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**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**More disclosures won't help borrowers**

Re: '[A new watchdog, better home-loan disclosures](#)' (April 23)

**Dear Editor:**

I am in agreement that lenders should be held liable if they allow borrowers to take home mortgages that aren't suitable for them. More disclosures will NOT help. I'm in San Diego, Calif., where there are more real estate disclosures than just about any where else in the country. The number of disclosures currently required already overwhelms buyers! If the mortgage companies add more disclosures, buyers will probably end up being

Real Estate Articles from Inman News

**Some agents find bang with single-property sites**

**Part 2: Real estate technology buzz**

Tuesday, April 24, 2007

[By Jessica Swesey](#)  
[Inman News](#)

*Editor's note: In an increasingly competitive marketplace, brokers and agents are trying new things to gain an edge. In this four-part series, Inman News offers a look at new tools available for Realtors, including online communication plug-ins, online video and single-property Web site marketing. (Read [Part 1.](#))*

If you've been to any real estate tradeshow in the last year or two, you've no doubt noticed a slew of vendors offering to sell single-property Web sites to Realtors.

Single-property Web sites typically use the exact address of the listing as the URL and feature photos, property details, maps, virtual tours, neighborhood information and links back to the agent's main site.

Realtors, brokers and vendors contacted by *Inman News* had varied responses to whether single-property Web sites work as a viable online marketing strategy. Some said that having single sites does nothing for [search-engine placement](#), while others said that's not the point of using such a tool.

Agents who have found success with single-property Web sites say they are great for showcasing listings, wowing sellers and showing prospective clients what you can do for them.

Christopher Thiemet, a St. Louis Realtor with Circa Properties, said he now uses single-property Web sites to market all his listings, though his marketing plan is constantly evolving. One benefit of using single-property sites, he said, is that it helps to simplify the advertising -- he advertises the simple Web site address with each property ad in print and other marketing materials. Also, the sites enable Thiemet to market the neighborhood, and they have been a lead-generation tool for him.

"I am utilizing the domain name being the 'property address dot com,' " he said. For instance, [www.1955withnell.com](http://www.1955withnell.com) is a site for a listing Thiemet is currently marketing

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less educated, NOT better off. Due to the stacks of papers needing to be signed, most glassy-eyed buyers will not read or understand what is being shoved in front of them.

Lenders and/or mortgage brokers should thoroughly interview their prospective borrowers before making loan suggestions. Many simply go with the easy and trendy loans. All should set the greed aside and make recommendations that are truly in the best interest of the buyer.

That is my take on it.

Marie Currie  
Prudential California Realty

Re: '[Web tools open new lines of communication for agents](#)' (April 23)

**Dear Editor:**

Funny how so much time is spent on all this new technology when we already have an amazing tool that I use daily, making it the most effective tool on the planet for making contacts and closings: the telephone!

Lee Bothast  
Coldwell Banker  
San Marino, Calif.

using them is currently marketing.

Having a simplified Web address can help in viral marketing when consumers pass along a link to friends, he said. Many times a URL for an MLS listing can be three lines long, which breaks inside an e-mail message, Thiemet said, whereas the shorter Web address will not break in most cases.

Thiemet said the sites have helped him cross-market his services when people stumble upon a site URL in a craigslist ad and click through to realize that he has other listings and services.

"It gives me more credibility as someone who specializes in a certain market," he said. When these sites are well designed, it makes an impression that the house is nicer than the one that wasn't marketed as nicely, he said.

Thiemet runs weekly advertisements in print publications and includes the property Web site domain. He also includes the site URLs on property signs, riders and brochures. This enables interested buyers to find out more detailed information, and Thiemet does not require registration or login information to gain access to this information.

"It's taking more of a passive role as a salesperson," he said, noting that the role of agents has been turned completely upside down in the last 10 years, moving away from "information gatekeepers."

"What I'm finding really effective for me is to give people as much information as they need, be the expert and when they're ready to finally take action then they'll more than likely remember me as the person who was really helpful to them," he said.

Thiemet says the property sites, which include information about the neighborhood and community, have created a loyal buyer pool for him. He was getting ready to meet with a couple relocating from Philadelphia who found him through a single-property Web site link that ran in a craigslist ad.

He creates the site templates himself, but has been testing a new product from RealBird. Other companies that offer single-property Web sites include AgencyLogic, Single Property Web sites, and Realasites.

Kristal Kraft, a Denver-based broker with The Berkshire Group Realtors, also uses single-property Web sites to market each of her listings, and she's been doing it for about a year and a half.

Kraft said she designed the first property site herself and that the Web site is what caused the house to sell. Like Thiemet, Kraft includes neighborhood information in the sites and she believes this is the best way to showcase a neighborhood. "People buy because

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of the neighborhood, not just the house," she said.

The Denver-based Realtor also says that simplicity is a major benefit of this marketing technique. The site "makes it really easy to link to schools and other links that are relevant." She likes having a complete package of everything about the home and the surrounding area all in one place online.

She has since moved to using a technology vendor to create the sites and she hosts them at [www.imbeautifulinside.com](http://www.imbeautifulinside.com). She also has purchased street names for URLs and placed single-property Web sites at these addresses where appropriate.

Kraft often refers to the single-property Web sites she's used to market properties in her listings presentations and has secured new clients this way.

She also said it's really easy to market the sites in craigslist ads, on signs and brochures. "The investment to do this is low-cost compared to other (marketing) methods," she said.

Realtor Kevin Boerr's twist to the concept of single-property Web sites is taking shape for a trendy loft in San Francisco's Potrero Hill neighborhood. Boerr is building a blog to market this property, though it's not ready to go live until later this week.

"I've been debating for awhile and wanting to do a single-property Web site with a blog. The problem is if you do a brand-new domain, Google takes forever to notice it and doesn't take it seriously," he said.

This part of the single-property Web site approach has puzzled many in the industry who say that there are no search-engine benefits to having single domains for every listing.

Mary McKnight, who operates RSS Pieces, a blog about blogging and search-engine optimization tactics, says that the single-property Web site method is not valuable in driving site traffic since the new URL will be ignored by Google far longer than it takes to sell the house.

She also says that the splintered traffic these sites can create will effectively direct clients off an agent's site once they have found a property they like, can lower Alexa Web site rankings and traffic, and cause backlinks to be generated for a secondary site instead of the agent's main site.

"The type of information contained on one of these single-property sites could just as easily and more affordably be hosted on your own Web site," she said. "Splintering traffic to an outside site that contains your own information just doesn't make sense."

She recommends agents redirect the property site's domain to a page on their existing Web site.

Agents interviewed for this article who said they have had a lot of success with single-property Web sites all said that they drive traffic to the site by way of brochures, fliers, signs and riders, rather than

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Boerr's approach is to use the single-property site marketing technique with his own blog, [3oceansrealestate.com/blog](http://3oceansrealestate.com/blog), which shows up high in search-engine results because Google has recognized it as relevant and containing fresh content. His plan is to use his blog to get the Web traffic and send interested buyers over to the property's blog where all the details and neighborhood information is available.

Boerr, like others, believes that single-property sites are great for property marketing but terrible for search-engine optimization. He said the challenge will be to combine the marketing cache of a single-property Web site with the SEO benefits of an established blog and that's what he intends to do with the Potrero Hill loft site.

Boerr said he has purchased the appropriately named domain like PropertyAddress.com and will redirect it to a well-established site so it will then live at 3OceansRealEstate.com/PropertyAddress.

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***Send tips or a Letter to the Editor to [jessica@inman.com](mailto:jessica@inman.com), or call (510) 658-9252, ext. 133.***

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