

How Algorithmic Pricing Tools Distort Urban Rent Markets

ProPublica reported that one large Seattle landlord raised rents by as much as 14.5 percent after adopting RealPage's pricing software, even in buildings with stable occupancy and no major upgrades. Other property owners in the region followed similar recommendations, which pushed rates upward in patterns that had no connection to local demand or actual maintenance costs. Entire neighborhoods felt the pressure as these coordinated increases reshaped rental expectations in a single season. Cities now face a market influenced by algorithmic signals instead of independent pricing decisions, and firm limits on these tools can help protect renters from system-wide jumps that strain household budgets.