



BRITISH COLUMBIA
REAL ESTATE
ASSOCIATION

the bulletin

Primer: Web 2.0 and Real Estate



The term “Web 2.0” was coined by O’Reilly Media in 2004 to describe so-called second-generation Web services. It’s now used widely by marketers and service providers, but there’s still disagreement about what exactly Web 2.0 means.

Peter Simpson, Director, Products and IT with The Canadian Real Estate Association suggests it is “a way of strategically applying technology to your business or, if technology is your business, it describes guidelines for being successful in developing and deploying new technology applications.”

But, what does Web 2.0 mean to the real estate profession? From a big picture perspective, it opens up opportunities for quick and easier deployment of services for REALTORS® to use. This is done through the establishment of data

standards like the Real Estate Transaction Standard, also known as RETS.

According to Ernie Vance, IT Manager (and Mr. WEBForms™) at the Fraser Valley Real Estate Board, “The big advantage is that a software developer (in theory) can write one piece of software in almost any programming language that is easily transportable from one MLS® provider to another MLS® provider to retrieve listing data. Not so long ago, the software programmer would need to customize each customer’s site specific to that customer, which would be expensive and time consuming.”

Another appealing advantage is that a single front end can be plugged in to many different services and software applications anywhere on the Internet, all at the same time.

For example, and looking into the future a little bit, a REALTOR® using any Web-enabled device (laptop, desktop, PDA, cell phone, fridge) can be plugged into his/her MLS® system at the same time as doing a credit check, looking up mortgage rates, conducting a title search, checking stock quotes, mapping available properties, ordering flowers and arranging for a moving company, all with one login code.

The Internet facilitated the creation of *mls.ca* and the development of MLS® technology and services that can be acquired by members of smaller real estate boards without the need to host and manage complex systems. In its early days, the ability to gather data in this way was considered one of the

major benefits of the Internet. Web 2.0 turns that concept around, and views the Internet more as a means to access data, rather than simply collect it.

Stefan Swanepoel, author of the *Swanepoel Trends Report*, says development of the Internet is one of 15 trends to watch and embrace. Web 2.0 is about information sharing and collaboration, and “webified” applications—software and data accessed through the Web—“could completely change the way the industry does business.”

There’s much more to learn about Web 2.0. Consult the sources below as a starting point for the social networking aspect, including mashups, RSS feeds, wikis and blogs.

Sources and more information:

- O’Reilly Network, www.oreillynet.com
- *Swanepoel Trends Report: Top 15 Real Estate Trends for 2006/7* (available at www.rismedia.com)

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President's Report

Pride in the Profession

I see minimum standards as the starting point, not the destination. To me, that's part of what it means to be a REALTOR®.

I take great pride in this profession, and I hear the same thing from REALTORS® around the province. We take responsibility for ourselves and the services we provide our clients. Every meeting and every transaction goes one step further toward public recognition of our value.

One of our responsibilities is fulfilling the requirements of the Professional Development Program. Notice the name

focuses on the result instead of the activity, putting the goal right up front. REALTORS® are committed to high standards and, in this dynamic environment, that commitment is significant.

I'm also proud of BCREA's use of the Quality of Life philosophy. The five principles aren't an end on their own, but they are an excellent way to establish common ground among groups with different points of view and similar interests.

It was the Quality of Life approach that led us to ask the provincial government to develop a comprehensive water action plan to ensure an adequate supply of safe drinking water and minimize flood risks. The philosophy also made it possible for BCREA and the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver to work with the Vancouver Board of Trade to plan several public Dialogues, each focusing on one principle and actions that can be taken to improve quality of life.

With more than two-thirds of BC's 17,000 REALTORS® active as communi-



President **Andrew Peck**

ty volunteers, we have yet another good reason to celebrate our contributions. It's easy to shrug off this work as our duty as good citizens, but that's outweighed by the importance of demonstrating to the public and to decision makers that we're committed to this province, not just to our bottom lines.

We are community and business leaders, as a profession and as individuals. It's time to embrace this reality and say: "I'm proud to be a REALTOR®!"

Andrew Peck
President and REALTOR®



Swearing in of 2007-2008 BCREA Directors

Core Ideology

Core Purpose

Ensuring the continued relevance of REALTORS® in BC.

Core Values

- Member board vitality
- REALTOR® success
- REALTOR® professionalism
- Quality of Life
 - Economic viability
 - Housing opportunities
 - Environmental preservation
 - Property owner rights
 - Better communities
- Public trust

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Your Partner in Professionalism: BCREA Year in Review

Last year signaled many significant landmarks for the real estate profession, and BCREA and its member boards contributed to those landmarks.

Among the most noteworthy of BCREA's achievements was the adoption of a new Strategic Plan, which guides the governance and operation of the Association. In addition to goals and objectives in areas such as professionalism, a key component of the plan is the establishment of a core purpose for BCREA: ensuring the continued relevance of REALTORS® in BC. BCREA's focus supports the commitment to high standards of professionalism and personal pride already put forward by real estate boards and REALTORS® across the province.

Another milestone was the creation of an Economics Department, beginning with the addition of Cameron Muir as Chief Economist in November 2006. As part of BCREA's commitment to being recognized as a trusted source of credible information, the new department provides timely research, analysis and information on economic factors affecting BC and its housing markets. The department looks to build on its recently-released, semi-annual Housing Forecast, the first of its kind for the Association, which was very well received by the media and the profession. The efforts of the Economics Department will go a long way to helping the Association achieve its long-term goal (that is, 10-30 years) of becoming THE voice of real estate in BC.

From a government relations standpoint, BCREA is on the leading

edge of emerging issues that affect homeowners and REALTORS® in BC. At Government Liaison Days in April, BCREA recommended the provincial government create a water action plan. The Honourable Barry Penner, BC's Minister of Environment and Minister Responsible for Water Stewardship and Sustainable Communities, said he's prepared to give the profession an advance copy of the province's draft plan before its public release. This will be an excellent opportunity for the profession to provide input from the real estate perspective.



It's been over a year since the inception of the Professional Development Program (PDP), which holds every REALTOR® in the province to the same standards of educational and professional excellence. That translates into outstanding service, wherever their clients make their homes.

REALTORS® are already aware of the benefits of professional development and its impact on their pride in the profession. BCREA is well positioned to provide REALTORS® with the tools they need to excel, as demonstrated



Chief Economist Cameron Muir and then-President Kelly Lerigny, 2007 Provincial Budget Lockup

by the first offerings of the *Commercial Trading Services Applied Practice Course* and record attendance at several PDP-accredited Continuing Professional Education (cpe) courses, including *What Brokers and REALTORS® Need to Know About Agency*. Also, look for upcoming offerings of *Ethics: Unlocking the REALTOR® Code*, which outlines CREA's new Code of Ethics.

REALTOR® pride was reinforced early this year when the Vancouver Board of Trade celebrated the real estate profession during its annual Governors' Banquet. During that event, BCREA was recognized as a Quality of Life Champion.

The 12 member boards have clearly told BCREA that professional development and improving the public image of REALTORS® are priorities for the future. This month, BCREA's Board of Directors will hold a strategic planning session to consider this input and review accomplishments, with a focus on building on them for the future.

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Printed on recycled paper.

ISSN: 1705-3307

Spatial Data for Real Estate Professionals

The Integrated Cadastral Information Society (ICIS) was started as an initiative by the Province of BC, BC Assessment, BC's utility companies and local governments to create a common digital cadastral (land parcels) map of the province. The vision was that the cadastral base map be shared by all members from a single web-based portal. Previously, people had to visit many agencies for the data they needed.

Much has changed since the Society's inception. Although building a single cadastral base map is still an objective, the Society has expanded to include all kinds of spatial data sharing, including infrastructure and other administrative boundaries.

In 2005, ICIS rewrote its core data sharing and licensing agreement to provide more flexibility in terms of protection of data ownership rights

ICIS members can browse and download "layers" of spatial data

and ability to share data with other partners. To date, ICIS has 121 local government members, plus approximately 20 other local governments that contribute parcel and other data.

Recently, ICIS received a grant from the Real Estate Foundation of BC in recognition of the importance of this data for the real estate profession. The grant, running over the next three years, will be used to help fund an ICIS program to assist local governments improve the quality and currency of their spatial data.

The kind of information available

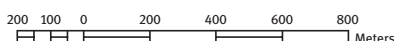
through ICIS is illustrated in the map below. ICIS members can browse and download "layers" of spatial data, including:

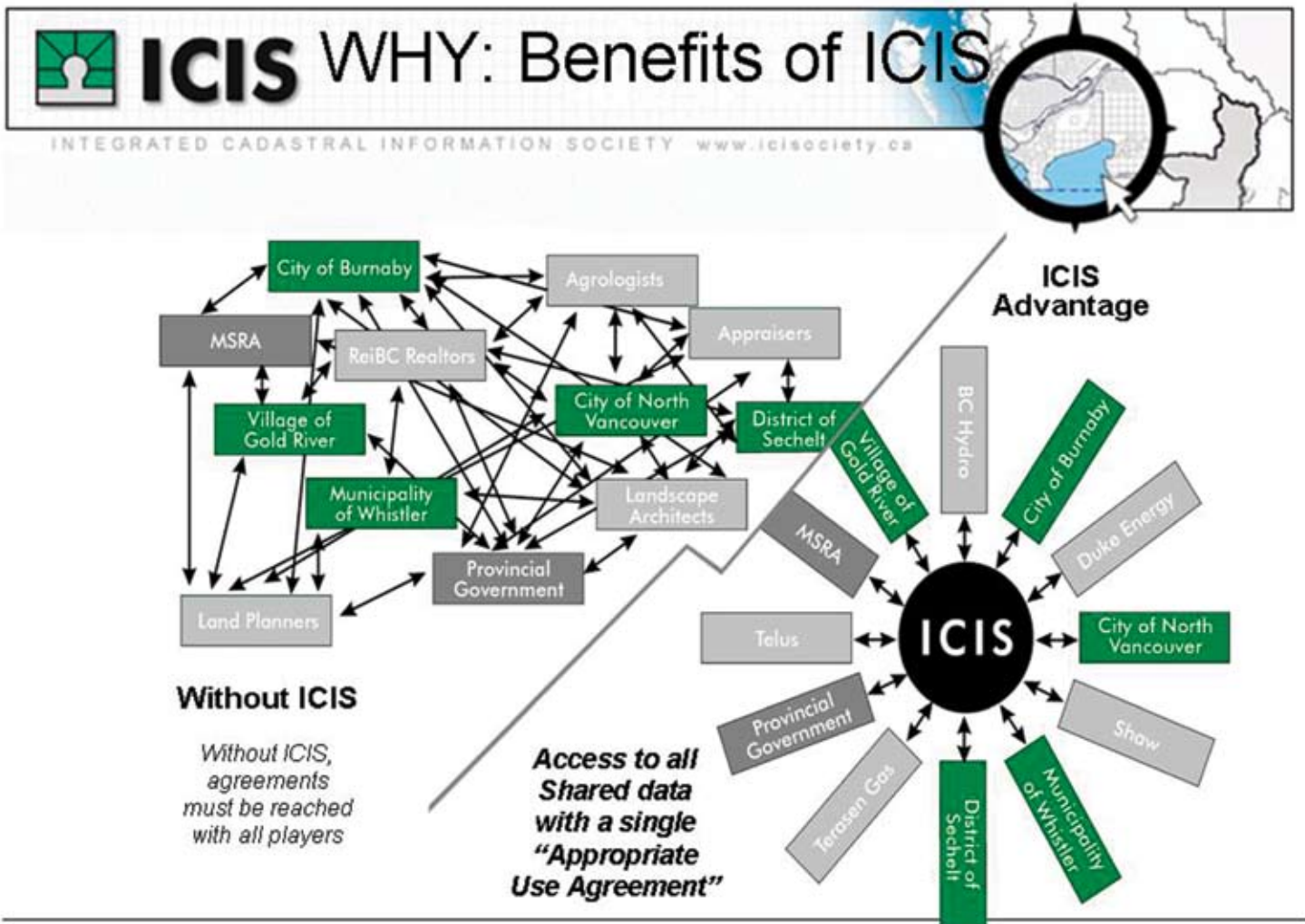
- Land parcel data from local governments (private sector parcels) and the provincial government (crown land parcels);
- Local government infrastructure data, such as the lines of potable water, sewer and storm drainage, hydrants, zoning and other information, as available;
- Street address information for civic addresses—many of these are available as point features on the map;
- Utility infrastructure data, such as Terasen Gas pipelines, BC Hydro lines and poles, Shaw cable, Telus cable and other infrastructure data from Spectra Energy and Fortis in the interior;

Sample of Spatial Data Available to ICIS Members

Legend

- BC Hydro Transmission Structure
- Shaw Pole
- Storm Drain
- Sanitary Sewer
- Potable Water
- Local Government Cadastre
- Agricultural Land Reserve





- BC Assessment roll numbers;
- Agricultural Land Reserve parcels;
- Conservation parcels; and
- Health authority data, such as mosquito infestation areas and emergency evacuation routes.

ICIS also provides download access by members to provincial government data, such as administrative boundaries (e.g., school districts), and the Terrain Resource Information Mapping (TRIM) data, which contains streams, elevation and other topographical data.

ICIS acts on behalf of its members to seek out and distribute other spatial data sets that can be of value to the membership. The Society is working

with the provincial government to develop and distribute an “industry inventory” map for the province, locating major industries as point features.

ICIS is also opening its doors to an expanding number of associate members, such as port authorities, health authorities and private sector companies that have spatial data to share, such as orthophotography.

Currently, real estate professionals can get access to the cadastral data available on our public site at www.icsociety.ca. Many REALTORS® already use the public site to check land parcel data. ICIS is working with a value-added reseller to provide snapshots of the cadastral data electronically to REALTORS®

and will work with the BC Real Estate Association to arrange broader access to the expanded data set for REALTORS® in the province.

If you have questions about ICIS or data available to you, please call 1.866.403.0095, or directly at 250.381.9395 in Victoria. Membership information is available online at www.icsociety.ca.

Prepared by Connie Fair, BC Assessment, and Laura Cassian, ICIS.

cpe Course Schedule

PDP Professional Development Program



Current as of May 25, 2007. Check with your local board office for last-minute changes. Look for a full list of cpe courses on BCREA's REALTOR Link® homepage, under Professional Development.

Please note: this is a schedule of BCREA cpe courses only and does not reflect all PDP-accredited courses. Unless otherwise indicated, each course is assigned 6 PDP credits.

BC Northern Real Estate Board

JUNE 21, TERRACE, *Ethics: Unlocking the REALTOR® Code*, Andrew Peck
JUNE 26, FORT ST. JOHN, *Risk Management for REALTORS®*, Kim Spencer

Fraser Valley Real Estate Board

JUNE 20, ABBOTSFORD, *What Brokerages and REALTORS® Need to Know About Agency*, Brian Taylor
JUNE 27, SURREY, *Foreclosures and Court Ordered Sales*, Jack Micner
JULY 11, SURREY, *What Brokerages and REALTORS® Need to Know About Agency*, Jim McCaughan
JULY 12, SURREY, *Ethics: Unlocking the REALTOR® Code*, Dennis Wilson
AUGUST 9, SURREY, *Selling Time Shares, Hotel Strata Lots, Cooperatives and Other Forms of Real Estate*, Adrienne Murray
AUGUST 17, SURREY, *What Brokerages and REALTORS® Need to Know About Agency*, Brian Taylor
AUGUST 23, SURREY, *Legal Update 2007*, Mike Mangan

Kootenay Real Estate Board

JUNE 19, CRANBROOK, *Ethics: Unlocking the REALTOR® Code*, Kim Spencer
JUNE 20, CASTLEGAR, *Ethics: Unlocking the REALTOR® Code*, Kim Spencer

Northern Lights Real Estate Board

JUNE 25, DAWSON CREEK, *Ethics: Unlocking the REALTOR® Code*, Kim Spencer

Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board

JUNE 28, VERNON, *Legal Update 2007*, Mike Mangan
JUNE 29, KELOWNA, *Legal Update 2007*, Mike Mangan

Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver

JUNE 18, VANCOUVER, *Know Your Product*, Will Graham
JUNE 20, VANCOUVER, *Foreclosures and Court Ordered Sales*, Michael Walker
JUNE 21, VANCOUVER, *Negotiating and Presenting Offers*, Richard Collins
JUNE 25, VANCOUVER, *CONDO 202: Advanced Strata Law for REALTORS®*, Adrienne Murray
JUNE 26, VANCOUVER, *Selling Time Shares, Hotel Strata Lots, Cooperatives and Other Forms of Real Estate*, Adrienne Murray

JUNE 28, VANCOUVER, *Win/Win: Conflict Resolution Skills for REALTORS®*, Richard Collins
JUNE 29, VANCOUVER, *What Brokerages and REALTORS® Need to Know About Agency*, Brian Taylor
JULY 10, VANCOUVER, *What Brokerages and REALTORS® Need to Know About Agency*, Richard Collins
JULY 12, VANCOUVER, *Know Your Product*, Will Graham
JULY 17, VANCOUVER, *What Brokerages and REALTORS® Need to Know About Agency*, Andrew Peck
JULY 19, VANCOUVER, *Legal Update 2007*, Mike Mangan
JUNE 20, VANCOUVER, *Win/Win: Conflict Resolution Skills for REALTORS®*, Richard Collins
JULY 26, VANCOUVER, *What Brokerages and REALTORS® Need to Know About Agency*, Andrew Peck
JULY 27, VANCOUVER, *Negotiating and Presenting Offers*, Richard Collins
JULY 31, VANCOUVER, *CONDO 101: Strata Law for REALTORS®*, Adrienne Murray

South Okanagan Real Estate Board

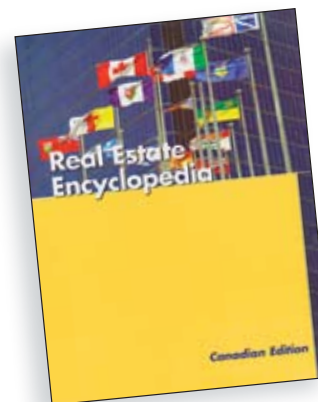
AUGUST 27, PENTICTON, *Negotiating and Presenting Offers*, Richard Collins

Vancouver Island Real Estate Board

JUNE 27, COURTENAY, *What Brokerages and REALTORS® Need to Know About Agency*, Michael Ziegler
JULY 11, PARKSVILLE, *Liability for Contaminated Sites: New Practical Considerations for REALTORS®, Buyers and Sellers*, Wally Braul

Victoria Real Estate Board

JUNE 22, VICTORIA, *Legal Update 2007*, Mike Mangan



The *Real Estate Encyclopedia* is a must have for every real estate office, packed with detailed information on every real estate topic from abandonment to zoning. Call BCREA to order: 604.683.7702.