RMLS™ Distribution Services FAQ

- For in-depth clarification of all rules and requirements, please refer to our Internet Policy.
- If you have questions, please contact our Distribution Service (DS) team at ds@rmls.com.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is IDX ("Internet Data Exchange")?

IDX stands for "Internet Data Exchange" and is sometimes referred to as Broker Reciprocity. Under the IDX system, brokers exchange consent to advertise each other's listings on the Internet. The IDX program allows individual websites to show listings belonging to other brokers.

What is a VOW ("Virtual Office Website")?

VOW stands for "Virtual Office Website." A VOW allows a consumer who has entered into a broker-consumer relationship with the RMLS broker to see a richer data set than found on IDX websites. An AVP "Affiliated VOW Partner" is a person or entity that operates a VOW on behalf of an RMLS Participant.

What is the difference between IDX and VOW?

Internet Data Exchange (IDX) refers to the rules, licenses, and technologies that enable real estate professionals to connect to MLS listing data. While Virtual Office Websites (VOW) also connect real estate agents to MLS data, a VOW account and terms of service agreement containing language specific to the particular MLS are required since VOWs offer data not available to the general public. A VOW website provides more information than IDX, including sales history and off-market data.

What does 'website' mean related to IDX and VOW?

Think of a website as a house and IDX or VOW as a room within that house. You may have a website designer build your 'house' but have an IDX service provider put in the 'kitchen.'

What is a service provider?

A service provider is a third-party (or in-house) provider of RMLS Data to our members. They are licensed to access and pull the data from RMLS and serve it out to RMLS Subscribers and Subscriber Firms for various uses. The most common uses are IDX (Internet Data Exchange) websites or for back end uses/applications like Transaction Management systems, CRMs and Statistical Analysis.

Distribution Services FAQ

Is there a list of current IDX service providers?

Yes, that list is Document 1990 Distribution Services - IDX Providers located at *RMLSweb.com > Toolkit > Forms & Documents* menu and at *RMLS.com > Resources > Distribution Services Guides*. Some providers will supply everything needed to create a website (domain name, hosting, design, etc.) while others will provide only those components that you need, such as IDX if you already have an existing website.

What else is there besides IDX and VOW?

RMLS also has Broker Specific and Internal Use Only data feeds, which are available only to firms. Broker Specific feeds contain the listing data for only that specific firm and allow the Participant to electronically transfer its data to other marketing channels. Internal Use Only and Third-Party Enhanced feeds contain all available data and are most commonly used for CRM, Transaction Management, and Statistical Analysis applications.

Does RMLS provide any customizable IDX or VOW sites to link or frame?

No, we do not.

What paperwork would need to be filled out in order to receive IDX or VOW data on a website?

If you are a Participant, you will need to fill out Document 1910 Listing Content License Agreement (LCLA). If you are a subscriber, you will need to fill out Document 1912 Addendum A in addition to Doc. 1910. Both documents must be signed by the Participant.

Who is a Participant?

A Participant is the Principal Broker and/or Responsible Member of any RMLS subscriber firm, partnership, or corporation who participates in RMLS by agreeing to conform to the Rules and Regulations.

Who is a Subscriber?

A subscriber is a non-participant broker or sales licensee in an RMLS Participant's office.

Are there any fees associated with displaying IDX data?

There are license fees to access the listing content. Unless you create your own website and access data on your own behalf, these license fees are normally paid by service providers. Service Providers will charge for their service, but RMLS does not regulate what fees the service providers charge. The license fees are outlined in Doc. 1910 Listing Content License Agreement and Doc. 1960 Exhibit A: Distribution Services License Fees.

Are there any fees associated with displaying VOW data?

There is a $50/month fee for each VOW website, billed to the party who receives the data feed (Firm, Subscriber, or Service Provider/AVP). The fees are outlined in Doc. 1910 Listing Content License Agreement and Doc. 1960 Exhibit A: Distribution Services License Fees.

Is there a standard turn-around time for getting IDX or VOW approved by RMLS?

For a Service Provider that is already licensed with RMLS, the standard turnaround time for RMLS to approve an IDX or VOW request is typically 1-3 business days.

Are Sold listings included in IDX?

Yes, sold listings may be displayed on IDX websites with sold data dating back to 1/1/2012.

Why isn't a particular listing showing up on IDX sites?

In order for a listing to appear on an IDX site, the listing must be in ACT, BMP, SSP, PEN, POP, SLD, or SNL Status, and have a "Y" in the Internet field on the listing form. Subscriber Firms do have the option to opt out of IDX participation entirely. Approximately 98% of all RMLS listings are included in the IDX feed.

On the listing form under "Authorization to post on public Internet sites," what is the difference between the two fields (Listing & Property Address)?

The first field, "Listing," is asking the seller if they would like their listing to be available on websites such as Realtor.com or VOWs and IDX sites. The second field, "Property Address," allows the address of that particular listing to appear on those sites.

On the listing form under "Disable Specific VOW and IDX Functionality" what is the difference between the two fields (Disable Third-Party Comments and Disable AVM)?

The 'Disable Third-Party Comments' option on VOW and IDX fields indicates that the seller wants to disable third-party comments (blogging) in immediate conjunction with their particular listing on VOW and IDX where this feature is available. 'Disable AVM' on VOW and IDX field indicates that the seller wants to disable the automated estimate of the market values in immediate conjunction with their particular listing on VOW and IDX where this feature is available.

What is an AVM?

An AVM (automated valuation model) is a feature that may be incorporated into VOW and IDX websites, which displays an automated estimate of the market value of a listing.

What are Third-Party Comments?

Third-Party Comments is a feature that may be incorporated into VOW and IDX websites that allows third parties to write comments or reviews about particular listings.

Once a listing is entered into RMLS*web*, what other sites does RMLS aggregate listings to?

RMLS sends listings to Realtor.com. In addition, RMLS aggregates listing data to IDX and VOW sites. An IDX site is an RMLS Participant Firm or Subscriber site. A listing could potentially appear on approximately 4,000-5,000 Agent and Brokerage IDX and VOW websites.