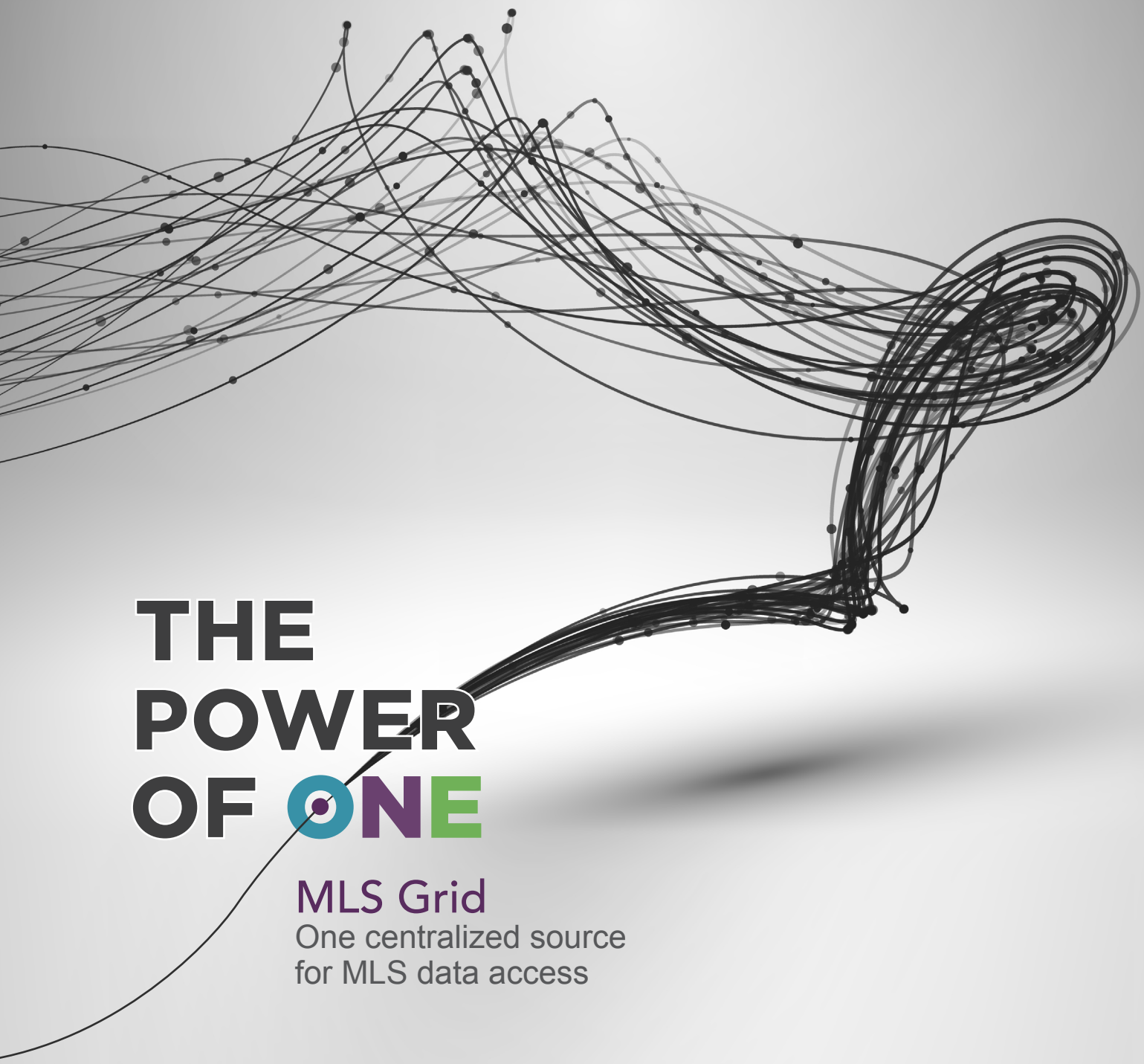


THE POWER OF ONE

MLS Grid

One centralized source
for MLS data access

MLS GRID

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: THE POWER OF ONE

Multiple listing services (MLS) have an important job: delivering timely, accurate and comprehensive data to their subscribers and the technology companies that support them. With nearly 600 MLSs nationwide, it can be a daunting task to roll up data from multiple markets to fuel websites, marketing systems, market analytics and brokerage management systems.

This paper outlines how MLS Grid eases the burden of licensing, normalizing and distributing data while monitoring for compliance across the internet for MLSs.

Key takeaways:

- **Solving broker data challenges** – MLS Grid addresses brokers' need for a simple, efficient and affordable way to leverage MLS data to drive differentiation and innovation.
- **Simplifying data management for MLSs** – MLS Grid helps MLSs provide better data, quicker and cleaner. It is designed to eliminate the redundant and inefficient processes for data licensing, distribution and online compliance burdening MLSs today.
- **One-stop shop for IDX, VOW and myDX data** – MLS Grid has created an affordable method for MLSs to license and distribute standardized IDX, VOW and soon myDX data (Q4 of 2020) from multiple MLS markets all from one centralized, easy-to-use dashboard while allowing for local market fields.
- **One standardized data license agreement** - MLS Grid offers the ONLY standardized data licensing approval form in the industry today for accessing IDX, VOW and soon myDX data feeds.
- **Collaborate to stay current with National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) policy** - MLS Grid makes it easier for MLSs to keep up with market changes and NAR policies such as Clear Cooperation and the new myDX policy by collaborating with fellow MLSs from around the country.

DATA SERVICES CHALLENGES FOR BROKERAGES

Why is it so difficult to access MLS data?

Lack of data licensing centralization/ standardization

There are nearly 600 MLSs in the U.S. and nearly as many data licensing application forms and approval processes. This creates unnecessary complexities for brokerages which keeps them from achieving their business goals. According to the 2020 WAV Group Data Services Survey, 71% of respondents said they are very/extremely interested in using a single, standardized data licensing approval form.

71% of survey respondents are very/extremely interested in a single standardized data licensing approval form.

Lack of centralized source for data feed applications

Two-thirds of respondents to WAV Group's survey would prefer to work with one or more centralized data service providers, yet today, just 11% are working exclusively with centralized providers such as MLS Grid, CoreLogic's Trestle, Zillow's Bridge Interactive, FBS' Spark API or MLS Aligned.

Two-thirds of respondents to WAV Group's survey would prefer to work with one or more centralized providers.

Lack of responsiveness

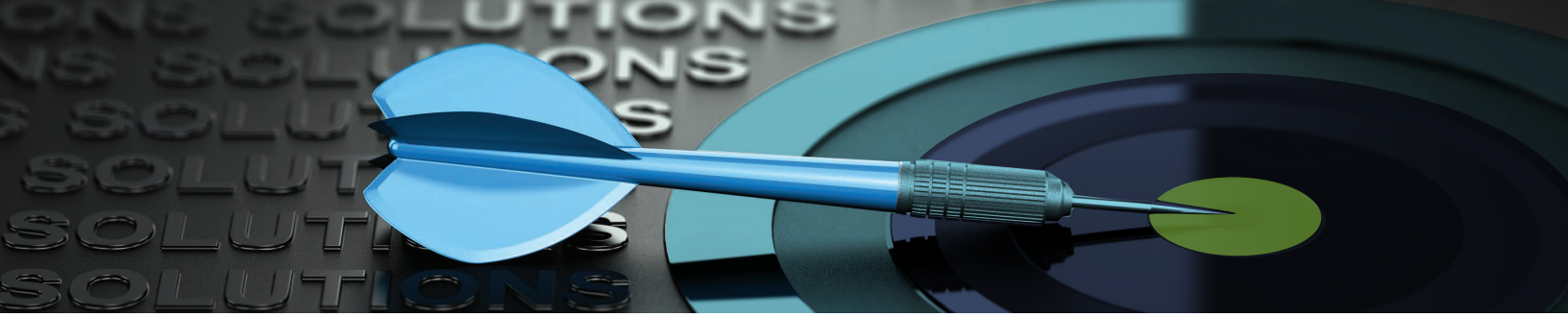
While many MLSs quickly respond to data inquiries, other MLSs lack the ability to promptly fulfill these requests. If just one MLS does not provide a quick turnaround on a requested feed, it slows down a brokerage's ability to roll out a new website or technology.



Limited public licensing access for local MLS data

A review of association/MLS websites shows it is often difficult to find instructions on how to apply for data access. Obtaining this information usually requires MLS membership or log-in access.

By addressing these pain points, MLS Grid makes it easier for brokerages to fully tap into the power of market-wide, statewide and even nationwide MLS data and focus their development efforts on innovation rather than wrangling MLS data.



Why isn't there more consistency in MLS data and policies?

Inconsistent data policies

Brokerages have applauded the efforts of the NAR Multiple Listing Issues and Policies Committee. This committee has implemented policies that ensure timely delivery of data and expanded data types including pendings, solds and a broker's historical data via the new myDX data feed. MLSs struggle to adjust and comply with updated NAR policies. Brokers, especially those operating in multiple MLS regions, are unable to benefit from policy improvements without data consistency.



Lack of consistent data fields

Even though the Real Estate Standards Organization (RESO) Data Dictionary fields and distribution methods are required under NAR policy, few MLSs have adopted RESO data definitions as their primary native data definitions. This creates the difficult challenge of mapping data from disparate data sets.

Managing data modifications

When an MLS is not proactive in communicating modifications in data fields, it creates a cascade of time-consumer problems. Take livestream open houses, for example. Prior to standardization, each MLS was creating a new local description for the field, which would then be relayed to vendors to accommodate for the changed display field. Data changes are often challenging for MLSs to communicate effectively.

DATA SERVICES PAIN POINTS FOR MLSs

Why is it such a challenge to manage and monitor data?

Daunting task to manage data licensing services

Significant MLS staff time is needed to review data licensing applications, manage multiple feeds, supervise multiple approval processes, facilitate billing and oversee compliance. Handling billing and collections from vendors can result in added time to already-stretched accounting departments. In addition, staff members often play an educational role, as some technology companies and brokers don't fully understand the difference between IDX, VOW or broker feeds or cannot differentiate between a RETS feed and the RESO Web API. MLS Grid allows MLSs to outsource these time-consuming and often complex challenges.



Difficult to monitor use of IDX and MLS data across the internet

Every MLS has a core responsibility to ensure the data contributed by its participants and subscribers is displayed in places with secured licensing approvals. There are hundreds of MLSs all monitoring the same websites nationwide. It is expensive, redundant and inefficient for every MLS to host its own IDX compliance instead of centralizing the effort.



Difficult to navigate ever-changing data standards

Staying compliant with the regular updates of required RESO standards and certifications involves considerable time, technical expertise and regular engagement with RESO. MLSs with small staffs do not usually have the time to invest in RESO.



Why is adopting a new policy so challenging?

Redundant, local interpretations of NAR policies

When NAR issues new guidelines, local MLSs must interpret the rules and implement their own policies. This is often done in a vacuum without collaboration from other MLSs, resulting in inconsistencies and unforeseen challenges, especially for multi-market brokerages.





Difficult transition from RETS to RESO Web API

MLSs are tasked with shifting the industry from outdated RETS technology to the RESO Web API, the format recognized as the future of real estate data transport. To fully support brokers and tech companies that need to evolve their data distribution methods, MLSs must have staff with deep technical expertise. They also need to teach tech companies how and why the RESO web API is advantageous for them. Many companies are resistant because their solutions have been architected around RETS.

WHAT IS MLS GRID AND HOW CAN IT HELP MY MLS?

MLS Grid is designed to make MLSs and brokers' lives easier with up-to-date data, one set of rules and display guidelines, a single licensing approval form, a single data feed and one compliance process, all from one centralized dashboard.

Simply stated, MLS Grid is the easiest and most efficient way for MLSs to deliver IDX and VOW data feeds from one centralized source. It simplifies the process with one license agreement and alleviates key challenges MLSs face when delivering and monitoring data. Soon, MLS Grid will also help simplify the process of delivering myDX data.

Forward-thinking MLS leaders founded MLS Grid in 2017 to provide all MLSs with an affordable, reliable way to outsource the heavy lifting of data services and compliance.



"MLS Grid participants work together towards the common goal of improving MLS services through collaboration. It helps MLSs, brokers and tech companies work efficiently together to achieve cost savings as well as implement the increasingly important RESO data standards."
-Joseph Szurgyi, *CEO, MLS Grid*

MLS Grid provides a one-stop shop for technology companies to obtain MLS data for IDX and VOW feeds which fuel broker-marketing solutions. This eliminates the need to contact multiple MLSs and work with a variety of data licensing agreements, approval processes and data sets. MLS Grid utilizes standardized national fields while supporting the localized data needs of brokers.

The Carolinas' Canopy MLS went live using MLS Grid to deliver IDX data feeds in January, 2020. AnneMarie DeCatsye, CEO, Canopy MLS, recognized the value of MLS Grid from the beginning.

"The whole idea of MLS Grid is to make it easy for brokers to have multiple markets of MLS data available from a one-stop shop. That was the key driver for us. With MLS Grid, we offer one set of rules, one licensing agreement and one place to get multiple market data feeds. Everything comes from the same source."
-AnneMarie DeCatsye, *CEO, Canopy*



WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT MLS GRID?

MLS Grid focuses on what it knows best: effectively managing and delivering MLS data. In addition to standardizing the license, approval and billing process, MLS Grid reinvests its net proceeds into technology, enhancing the product and expanding the types of data services available.

Centralized monitoring and policing of authorized data use

MLS Grid takes on the role of making sure websites display licensed data properly on behalf of its participating MLSs. MLS Grid is exacting when it comes to the control of approved vendors and their access to data, conducting quarterly audits of websites where listings are displayed. MLS Grid keeps an eye on vendor data usage. Inappropriate data distribution or display is quickly identified and shared with all participating MLS Grid partners to eliminate the need for redundant policing.

"There are always bad actors out there and sometimes you hear about them six months later. With MLS Grid, you know about them almost immediately and can deal with them in a timely manner."
-Stuart White, *CEO, Realtracs MLS*

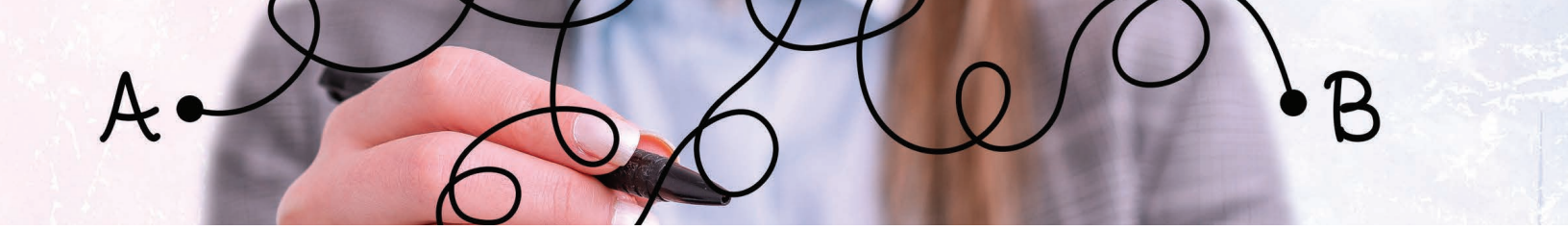


One standardized data licensing agreement

Most MLSs require technology companies and brokers to complete their own local license agreements. MLS Grid offers one standardized data licensing agreement, making it easy to apply for multiple data feeds from multiple MLSs with just one click. Participating MLSs regularly review and update the agreements as needed.



"There is no reason to have so many different license agreements when the end result can be commonly defined. Why pay a lawyer to review a multitude of data agreements when you only have to have the attorney review one? MLS Grid is designed to make the process of obtaining IDX data easier, faster and more controlled for the MLS. It's a better customer experience for the technology vendor, for the broker and for the MLS."
-Joseph Szurgyi, *CEO, MLS Grid*



How can MLS Grid simplify data services?

Centralized source

Working with just one organization to secure multiple MLS data feeds through an easy-to-use dashboard saves time and money. Brokers with operations in multiple MLSs must only complete a single license agreement to gain approval for data feeds from multiple MLS regions.

Proactive, collaborative decision-making and consistency with new policies

MLS Grid enables participating MLSs to more quickly respond to a changing market. When shelter-in-place orders during the COVID-19 crisis went into effect, MLS Grid quickly managed the inclusion of virtual open house fields for participating MLSs to help brokers stay in business during a pandemic.

"We were able to add Virtual Open Houses to all participating MLS Grid organizations in a very short turnaround. It is so much easier to coordinate a data definition change in a centralized location to be used in all MLS Grid markets by all MLS Grid tech partners."

-Joseph Szurgyi, *CEO, MLS Grid*

One example of a brokerage that benefits from one license agreement and centralized rules.

Crye-Leike Real Estate Services

3,000 Agents

125 Offices

Belongs to 38 MLSs Across 9 states

Complies with 38 different sets of rules to offer IDX on company website

One of the nation's largest residential independent real estate brokerage firms, located in Memphis, TN.

One set of rules and regulations and normalized data

Participating MLSs in MLS Grid work together to create a common set of rules and regulations, using NAR model rules and RESO data standards as a guide. Participating MLSs are still allowed to address unique local geographies or business traditions as needed.

Fast, efficient data licensing approvals

Speed is of the essence when it comes to data access. Brokers have experienced delays of more than three months to secure data approvals. A variety of reasons exist for the delays, ranging from inconsistent methods of applying for data access, a lack of technical support to a failure to have a central place to apply for data feeds. MLS Grid not only centralizes data licensing approvals, it also evolves the data licensing approval process as needed.

What makes MLS Grid's service different?



Concierge approach

MLS Grid is spearheaded by a staff with more than 60 years of combined experience with MLS software and data. The staff's deep technical knowledge eliminates the need for each participating MLS to hire technical staff. MLS Grid provides a wealth of technical documentation and live support for the MLSs as well as the brokerages and technology companies it serves.



"For a tech company that has challenges, we are able to refer them to MLS Grid tech support, which walks them through the process so we do not have to. It saves us a ton of time from the days when we managed data feeds ourselves. Joseph Szurgyi (MLS Grid CEO) and his team respond quickly to nuances as needed. The staff understands the needs of brokers and vendors because the MLSs who put it together did it right. It's an excellent product with excellent customer service. When something happens, we get things fixed quickly."

-Steve Byrd, *VP and CTO, Canopy MLS*

Native fields possible

Real estate is, and will always be, local. These local markets will always have a need for their own unique data fields. MLS Grid allows for localized fields and makes it easy for technology companies to identify that native data. A workgroup of participating MLS Grid members meets regularly to assess data fields and discuss the need for locally specific fields.

MLS Grid allows each participating MLS to maintain its own local identity and data localization needs while increasing the opportunities for broader cooperation among MLSs.

Real-time communications/updates with established vendors

MLS Grid makes it easy for participating MLSs to ensure that every data change is effectively communicated. Data field updates and questions are handled through one central source, eliminating confusion or the potential for miscommunication. This takes the weight off MLS staff who are constantly juggling competing priorities.

New myDX data feed launching

MLS Grid is hard at work to make a myDX feed available to comply with the new NAR MLS policy, helping brokers access their historical data from an MLS. The MLS must provide the data to the broker who may then use the data to populate marketing, analytics or management technologies. The policy allows a broker to move from one MLS to another as they see fit.

The newly approved NAR myDX policy states:

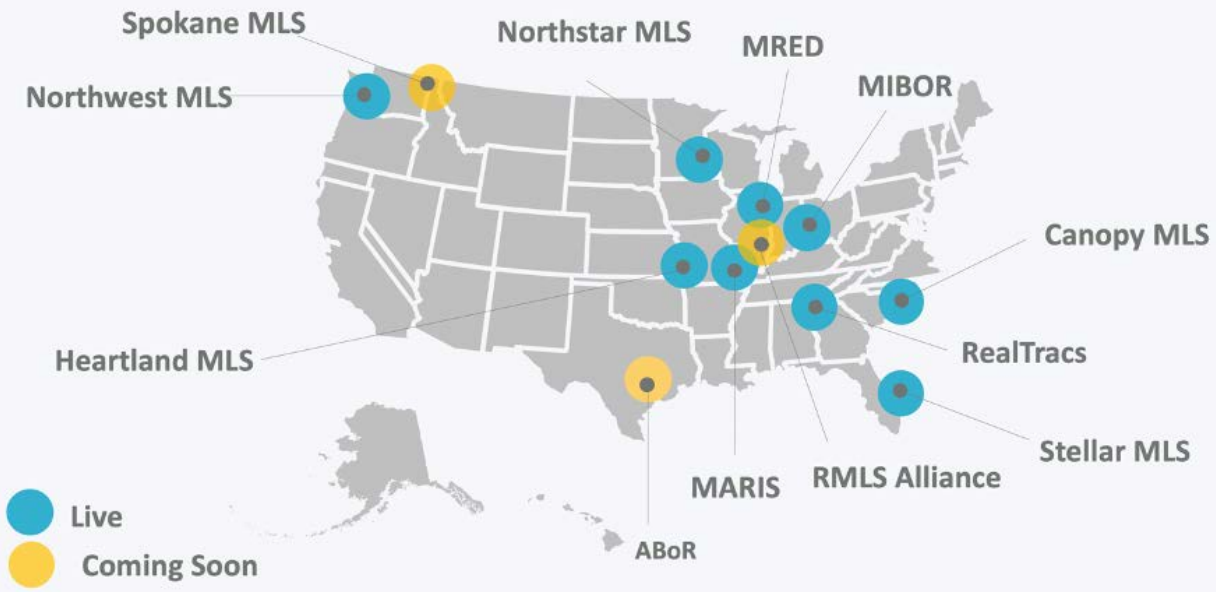
> *A Multiple Listing Service must, upon request, promptly provide an MLS Participant (or the Participant's designee) a data feed containing, at minimum, all active MLS listing content input into the MLS by or on behalf of the Participant and all of the Participant's off-market listing content available in the MLS system. The data feed must be in compliance with the RESO Standards as provided for in MLS Policy Statement 7.90.*

MLS Grid is scheduled to go live with its new myDX service offering by the end of 2020.

BY THE NUMBERS: A PROVEN CONCEPT

MLS Grid's solution has been proven to reduce friction between MLSs, brokers and their technology providers throughout the country. As of August 2020, MLS Grid provides data services for MLSs nationwide, serving 240,000 agents. MLS Grid is being used by 442 technology companies, supporting 9,814 websites in multiple MLS markets.

As of August 2020, MLS Grid works with 442 technology companies, supporting 9,814 websites in multiple MLS markets.



MLS GRID: AN EASY TRANSITION

Saves money for brokers

The more MLSs that join MLS Grid, the easier it is for brokers (especially multi-market brokers) to innovate using MLS data. Brokers are turning to their MLSs to provide more efficiency and cost-savings for data feeds. MLS Grid is solving these problems for brokers around the country.

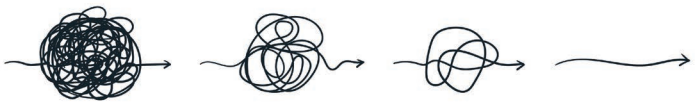
"One of our primary goals is to make it easier for multi-market brokers to fully leverage MLS data to differentiate their businesses as they see fit. MLS Grid solves a lot of challenges. It's not expensive, it helps brokers save money and it makes your MLS look good."
-AnneMarie DeCatsye, *CEO, Canopy*

Affordable, even for smaller MLSs

The cost of using MLS Grid is based on the number of MLS users, so even smaller MLSs can afford it. Once a local MLS' data is mapped into MLS Grid, each MLS controls its pricing for data licensing fees.

Win-win for MLSs and brokers

"MLS Grid is a win-win situation for all. For real estate professionals, up-to-the-minute, accurate information makes for an efficient and harmonious marketplace. MLS Grid removes unnecessary red tape to free up MLSs to proactively serve their customers."
-Stuart White, *CEO, Realtracs MLS*



Easy transition

With more than 400 of the largest data-dependent technology companies already using MLS Grid, a transition for a new MLS market is relatively simple.

"We started communicating the change in July, 2019 and by January, 2020 all of our vendor partners had made the switch. Now that 10 participating MLSs and hundreds of tech companies are accessing data through MLS Grid, nearly all of the national vendors have made the conversion to RESO Web API offered by MLS Grid, making it much easier for new participating MLSs to get online quickly."
-Steve Byrd, *VP and CTO, Canopy MLS*

CONCLUSION

MLS Grid simplifies the process of accessing IDX and MLS data across multiple markets to provide more streamlined information in a uniform way. Through this process, MLS Grid supports MLSs in their role as the guardian of the data. MLS Grid knows real estate data inside and out while understanding the needs of MLSs and brokers and keeping up with ever-changing market demands.

MLS Grid has the best interest of brokers and the companies that support them in mind. MLSs, brokerages and their tech partners benefit by having one set of terms and conditions, one set of rules and one simple, centralized location to manage data approvals and deployments.

MLSs looking for a way to improve the policing of licensing and data usage, streamlining the process for approving and renewing data licensing and staying current with RESO data standards should look no further than MLS Grid.

Regardless of size, location or technology provider, MLS Grid is ready to help every MLS be the best it can be at delivering data services.

Schedule a demo:

If your MLS is interested in learning more about how to offer MLS Grid services to your members, contact us today!

Visit: mlsgrid.com/contact-us

(385) 429-0606
info@mlsgrid.com

Access frequently asked questions:
Visit: mlsgrid.com/faq

MLS GRID

Participating MLSs

The leaders of the participating MLSs are happy to tell you more about how MLS Grid has helped strengthen the support they provide to their customers.

Austin Board of REALTORS® - Stan Martin, MLS Director

Canopy MLS - AnneMarie Decatsye, CEO

Heartland MLS - Kipp Cooper, CEO

MARIS - Tim Dain, CEO

MIBOR - Shelley Specchio, CEO

MRED - Rebecca Jensen, CEO

NorthstarMLS - John Mosey, CEO

Northwest MLS - Tom Hurdelbrink, CEO

Realtracs - Stuart White, CEO

Stellar MLS - Merri Jo Cowen, CEO



MLS GRID