

Working the MLS database

I've received a lot of phone calls inquiring about a property, only to look up the listing and find it closed or pending. As any good agent would do, I offer the caller the option of sending them similar listings via e-mail to see if there are others they may like as well. Some people take me up on it, and some don't. Those who don't are usually very confident in their ability to find the information they seek themselves.

The Internet is a fabulous thing, and it is invaluable to the real estate community. Many real estate sites exist that allow you look up

information about properties for sale. You can look up price ranges, square footage, number of bedrooms, specific areas of town and even some features like whether or not it has a garage or a finished basement. My own Web site has this feature, and the listing information comes directly from the MLS.

While these sites are wonderful for getting basic information about specific homes, they only scratch the surface when it comes to helping you find exactly what you want. Licensed real estate agents who pay to be members of the Knoxville Area Association of Realtors MLS have access to the complete database.

Agents who are MLS members can find all sorts of things on the database that the general public can't find using public search engines. Here are just a few examples of search features that a real estate agent can find for you:

- Foreclosures

- Homes with master bedrooms on the main level
- Homes with fireplaces
- Homes with or without pools
- Specific age range
- Whether or not a lease purchase is offered
- Homes within a specified distance radius of another property
- Homes with hardwood floors
- Homes with gas heat
- Multifamily homes
- Homes in a specific subdivision or on a specific street
- Homes that have been on the market more or less than a certain number of days
- Homes with alarm systems
- Homes on a cul-de-sac
- Homes in a very specific geographical location like south of Kingston Pike, north of Northshore, east of Pellissippi and west of Morrell Road
- Homes with wooded lots
- Ranch-style homes, two stories with or without basements

- Homes without city taxes

For sellers, the information contained in the MLS is necessary to ensure your asking price is in line. If no homes in your neighborhood have sold in the past six months, your agent can look up the sales of similar homes in nearby areas to help determine its market value. It also helps to look at the features that other homes offered, so you can compare yours to see if you should ask more or less for your property.

So call your agent and have them put the power of the MLS database to work for you, then you can find what you really want.

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