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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

New listings site makes a splash

Re: '[Truly a new real estate Web site: Trulia.com](#)' (Sept. 30)

Dear Editor:

Truly...what an excellent idea. Oh wait. It is IDX/ILA...it just has a new, tres cool name. I particularly like the part..." truthful, trustworthy information" (presumably not available anywhere else). And, that would be the information that they do not scrape from IDX/ILA, but secure from 'other' sources already on the Web (aren't these called agent, or FSBO, or community, or company sites?) So.....that information that they're 'spidering', but certainly not scraping, must be

Real Estate Articles from Inman News

Podcasts: A new way to shop for real estate

Realtor publishes online audio descriptions of home listings

Thursday, October 06, 2005

By [Janis Mara](#)
[Inman News](#)

Realtor Zahara Mossman is publishing audio descriptions of new real estate listings via the Internet to potential home buyers in a novel use of the popular audio publishing technique known as podcasting.

Mossman, a Miami Beach, Fla., Realtor, dictates descriptions of her listings that can be downloaded from her two Web sites, <http://www.zaharaproperties.com> and <http://www.podcastrealty.com>.

Podcasts are audio files, usually MP3s, that can be downloaded to any portable MP3 player, such as an iPod, or personal computer. Mossman's approach is unusual; podcasts are usually in radio talk-show format.

Podcasting is different from other types of online media delivery because of the way it's delivered and received. Listeners can subscribe to "podcatching" programs like iPodder that periodically check for new content on specified feeds and download it to the user's computer.

Interest in such offerings is just beginning in the real estate and other industries. In July, [ByOwner.com](#), a for-sale-by-owner real estate site, started offering podcasts for the FSBO industry. In June, [Martopia](#), a national marketing firm for the mortgage and financial services, [launched](#) its Executive Insight Podcasts of corporate positioning messages.

In April, the Pew Internet and American Life Project found that 22 million Americans own an MP3 player and 29 percent of those had downloaded a podcast. And Forrester Research expects sustainable podcasting – listening to a podcast once a month or more – to reach 12.3 million households by 2010.

"Though it's been expensive to adopt the technology, in the long run I know it will be w referrals like you wouldn't believe," said Mossman, owner of Zahara Properties in Miami



Zahara Mossman,
Zahara Properties

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pretty truthful and trustworthy. Or, perhaps Trulia slices, dices, re-packages, re-formats, re-constitutes, re-whatevers the existing information that they've secured from other sites on the Web? Do they re-verify to ensure the truthfulness and trustworthiness of their information (vs. the other information that they are not-scraping, of course)?

I must admit to being absolutely SHOCKED! SHOCKED! I tell you...to learn that Trulia has discovered that home seekers want information on homes. Inquiring minds just want to know: Who/what is now seeking to disintermediate, and who/what is coming up with the really cool names. Thanks for the update.

Barb Northam
Associate Broker
RE/MAX Choice
Northern Virginia

Beachfront Realty.

Mossman wouldn't say how much she paid to get set up with the technology, though she help her charged \$250 an hour.

Zahara was licensed as a Realtor just 10 months ago. She has been podcasting listing licensed, and credits a full 50 percent of the \$7 million in sales she claims to her podca

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When Mossman gets a new listing, she records the description over the phone, using [A](#)

"I use my cell phone and walk around the property. That way I can catch details like, 'I orange tree on the side of the house,'" Mossman said. She describes the listing proper conversation about it with an interested buyer, Mossman said.

In each of her podcasts, Mossman announces her name, the city she's podcasting from describes the property and its amenities.

When she's finished, the Audblog bot automatically uploads the recording as MP3 files sites. Subscribers can then get the latest podcast via RSS technology, she said.

Mossman gets up to 50 downloads a day from her main site, [www.podcastrealty.com](#), and on iPodder.com, she said, though her idea is so new, the site does not yet have a real

In January, Mossman said, she had only five unique visitors to her PodcastRealty site. to 5,849, and that number more than doubled by September to 12,473, she said. She p will be as widespread as blogging is today.

Mossman isn't the only real estate agent to use podcasting as a marketing tool. For ex: Calif., is working on a series of informational podcasts on "preparing your home for sale making offers, inspections and title and escrow," as well as a completed podcast on dis [told Inman News](#) in September.

However, Mossman is one of the first to garner attention for podcasting listings descrip

Asked how she came up with the idea, Mossman responded, "The question is, 'Why did existed forever. I don't understand why nobody thought of it before. Podcasting makes own radio show."

Send tips or a Letter to the Editor to janis@inman.com or call (510)

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