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History

Real Estate Standards Organization (RESO)

In early 1999, the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) joined forces with leaders in the technology industry to explore ways to make access to MLS data easier for individual Realtors, as well as other third-party organizations. The Real Estate Standards Organization, or RESO, was born.

By March of 2002, RESO was officially created as a working group in conjunction with NAR and soon presented its first version of the well-documented Real Standard Transaction Specifications (RETS). RETS became the framework used by the real estate industry in the U.S. and Canada to facilitate the exchange of data: it is what has made real estate "work" for the last quarter century in America.

Standards create compatibility across different computer systems within and outside organizations, as well as between business partners. The creation of standards in real estate results in more consistent and higher quality data among those that support those standards.

In short, RESO was created to develop standards that would be implemented in real estate to make it easier for programmers to handle real estate information from many different entities because standards force consistency when exchanging data between different systems. Without RESO standards, data programmers would spend more time (and for their companies, more money) dealing with many different types of systems, fixing more bugs and correcting data errors.

RESO was incorporated in November 2011 as its own independent, not-for-profit 501(c)6 trade organization, and is no longer a section of the National Association of REALTORS®. RESO steadily grew its membership and by January 2015, RESO encompassed 125 organizations, including NAR, multiple listing services, real estate associations and industry technology providers.

RESO Growth and Influence Explodes
In the last few years, the influence and growth of RESO within the real estate industry has been remarkable, growing more than five-fold and members include many of the biggest brands in real estate, including News Corp.'s Move/Realtor.com, Zillow, Keller Williams, Home Services of America, CoreLogic, DocuSign, Black Knight, FBS and all of the largest MLSs in America.

Today, RESO has more than 725 active members, including NAR, multiple-listing services, real estate associations, brokerages and industry technology providers.

Introduction of the RESO Data Dictionary

Key to the growth and success of RESO has been the development and maturation of the RESO Data Dictionary. The RESO Data Dictionary serves as the real estate industry's "Rosetta Stone" for real estate data. Some 650 MLSs and other source providers, gather data. ***But what good is it if the data cannot be shared or understood?*** This new common standard defines real estate data fields – fields that contain the most important property listing information, for example – and that data is presented using consistent terms and data structures. The RESO Data Dictionary creates a common language so the real estate information can be more easily shared and understood.

The first version of the Data Dictionary was introduced by RESO in 2012 with RESO Data Dictionary 1.1 and subsequent improvements were made, adding new fields and variables. The NAR accelerated the growth of the Data Dictionary when in 2014, it announced that by January 1, 2016, every NAR-affiliated MLS (almost all of them in the U.S.) was required to adopt the RESO Data Dictionary Standard policy. RESO provides certification to allow MLSs to demonstrate compliance with NAR mandate, and today, MLSs with more than 1.2 million REALTOR® members are RESO Data Dictionary Certified.

Now the most recent update to the Data Dictionary – 1.6 – is the biggest update in the history of its RESO Data Dictionary. This 1.6 release (RESO Data Dictionary Wiki is here) includes more than 225 new data fields that are available through both RETS and the Web API and over 625 additional "look up" values: that's a total of 1,272 Fields and 2,108 Pick-List Lookup (Enumeration) Values. It has been a massive voluteer effort to create, maintain, improve and continuing to improve the RESO Data Dictionary since its creation, one that has involved more than five dozen real estate and technology industry experts.

These new data field standards improve the ability for MLSs, brokerages and software technology firms to provide a wide range of new websites, apps, and other technologies that will leverage the Accessibility, Showing Data, Saved Searches, Internet Tracking, Member Data, standardized Universal Identification of Organizations distributing data, Historical Transaction information and more, now able to be captured.

RESO Certification

RESO provides specific Data Dictionary Certification services to ensure MLSs correctly adapt to standards and ensuring brokers and technology companies can utilize MLS data in a cost-effective and efficient manner. RESO provides, on its website, detailed instructions on how MLS may obtain Data Dictionary Certification, as well as information about its testing process and the Testing Rules it uses, which it makes publicly available.

RESO Data Dictionary Certification ensures that structured data can move between systems without losing information. That translates into cost reduction and also provides a smoother path for internal and external development of data-driven applications and services. That lowers development costs and reduces development cycles. Plus, when a technology vendor is RESO Certified, that is a quality stamp of approval that signals the interoperability of your systems.

RESO Certification is available for MLSs and Technology Partners, which can include Real Estate Brokerages that develop their own software systems. In addition to RESO Certification for the Data Dictionary, RESO Certification is available for the new RESO Web API.

RESO Web API: The future of data
The RESO Web API Specification is key to the future of real estate data standards and that's why the National Association of REALTORS® required that all NAR affiliated MLSs adopt the RESO Web API no later than June 30, 2016. Compliance with this policy is demonstrated through RESO Web API Certification.

The API acronym stands for "application-programming interface." From a technical standpoint, it is a range of programming standards and instructions released publically that allow software developers to access a web-based software application or tool. From a practical standpoint at RESO, an API makes everyone's life simpler, as it reduces the amount of time it takes for software developers to connect to, retrieve and organize listing data within a website, web application or tool.

The RESO Web API supports the widely adopted, RESTful (Representational State Transfer) to help the development for web, mobile, social and other HTTP-based applications. The implementation of the Web API will deliver several key benefits for developers:

- **Speedier development, more robust features:** Web API offers a quicker path for software development. RETS, while fully functional, can be heavy to develop against and is proprietary, where the Web API leverages Global Technology Standards.
- **Faster path to listing data deployment:** For a software developer, having unified data standards for every product – whether it is a website, web app or tool – reduces their development time, speeding up their time to market. The new Web API accomplishes this.
- **Simplification:** A Web API means eliminating the need to have multiple software solutions for multiple markets. For firms working with MLSs in multiple marketing, the RESO Web API removes this barrier.

Additional information about the RESO Web API is on the RESO website **here** and an article that details real world applications of the API can be found here.

RESO as an organization
RESO is a nearly all-volunteer organization with a very limited paid staff (just two full-time employees, including its CEO) and hundreds of active members who collectively contribute thousands of hours annually through participation in its Workgroups, on its Board and by attending its Conferences to improve standards for the real estate industry.

RESO has six Workgroups, which is where innovations in standards are created before they are deployed. They include Research & Development, Data Dictionary, Transport/Web API, Internet Tracking, Payloads, and Property Unique Identifier. RESO also has two active committees, the

Technical and Marketing committees. Detailed information about RESO and its Workgroups is available on its [website](#).

RESO as a collaborator
RESO also leads real estate industry efforts for standards by partnering with a myriad of real estate standards organizations, creating an umbrella of standards that will help the real estate thrive.

RESO has created new green listing standard by working with the U.S. Department of Energy's Better Buildings [Home Energy Information Accelerator](#) program. RESO also collaborates with the National Multi-Family Housing Council and their Multifamily Information and Transactions Standards ([MITS](#)), the mortgage industry with the Mortgage Industry Standards Maintenance Organization ([MISMO](#)), the Building Industry with the Building and Land Development Standards ([BLDS](#)). These collaborations make it easier for brokers to participate in multifamily sales, green home sales, mortgage transactions and new home sales. In addition, RESO is a member within [OASIS](#), ensuring the real estate industry leverages global technology standards that complement the needs of the real estate industry.

The role of RESO
The real estate industry and the systems and technology that supports it are highly segmented and until RESO, largely without universal standards. RESO was established to produce a common language spoken by systems that handle and exchange real estate information, such as Multiple Listing Services (MLS) and other technology that support real estate brokerages and their agents. Using RESO Standards means having to write one program to work with many different systems. This means lower costs, more products, more competition among technology partners and faster implementations of new systems, all of which directly benefit people who work with real estate information as a living.

RESO actively develops, adopts and implements open and accepted data standards and processes across all real estate transactions. RESO provides an environment for the development and implementation of data standards and processes that facilitate software innovation, ensures portability, eliminates redundancies and obtains maximum efficiencies for all parties participating in real estate transactions.

The mission of RESO is to create and promote the adoption of standards that drive efficiency throughout the real estate industry.

RESO headquarters
RESO is based in Raleigh, North Carolina, but has a distributed workforce, with its CEO based in Dallas, Texas.

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