

For Immediate Release:

Arizona MLS Takes Stand on “Scraping” and “Indexing”

RECENT NAR INTERPRETATION CREATES COMPETITIVE DISADVANTAGE FOR REALTORS®

PHOENIX, AZ – JUNE 10, 2009 – The Arizona Regional Multiple Listing Service (ARMLS) is taking a stand on a recent National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) ruling on the technical interchangeability of “scraping” and “indexing” as it pertains to display of the IDX Database on the Internet. A recent controversial interpretation issued through the Center for Real Estate Technology (CRT), NAR’s technology arm, advised members that “scraping” and “indexing” are in effect the same practice and represent misappropriation of the IDX Database. ARMLS believes that this ruling places NAR members at a distinct and serious competitive disadvantage.

ARMLS maintains that the CRT opinion does not factor in the end use of the “scraped” and “indexed” listing data. It fails to distinguish between *benign* and *malicious* “scraping” and “indexing.” These practices are termed *benign* if they provide intended benefits to the consumer and the buyers and sellers whom the REALTOR® serves, and are not in conflict with the ARMLS IDX Policy. They are deemed *malicious* if they utilize the listing data in a manner foreign to the original intent of the REALTOR® and the property owner, and are incompatible with the ARMLS IDX Policy. The practice of “scraping” or “indexing” by search engines for the purpose of displaying or indexing the data for consumer property search, and which ultimately direct the consumer back to its source, is *benign*, and is in sync with the REALTOR’S® intention when displaying listings on the Internet. When a third party, e.g. a search engine, through “scraping” or “indexing” misappropriates and uses the listing data for purposes not intended by the property owner or REALTOR®, these practices become *malicious* and should be prohibited. Any interpretation by NAR prohibiting REALTORS® from allowing search engines, such as Google, from *benign* “scraping” and “indexing” listing data puts the REALTOR® at a distinct competitive disadvantage.

The ARMLS IDX Policy contains the statement that “IDX Brokers must protect the IDX Database from misappropriation by employing reasonable efforts to monitor and prevent “scraping” or other unauthorized accessing, reproduction or use of the IDX Database.” The interpretation of this policy was not intended to discourage dissemination of listing information through search engine indexing or to discourage brokers or their permitted licensees who offer listings from optimizing their listings to achieve higher search engine placement. ARMLS supports and encourages a change in NAR’s interpretation of “scraping” and “indexing” that factors in the results of such activities and removes any competitive disadvantage that NAR’s current opinion creates.

About ARMLS: Arizona Regional Multiple Listing Service is the REALTOR® owned listing service for central Arizona. ARMLS provides services to more than 32,000 brokers and agents of the Phoenix, Scottsdale, West Maricopa, Southeast Valley, and Western Pinal County Associations of REALTORS® and their affiliates. For more information about ARMLS, please visit www.armls.com or contact Bob Bemis, CEO, 130 W. Priest Dr, Suite 101, Tempe, AZ 85281, at bob.bemis@armls.com or 480-303-7224.