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Zillow vs. Realtor.com: The gloves come off in online real estate

By [Patrick May](#) / April 22, 2015 at 9:35 AM



What is it about these new big-data, mobile-centric, paradigm-shifting companies and their high testosterone levels?

First we had months and months of public bickering between ride-share giant Uber and arch-rival Lyft.

Now it's time for a smackdown in the world of online real estate listings.

In [a post](#) on GeekWire, Blair Hanley Frank reports on the latest fisticuffs:

Zillow accused Realtor.com operator Move, Inc. of scraping the listing data from its website in a new court filing today, as part of an ongoing feud between the two companies. David Beitel, Zillow's chief technology officer, said in the declaration that Zillow's tech team detected requests for information from its website earlier this month that matched an automated scraping program.

"The Zillow.com content that was accessed included search results covering every State, as well as Puerto Rico and Guam," Beitel said. "Indeed, the intrusiveness of the application was such that it was averaging approximately 36,000 data requests to the Zillow.com website each day."

Chris Crocker

And this latest salvo comes after Zillow was accused of pulling the same shenanigans against San Jose-based Move:

That accusation comes in response to a claim that Zillow [scraped data from Move](#) to benchmark its own listings levied in a letter written by former Zillow executive Chris Crocker and submitted to the court by Move. In a declaration filed with the court, Crocker, who [sent the letter](#) anonymously to Move, said in a declaration today that he didn't want to be identified because he feared retaliation by Zillow.

And there's more!

Crocker's letter also included other accusations about conduct on the part of Zillow Chief Industry Development Officer Errol Samuelson and Vice President of Industry Development Curt Beardsley, who are named defendants in this case. Both men have filed declarations denying the claims against them, which include accusations that Beardsley stole databases from Move in order to benefit Zillow.

So what sayeth Zillow?

Not much, apparently.

"We have taken appropriate legal action to address this situation based on the facts," Zillow spokesperson Katie Curnutte said in a statement emailed to GeekWire.

Photo: Mercury News archives

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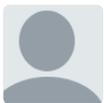
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James Frye • 3 years ago

Zillow and [Realtor.com](#) can both take a flying leap. They have been and continue to be a thorn in the side of most self-respecting Realtors.

Why do you ask? All listings start with the Realtor and are submitted to their local MLS. Somehow these MLS listings get sold or bartered to these real estate behemoths who in turn sell the leads back to the Realtor who listed it in the first place. Imagine having to pay for a lead to the listing you spent days to obtain and create!

Have you noticed that when you search for any city with the term 'real estate' appended at the

Have you noticed that when you search for any city with the term "real estate" appended at the end you will never see a local realtor appear at the top of the search results, you will see only the usual suspects zillo, [realtor.com](#), [homes.com](#), [redfin](#) and the like.

Tell me Google, since you think your search engine is so smart, How could Redfin or Zillow know more about real estate in that city than the Realtors who live and work in that community???

Wrong, maybe you need to get porpoise instead of penguin to return intelligent results.

For all you Realtors out there you need to insist that your listing NOT be made available to these greedy real estate search engines.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Shawn Moan → James Frye · 3 years ago

ah... poor little real estate agent complaining....these websites should put agent of business...worthless high school drop outs driving bmw's.... scum!

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



ChingChongDingDong · 3 years ago

I think most intelligent homeowners know that Zestimates are not the end-all be-all for home valuation. It's a good place to start for someone who is not sure he wants to be in the market. The last thing I want to do is contact a salesperson just to be talked into selling/buying before I'm fully ready.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Russell Kurson · 4 years ago

Who the hell needs Zillow. We have our own in-house group of realtors, and, we own all of our buildings.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Patrick Goeglein · 4 years ago

I'm a Los Angeles based broker and the best way to get an accurate representation of your home's value is to have an experienced real estate professional come to the property! You can view online average's but nothing comes close to that of a professional! View your home's average below now or give me a call: <http://westlakecalabasasago...>

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



alrui → Patrick Goeglein · 4 years ago

Nice shameless plug - I gave the same advice but didnt plug myself in the process - thats low!

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Linda E → alrui · 4 years ago

Awww, what's the harm in trying to rouse up a little business, huh? ;)

Hi, Alrui, haven't seen ya in a while since we stopped going to Food Beast. Just wanted to say hi, you're one of maybe two whole people I ever bothered to 'follow' in Disqus.

Haveth a good one!

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



alrui → Linda E · 4 years ago

Thanks & nice to hear from you! I did get one newsletter type mailing from the beast recently and thought they might get back on track but no luck. Where are you hanging out these days?

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Linda E → alrui · 4 years ago

Foodbeast is back up allowing comments! :)

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



mystic · 4 years ago

Yeah, sorry but Realtor has Zillow beat hands down. When we were looking for a house last year, Zillow was next to useless. Realtor told us everything we needed to know and was easy to navigate.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



alrui → mystic · 4 years ago

And the best bet is to use a knowledgeable Realtor anyway instead of a website as the can use the MLS and experience in your area to provide a CMA!

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Brandon Wills · 4 years ago

ZILLOW IS NOT ACCURATE! DO NOT RELY ON WEBSITES FOR VALUING YOUR HOME.

All real estate is local & you will not get an accurate or credible market value estimate from Zillow or any similar website. There is a reason they call their estimates "Zestimates"; a completely made up word. Its because only appraisers can give you an estimate of market value. If you need a cheap alternative get a BPO (broker price opinion) or CMA (competitive market analysis). "Zestimates" will get you as close to the real market value as blindly accepting the tax value; which is not very close, but just as free. Talk to a licensed appraiser or broker from the area if you want something accurate & remember only a licensed or certified APPRAISER from the area can get you a credible estimate of market value

get you a credible estimate of market value.

"ZESTIMATES" ARE NOT ACCURATE! DO NOT RELY ON THEM FOR VALUING YOUR HOME.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Cj Miller · 4 years ago

Zillow is always outdated BUT I do like the maps with the home values in the area

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



alrui → Cj Miller · 4 years ago

The home values are so far off in the majority of the cases they are USELESS! They are not comparables of the area homes simply based on the last known sales price which could have been during a peak market or during the collapse - DO NOT go by "Zestimates"!

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



ChingChongDingDong → alrui · 3 years ago

Majority of cases? You have data to back that up?

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



alrui → ChingChongDingDong · 3 years ago

Yes, I have customer calling me quite frequently complaining that their home price is far off also you can do an internet search and see a lot of upset consumers. That along with the fact there were enough people to bring suit should be enough data for most thinking individuals.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



ChingChongDingDong → alrui · 3 years ago

Give me some data that looks at millions of cases, not an anecdote of one customer. Come on!

Zillow volunteers that Zestimates can be 6-8% off. And customers call you because they're complaining about a website's estimate (keyword estimate?) Are they dim-witted?

Zillow gives the following advice to realtors who have a client fixated on the Zestimate:

A person might use WebMD to look up their symptoms, but they still consult their doctor if they want a truly accurate diagnosis. It's the same with using only a Zestimate to price a home: It's a good idea to get a professional opinion to give you the most accurate figure.

Where's the disconnect?

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



alrui → ChingChongDingDong · 3 years ago

Its "customers" plural - I made a typo & yes they DO call and yes they do complain. Any Realtor here will tell you theyve heard the same!

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



ChingChongDingDong → alrui · 3 years ago

I believe you. I'd say, why are you calling me? Contact Zillow and update your "Zestimate." It's a Zestimate not Zprice.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



jess d · 4 years ago

I am a realtor and constantly have clients referring to Zillow. That being said, I looked up my own neighborhood on [Realtor.com](#) as there were some lots available for building and I had a friend who was interested. Basically, I wanted to see how the lots and homes appeared on that site and how it all compared with Zillow. (btw, as a realtor I use the mls, so I never go on to [realtor.com](#))

Well, my entire small neighborhood was wrong on [Realtor.com](#). They had the wrong streets, wrong valuations, even a phantom house was listed that didn't exist! There were interior pictures of this ghost house and a 'market value.' Needless to say, I was disgusted and emailed [Realtor.com](#) about their enormous mistake. Do you want to know what they said? They wrote back saying if I had a complaint about the valuation they had on my home, to tell them. I told them that wasn't my complaint or concern. My concern was that they had an entirely different neighborhood represented, with different streets, a completely different style of homes, different valuations and even a ghost house that didn't actually exist but was given a street address and which showed interior pictures. They didn't answer again. I am a realtor, as I said, I will gladly admit that there are incompetent realtors out there. But an entire company, an entire site of incompetence? That takes the cake,

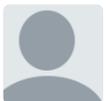
^ | v · Reply · Share ›



alrui → jess d · 4 years ago

The worst part is youre their customer as you or your broker are likely paying them \$ in some way, shape, or form! You need to contact somebody there who isnt simply a "CSR" I.E. low paid schlub!

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



alrui · 4 years ago

Zillow is pure SCUM who walk in lockstep with the Obama administration. In other words, they arent to be trusted!

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



mystic → alrui · 4 years ago

Oh grow up. They are their own business and have nothing to do with Obama. Why are you trying to change the subject? So you can troll?

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



alrui → mystic · 4 years ago

How bout instead you WAKE UP! Obama was shilling for them on the MSM not to long ago or did you miss that? Friggin libtard!

^ | v · Reply · Share ›

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