



AGENT | EXCLUSIVE

NAR offering free Placester websites to Realtors

Sites include mortgage calculator, editable page templates and 'IDX listing integration capability'

BY TEKE WIGGIN ★
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 Erica Kirk [Not you?](#)

Realtors who don't have a personal website have officially run out of excuses.

The National Association of Realtors is offering free property search websites to all members as part of a new deal with real estate software provider Placester.

The partnership makes it possible for all Realtors "to build an online presence they can control," said CEO Matt Barba in a statement. And it could fuel Placester's efforts to build a massive user base that could be receptive to buying upgrades.

A [previous deal](#) between the trade group and Placester made basic versions of Placester sites available to Realtors for \$5 a month. Under the new deal, the two are offering Placester websites for no charge.

The free mobile-friendly websites come with features including IDX [Internet Data Exchange] listing integration, "global listings search," homepage with slideshow, mortgage calculator, social media share buttons and editable listing search, about and testimonial pages.

Agents must pay for upgraded versions to add lead-capture features, such as contact forms, to the websites.

The free sites are ideal for new Realtors, but could also be useful to vets for personal branding, targeting a specific demographic (e.g. renters, luxury buyers, investors) or geography and marketing specific property types, such as waterfront or vacation homes, said Placester spokesman Seth Price.

For 60 of the 600 multiple listing services covered by the product, agents must pay a surcharge to activate IDX-powered property search. Placester [values the websites at \\$240 a year](#).

The free websites are provided under NAR's "Realtor Benefits Program."

Under the agreement, Realtors can also receive a 20 percent discount on annual paid subscription products, including single property websites, broker websites and Placester's lead-management and marketing "bundles."

Retail price for Placester's "Essential" package, the company's cheapest bundle, [costs \\$150 a month](#) and includes an IDX website, email marketing, lead-management system, advanced website features and "advanced account assistance."

Placester has expanded rapidly by offering websites at an extremely low cost — often through big deals with industry players — with the presumed aim of "upselling users" on its more expensive products.

Its new deal with NAR appears to mark the company's transition to a "freemium" model.

Placester recently [raised an additional \\$50 million](#) in a Series D funding round, bringing its total funding to \$100 million.

TEKES

The company declined to disclose its weekly number of real estate agent users.

Email Teke Wiggin.

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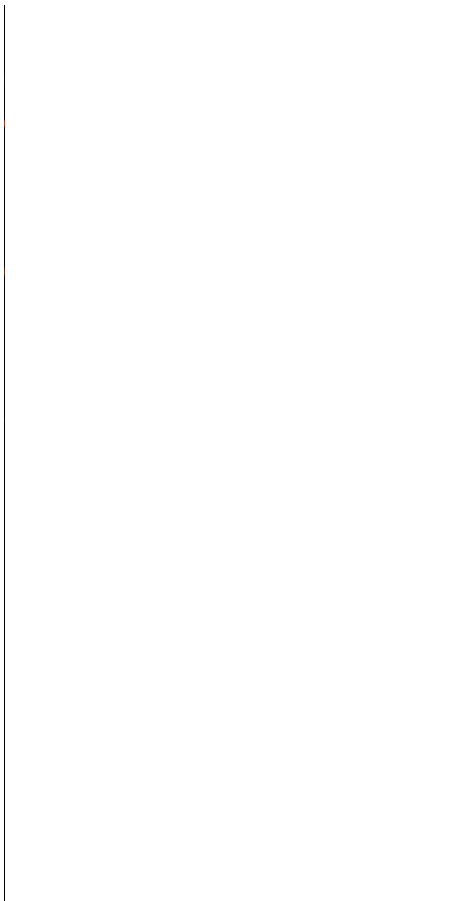
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Christopher Dean · NASA - JETS Contract Software Architect at Jacobs Technology

Its a big win for placester no doubt but web sites are now a commodity. As buyers move to Zillow, Realtor.com and possibly your local MLS Mobile app there is not as much need for web sites and IDX. IDX generated many leads in 2012-2013 but now almost nothing. And having everyone's web site all look the same further emphasizes the "all realtors are the same" opinion that the public has. That being said web sites can still be good for landing pages from google ads for people looking for a realtor or to sell but thats about it. I guess these sites are better than nothing but our MLS (HAR in Houston) has had agent pages and now agent sites for a while and everyone's looks identical with no differentiation.

Like · Reply · 6 · May 17, 2017 9:21am



Alison Creamer · Realtor at Keller Williams Elite - Town Center

When I started 2002 it was a big deal I agree. Not so much now. Im not impressed with the FREE stuff anyway. I have market leader and placester but I get more from my repeat and referrals. Its not really a big deal anymore.

Like · Reply · 4 · May 17, 2017 9:45am



Laura Monroe · VP of Industry & Strategic Development at RealSatisfied

Websites cover a variety of different needs for agents- but more importantly its good to note that by the time an agent or listing is found on major search portals- listings, reviews and recommendations lead consumers to personal websites for validation of their expertise. While large budgets are great for online lead generation. keeping the cost down on a



Laura Monroe · VP of Industry & Strategic Development at RealSatisfied

Thank you Teke, and Inman! To check out the new websites and features: <http://plcstr.com/2rnwAxW>

Like · Reply · 2 · May 17, 2017 9:50am



Al Cannistra · Realtor, Licensed since 2005 at My SA Texas Homes

Very exciting opportunity for an additional website. I have mine set up now - just waiting for everything to propagate thru the internet and it will be live: <http://sanantoniorealestate.website> << does not need to be dot com anymore!

If you want to make this work for you customize the site - don't let it look like everyone else's site. You will not likely get ahead of the big players, but your own address on the internet adds credibility and you can localize. If you have a good+ website you can point your clients to it. They will see YOU on the website - not everyone else. Add extras to your site, be a go to destination and promote your site everywhere.

Thanks to the folks who made this free site available!

Like · Reply · 2 · 6 hrs · Edited



Kenneth Jenny

So when will this industry wake up to the fact that the NAR is the broker's biggest competitor? By leveling the playing field with "Realtor benefits" the NAR is able to create and reinforce a virtual brokerage offering for the entire industry. Isn't that the job of the Broker? Or the franchisor? I get who this type of free offering benefits. It benefits all those non-productive members of the NAR who are incapable of doing business and who are not likely to be hired by a leading brokerage company that already has a business system. But the good news for the NAR is that they will now agree... See More

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Roland Estrada · Real Estate Agent/Broker at Bennion Deville Homes Laguna Niguel

I guess this is fine. Kind of Meh! It's fine for agents that don't have websites and just need a digital business card on a base level.

But, if NAR were really on the ball they would invest in a fledgling IDX company and bring agents a free IDX product that can be plugged into an agent's existing website. And by plugin, I don't mean by iFrame. That is a lazy garbage solution. Agents need a top flight IDX product to compete with third party portals. There was a really interesting IDX company called Swift IDX that never really took off. NAR should consider talking to them about a deal.

Frankly, I haven't seen any really worthwhile IDX solutions out there. They are all varying degrees of crap, crap and ultra crap! Oh, they all brag about being great but, no. And some of them are just gouging the crap out agents.

Like · Reply · 1 · May 17, 2017 12:56pm



Heather Moore

If it's free, why am I being asked for a credit card??? Nothing is ever truly free. I'll just stick with my current website!

Like · Reply · 22 hrs



Laura Monroe · VP of Industry & Strategic Development at RealSatisfied

Hi Heather- the only reason you would be asked for a credit card is through MLS fees that MAY apply. Other than that, it's free. Hope that helps!

Like · Reply · 22 hrs



Sergei Gerasymov · Realtor at Wilson Realty

Heather, it's for IDX integration and MLS surcharge. The site is free, but limited in functions with no Lead Capture, Site Tracking, Theme Selection, Blog Posts.

Like · Reply · 1 hr



Bruno Skopinich · LaGuardia CC

I'll take it... if my local MLS is compatible with their IDX system.

Like · Reply · 14 hrs



Ed Lavender · REALTOR® at Keller Williams Realty

Have had a Placester website through our brokerage for a year now, and I find it to be more of an embarrassment than anything else. The IDX is terrible. Always displays featured listings in order of highest to lowest price. Not too many visitors are looking for commercial properties in the \$8-9M range. Filtering the search by the age of the home ends up clearing ALL properties from the list. Several other issues persist. I brought these concerns to customer service a year ago, but they still are not resolved. You're better off using your brokerage's website, or paying for one of your own.

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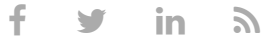
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