

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR ADVERTISING REAL ESTATE

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a system and method for advertising real estate on mobile devices. More particularly, the system and method for advertising real estate uses functions of the mobile device to enable buyers, sellers and agents to manage the advertised sale of real estate. The system and method is particularly suited, but not limited to, managing open homes during the advertised sale of a house.

BACKGROUND ART

Advertising on the internet has made the search for, purchase and sale of real estate to be easier as both seller and buyer can both provide and have access to up-to-date real estate information. Aside from the ability to search through the listings quickly using a predetermined filter or custom search term, home sellers, home seekers and real estate agents are also able to view information such as the property tax information, photographs, videos, and open home schedules, etc. Open homes are an essential part of buying and selling real estate as most people would want to visit the home, sometimes several times, before making such a major purchase.

However, even with powerful personal electronic devices such as handphones, tablets and the like, the scheduling of such open homes can be difficult, home sellers, home seekers and real estate agents often have to make that initial connection (via the internet advertisement) and thereafter rely on conventional methods of communication like telephone and short messaging service (SMS) to arrange an open home with each other. In these cases, such personal electronic devices are merely used as a web browser with a phone function, and they usually have more advanced functions such as calendar and diary, alarm notifications, geo-location services, to name a few.

The listing of open homes on the internet may also require a computer with a

web browser in order to add an open home listing, and once listed, it can be difficult to amend an open home listing without knowing which home seeker will be coming then and to inform them of the change. While applications for personal electronic devices, known as apps, have been written for the sale of real estate, these apps do not make use of the full functionality of the personal electronic devices and merely serve as a conduit to retrieve information that is already posted on a real estate listing website.

The present invention seeks to provide a system that alleviates the above mentioned drawbacks at least in part.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Throughout this document, unless otherwise indicated to the contrary, the terms “comprising”, “consisting of”, and the like, are to be construed as non-exhaustive, or in other words, as meaning “including, but not limited to”.

The above and other problems are solved and an improvement in the art is made by a system in accordance with this invention. A first advantage of the system in accordance with this invention is that users are able to search, filter and view the information relating to real estate listings quickly and efficiently. This allows home owners and real estate agents to better reach out to home seekers. A second advantage of the system in accordance with this invention is that open home schedules can be published and managed on the go, without requiring access to a computer. This is important for people who are constantly on the move and would allow users to do so via their personal mobile devices. A third advantage of the system in accordance with this invention is that a calendar appointment to view the home can be made with the real estate agent or the home owner and updated in mobile devices. This would allow all parties involved to have an overview of upcoming schedules to keep, for example open house schedules for a particular day. A fourth advantage of the system in accordance with this invention is that users would be able to use geo location services to view nearby open homes. This would allow users who happen to be in the same area to view available open homes,

especially if they are interested in that particular area.

In accordance with a first aspect of the invention, there is a system for displaying and managing real estate listings, where information is stored and managed on a server and can be displayed on a computer or a mobile device via a website or an application. This information includes various details of real estate listings like its location, open home schedules, as well as names of property agents, and users can indicate an interest in a particular listing. In further embodiments of the invention, users are notified if there are any changes in a particular listing that they have indicated an interest in. In accordance with some embodiments of the invention, a geo location function is used to show the location of the real estate listings, as well as allow users to locate nearby properties, especially those with open home schedules listed. In accordance with further embodiments of the invention, a calendar function is used to remind users of various appointments or open home schedules, and this can either be linked to a calendar on a computer or a mobile device. In accordance with some embodiments of the invention, a messaging function is included that would allow users to communicate with each other. This messaging function would notify users of new messages, highlight unread messages, as well as show past messages. In accordance with yet further embodiments of the invention, a report generation function is included that would allow users to generate reports based on real estate listings indicated by a user, or uploaded by a user such as published properties, unpublished properties and conversation records.

In accordance with a second aspect of the invention, there is a computer-implementable method for displaying and managing real estate listings. This method would also allow searching and filtering of the real estate listings, and displaying and managing real estate listings, where information is stored and users can indicate an interest in a particular listing. In further embodiments of the invention, users are notified if there are any changes in a particular listing that they have indicated an interest in. In accordance with some embodiments

of the invention, the real estate listing also includes a map showing its location via geo location methods, and can also be used to allow users to locate nearby properties with open home schedules listed. In accordance with further embodiments of the invention, a calendar function is used to remind users of various appointments or open home schedules, for example open house schedules for a particular day. In accordance with some embodiments of the invention, a messaging function is included that would allow users to communicate with each other. In accordance with yet further embodiments of the invention, a report generation function is included that would allow users to generate reports based on real estate listings indicated by a user, or uploaded by a user such as published properties, unpublished properties and conversation records.

In accordance with a third aspect of the invention, there is a computer-implemented method for recording, storing and organizing interactions within the system between real estate agents, home owners, and users, by displaying real estate listings with corresponding open home schedules. The method includes having a message inbox that sends notifications to the user when a new message comes in, and highlights this new message using a different text format. Past messages can also be reviewed by the user. In accordance with a further embodiment of the invention, the method is linked with a calendar function to show the open home schedules for real estate listings that the user expressed an interest in, for example open house schedules for a particular day. This calendar function can be an existing application within the computer or mobile device. In yet another embodiment of the invention, the method uses geo location to determine if there are open homes nearby, especially during the listed open home schedule dates and times.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a view of an embodiment of the invention showing the system and its components.

Other arrangements of the invention are possible and, consequently, the accompanying drawings are not to be understood as superseding the generality of the preceding description of the invention.

PREFERRED EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION

Particular embodiments of the present invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings. The terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular embodiments only and is not intended to limit the scope of the present invention. Additionally, unless defined otherwise, all technical and scientific terms used herein have the same meanings as commonly understood by one of ordinary skill in the art to which this invention belongs.

In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, there is a system consisting of a server 100 and an application 110 that resides on a device (not depicted) as shown in Figure 1. The server 100 includes a database and can be a website content management system (CMS) that is commonly known in the field. The database is accessed by the application via the server for maintaining website contents and mobile contents, and this can be done via a web browser or specific program on a computer or on a mobile device either via the mobile web browser or the application itself.

The device can be any electronic device that can connect wirelessly to a wireless fidelity (Wi-Fi) networks or conventional phone networks, such as mobile devices like smartphones, personal digital assistant (PDA) phones and tablets, including mobile devices such as the iPhone and the iPad.

There are three groups of users that may have different levels of access and information and these are the real estate agents, the home owners 120 and the home seekers (potential buyers) or general users 130.

Registration may be required before allowing a user from either of the groups to use the application, and the possible fields required for the various groups are as follows:

Home owners – First Name; Last Name; Email address; Mobile phone number; password. The email address entered field may be used for the purposes of login identification into the system.

Real estate agents - First Name; Last Name; Email address; Mobile phone number; password; Company name; Company License Number; CEA Registration Number. Similar to the home owners groups, the email address entered field may be used for the purposes of login identification into the system. The real estate agents group have additional fields in order to verify that they are certified real estate agents, which can be verified using their Council for Estate Agents (CEA) registration number.

These details are captured by the database connected to the server and allow users to view as well as edit their details either via a web browser or through the application on the mobile device. Each account would have its own message inbox for showing messages from the system. An option is also presented to the user to be notified of new messages in the system via conventional mobile device short message service (SMS).

The listing or publishing of a property for sale can be done by a user from either the real estate agents or home owners groups, and uploaded to either the website or to the application directly and the possible fields with exemplary answers include:

Options: Sale or Rental

Tenure: Freehold or Leasehold (number of years)

Type: Condominium, Apartment, Housing Development Board (HDB), Commercial, or Industrial

Property Name:

Road:

District:

Postal Code:

Asking Price:

Status: Available, Sold

Number of Rooms:

Number of Bathrooms:

Facilities: swimming pool, tennis court(s), gym, children's playground, etc.

Property Viewing Dates:

Property Viewing Times:

Photographs of the respective property can also be uploaded to correspond with the listing. Using the road name, district or postal code, the server can show the location of the property via a map. The listing will also include a calendar function that would allow the user to list the possible open home dates and time. A minimum time for scheduling a viewing can also be set at say three hours from the present time.

Once a property has been listed, users from the real estate agents group will be able to view a list of properties published, either by property or by schedule of open homes. They will also be able to delete a published schedule.

A separate section is available for listing closed or de-listed properties, and includes deals that have been concluded. Details may be omitted from the listing depending on the preference of the user.

The search function can be used by all three groups of users, although it is envisaged that the heaviest users would be from the home seekers group, who may not require registration in order to use the search function. The various groups of users may also have differing levels of access and thus see different information from each other. Users would be able to use the search function in order to narrow their field of search by using filters such as:

Sale/Rental; Freehold/Leasehold; Property Type (via a drop down menu); Property Name; Road; District; Postal code; Asking price (a range); Number of rooms; Number of bathrooms; property viewing dates and times; facilities, etc. The search results would show the relevant properties that satisfy the user's search terms and/or filters, and would include details such as the property name, location, asking price, sale or rent, listing date as well as upcoming open home viewings. The list can be sorted by property name, asking price, newest date, oldest date etc and selecting a property will direct the user to a page showing details of the specific property as well as the property details entered by the agent listing the property.

User has the option to:

- Bookmark the listing

- View the Map Location

- Share

- Join the Open House (redirects to list of schedules available). If the User is not logged in, it redirects to the Register/Login page.

Home seekers would register (or login) to the application in order to express an interest in a property and they would register using the following details:

- First Name

- Last Name

- Email (used for password retrieval)

- Mobile No.

- Password

Once the viewing schedule is displayed, if a user clicks on a particular schedule, a booking can be made with the listing agent via SMS. Property, date and time of the booking will be auto-filled in the SMS. If the viewing schedule is unsuitable, an option for the user to contact the listing agent for a separate viewing is also available, and this includes via an in-app chat function.

Once a user has shown an interest in a property, any subsequent messages from the listing agent will be displayed in a pop-up alert box and a conversation history is registered in the Notifications menu. Unread messages will be displayed in bold text while read messages will be in normal text. Changes or additional viewings will be advised the same way (if the "Push Notification Setting" in the Settings menu is switched to ON). If a property is closed by the listing agent, a push-notification is sent to interested users.

Re-listing or change of schedule of a listed property would trigger a push-notification to users who expressed an interest in that property.

A user thus has the opportunity of viewing any properties even if no prior appointment has been made, at the user's own time schedule, and if convenient to the home owner or real estate agent, the user can book the last minute appointment through this application.

A report generation function is also included that would allow users to generate reports based on real estate listings indicated by a user, or uploaded by a user such as published properties, unpublished properties and conversation records.

One possible embodiment uses a system that operates on the Apple iOS Platform with the Web Server operating as the main function to maintain mobile content. Correspondingly, the iPhone mobile application acts as a client tool with mobile content retrieved from the web server database via Http get-and-post requests. The server's URL is prefixed inside the client application.

Messaging will be defined by using Web Services in XML schema or JSON schema.

Push Notification Technologies are used to alert users via SMS messages. MySQL language is used by Administrators to query the database.

The above is a description of one embodiment of a method of detecting arrhythmia in accordance with this invention. It is envisioned that those skilled in the art can and will design an alternative embodiment of this invention that infringe on this invention as set forth in the followings claims.

Claims

1. A system and method for displaying and managing real estate listings, wherein information is stored and managed on a server and displayed on a computer or a mobile device via a website or an application; and wherein push notifications to inform the user of various alerts, like the presence of nearby properties with open home schedules listed, upcoming home viewings that a user indicated interest in as well as incoming messages in the inbox are provided.