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Buyers & Sellers Would Both Benefit From Making Greater Use of Google

It's well known that the vast majority of buyers begin their home search on the Internet, but neither they nor sellers make what I consider adequate use of the Internet. Indeed, no one even counts how many sellers begin their process on the Internet.

Let's admit it — most of us are babes in the woods when it comes to making full use of the Internet. For example, do you still look for a phone book when you need a telephone number? Or for a dictionary when you need to spell or define a word?

When I find a phone book on my doorstep, I put it right in the recycling bin. And I don't even know where I put my old dictionaries. It's just so much easier to Google "Home Depot Arvada" or "define caveat." And when I get an email like I did yesterday telling me that I

can summon police to any ATM machine by entering my PIN backwards, I Google to see if it's a hoax — and it usually is. Why can't other people do that simple search before forwarding these hoaxes to their entire address book?

But I digress...

In numerous previous columns (including on Feb. 26) I have urged prospective sellers to look on realtor.com for homes in their ZIP code and price range to find good listing agents — or to see how the agent they just interviewed markets his or her current listings. Yet, when I suggest that in a listing presentation, sellers will say, "Oh, I hadn't thought of that."

I also wish every current seller would try to find his own house on realtor.com and Google his own address — but few do that, either.

Homeowners would benefit from Googling the names of prospective home repair vendors, too. There's no quicker way to find the reputation, if any, of a vendor, because Google will, in less than a second, produce links for news reports, blogs, and you-name-it about any name you give it.

(Let me reiterate here a suggestion I've made before about vendors, and that is to ask me or another Realtor you trust for a referral, because, unless we're new in the business, we have used every type of vendor you can imagine, and we're only going to recommend someone who will reflect well on us. And then still Google any vendor name we give you!)

A caveat: In a previous column I wrote about an unnamed agent I had never heard of who falsely claimed he had been Lakewood's top listing agent for 10 years. You can't verify or disprove that using Google. For that you need access to the MLS that only agents have.

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By JIM SMITH, Realtor®

This Week's Featured New Listing:

Affordable Ranch in Mountain Ridge

As you already know if you saw my columns of Jan. 8 and Feb. 19, the Village at Mountain Ridge enjoyed 9.7% appreciation in 2008 on top of 17% appreciation in 2007. So, the offering of a ranch-style home in VMR for only \$400,000 is something to celebrate — and to check out before



it's gone. At press time, this home is not yet on the MLS, but it will be shortly, and you'll love such features as its great landscaping, new hardwood flooring, and its finished walk-out basement with a 26'x28' family room. There are 2 bedrooms on each level, 4 bathrooms, a main-floor study, 2 fireplaces, and 3,208 finished square feet. The original deck in back has been completely rebuilt in pressure treated & synthetic lumber.

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