front of you. (For those addicted to Internet speak, let me put it this way: "the robust system

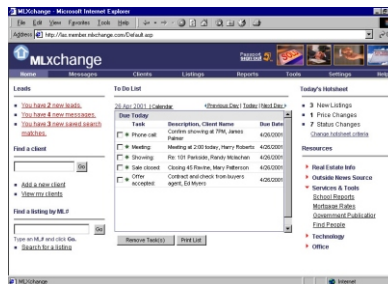
interface offers seamless functionality, leading-edge customer management, real-time data integration, fast implementation, and next-generation compatibility — all in a single end-to-end comprehensive solution." We now return to the English language portion of our presentation.)

Interealty, which operates many of the major MLS systems nationwide, has created a feature that's hooked directly into local MLS databases, so whatever's on the MLS is available on member computers. Unlike online systems, listing information is not held up for days or weeks. A change which shows up on the MLS also appears on the screen.

The system comes with a series of standardized links, but they're not welded into the system. If you prefer something different, you can add, delete, or modify connections. Users control the system, rather than the other way around.

What's really happening here is a return to basics. It's good to know programming and the inner workings of Website design, but if you're in real estate your time is best spent doing real estate stuff rather than learning exotic computer systems.

It's not easy to make things clear and lucid, and you can bet that a lot of software designers and Internet gurus will look at the Interealty package, laugh at its apparent simplicity, and totally miss the point: Here's a day-to-day tool for brokers, not a threatening technology or a new toy for hobbyists.■



"A quantum leap back to common sense."