

technology

BY JIM DUNCAN

THE REAL ESTATE BLOGOSPHERE

There are 100 times more "blogs" (short for weblog) now than there were three years ago. At least two blogs are created every second. Accordingly, the real estate segment of the "blogosphere" has seen tremendous growth in the past two years—where there was one local real estate blog (www.realcentralva.com) in January of 2006, there are now at least seven or eight.

Why do some Realtors blog? One thought is that because it is such a new trend, blogging will separate them from their competition. A better reason to blog is that blogging conveys openness, accountability and eventually, one hopes, credibility. Although blogging is an extremely time consuming activity—anywhere between one and three hours a day of news and market digestion and analysis—those who blog with consistent dedication tend to have a better (sometimes much better) sense of the real estate market and emerging trends that influence the market. Providing public analysis can be a daunting endeavor in its own right—opening oneself up to the criticism, critique and analysis of readers can be an intimidating thing. Ultimately, the give-and-take of blogs leads to more cogent analysis and discussion of the market.

A real estate blog is a window into a real estate agent's personality, his or her expertise or lack thereof. All relationships are based on trust. Real estate blogs provide a way to determine the trustworthiness of a person whom you may ultimately hire to represent you. A blog provides the blogger and the readers the opportunity to develop a relationship prior to first contact.

You can fool some of the people all of the time, and you can fool all of the people some of the time, but if you provide consistent writing and thoughts, those readers will ultimately be able to discern a blogger's true intent. If

a blogger writes only about the properties that he or she is marketing, readers will quickly dismiss that blog as just another advertisement. Blog readers tend to be savvy, both technologically and with their ability to see through a facade that is portrayed to "fool" a reader.

Some real estate blogs provide the ultimate "boots on the ground" analysis of the local real estate market. There are real estate blogs that address the macro-level economic factors impacting the real estate market. There are some local-level real estate blogs that analyze factors that affect the local real estate market—transportation issues, matters of agency, politics—all of which impact the real estate market in some fashion or another.

There is an overwhelming amount of real

estate information out there. For those interested in the most timely analysis of the real estate market from unique perspectives, good blogs are one of the best and most accurate sources available.

