

LISTING INFORMATION NETWORK CREATES MULTIMEDIA USER EXPERIENCE WITH GREYSTONE SOLUTIONS



Using Microsoft® SQL Server™ 2005, Microsoft Visual Studio® .NET 2005 and Microsoft .NET 2.0, Greystone Solutions created my.linkboston.com for Listing Information Network, a leading provider of listing and sales data for the Greater Boston real estate market. Built with the latest Microsoft technology, my.linkboston.com is a secure, web-based application that assures data quality, provides accurate search results and delivers a multimedia search experience to users-- complete with virtual tours and a bird's eye view of homes and their surrounding neighborhoods. In addition to providing a solid technical foundation for the future, my.linkboston.com gives the company a strong competitive advantage over its major national competitors.

Situation

Listing Information Network (LINK) provides listing and sales information, statistical data and sales trend reports for the Greater Boston real estate market. Dedicated to becoming the number one source of statistical and listing information for the real estate community, LINK continually works to provide the highest quality data for the brokers they serve. LINK prides itself on delivering the ultimate user experience for subscribers: accurate data, the latest technology and the highest level of customer service.

The company's existing client server application, LINKNet, had limited functionality. Used for brokers to list properties and update listing information, LINKNet required each user to have a copy of the application, making updates difficult. Updates to listing information were not performed in real time and were refreshed only once each evening, resulting in stale data. In the fast-paced real estate market, the timely process to update listings and add new properties was a hindrance to brokers and home buyers. In response to user demand, LINK implemented a web interface with limited functionality, while searching for a complete solution that would provide instant access to real time data across platforms with no software installation.

Realizing that they needed a better solution to meet the needs of their subscribers, LINK put together a set of requirements for a new listing system. In order to accelerate their growth, the company needed a fully functional web-based solution to better serve brokers and their clients. LINK also wanted to build on existing functionality to offer more capabilities to their users and determined that by enhancing the home search experience and improving the quality and accuracy of listing information, they could differentiate themselves from their competitors. LINK began to look for a solution to satisfy the needs of all their customers that was also secure enough to protect their valuable data.

Solution Overview

Customer Profile

Listing Information Network (LINK) provides statistical and listing information services for the Greater Boston real estate community.

Service Offerings

Custom Application Development

Industry

Professional Services

Challenge

Replace LINK's existing client server application in an effort to provide enhanced functionality to subscribers and increase the company's competitive advantage.

Solution

Greystone created a web-based system that improved data quality and delivered complex search capabilities.

Microsoft Software Used

- Microsoft® SQL Server
- Microsoft Visual Studio® .NET
- Microsoft® .NET 2.0
- Microsoft® ASP.NET Atlas

Benefits

- My.linkboston.com provides a user experience unmatched within the industry
- LINK has the capability to expand to future markets
- Web-based solution improves user accessibility
- Brokers can rely on the accuracy and quality of listing data

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Solution

After assessing their options, LINK chose to build a custom solution with Greystone Solutions, a Boston-based firm focusing on technology solutions and business consulting. Greystone worked with LINK to determine their needs: a solution with improved user accessibility, powerful search capabilities and timely, accurate data. With these needs in mind, Greystone developed a web-based application and worked to deploy the system within the time and budget constraints of a small company in the real estate industry.

The new solution integrated the functionality of LINK's previously disparate systems and now allows users to create, update and search real estate listings within the same application. In addition to speeding up the process to add new properties for sale, my.linkboston.com enables brokers to make instant edits, assuring the highest possible level of accurate, up-to-the-minute data. In the volatile real estate market, the availability of this accurate, timely data is invaluable to brokers and home buyers, allowing them to act fast on hot properties.

My.linkboston.com also offers powerful search functionality, helping brokers to granularize property details to deliver precise search results that meet their clients' needs faster than ever before. Brokers can also grant access to clients, allowing them to utilize the system to save their search criteria and receive e-mail alerts so they never miss new listings or property updates.

Taking advantage of new features in ASP.NET 2.0, my.linkboston.com also allows users to customize the application to fit their needs. By allowing users to set and save their preferences across sessions, LINK provides its customers with a unique personalization aspect that further distances them from their competitors.

Brokers and home buyers alike are benefiting from the multimedia experience now available surrounding their search results.

My.linkboston.com provides access to photos, floor plans, and a bird's eye view of the home and surrounding neighborhood. Some listings even include a virtual tour of the property interior. Due to the accessibility of the web-based application, users have the flexibility of browsing properties from the comfort of their homes and offices.

"We've added a whole new market in Nantucket using our existing infrastructure and will be going live in January."

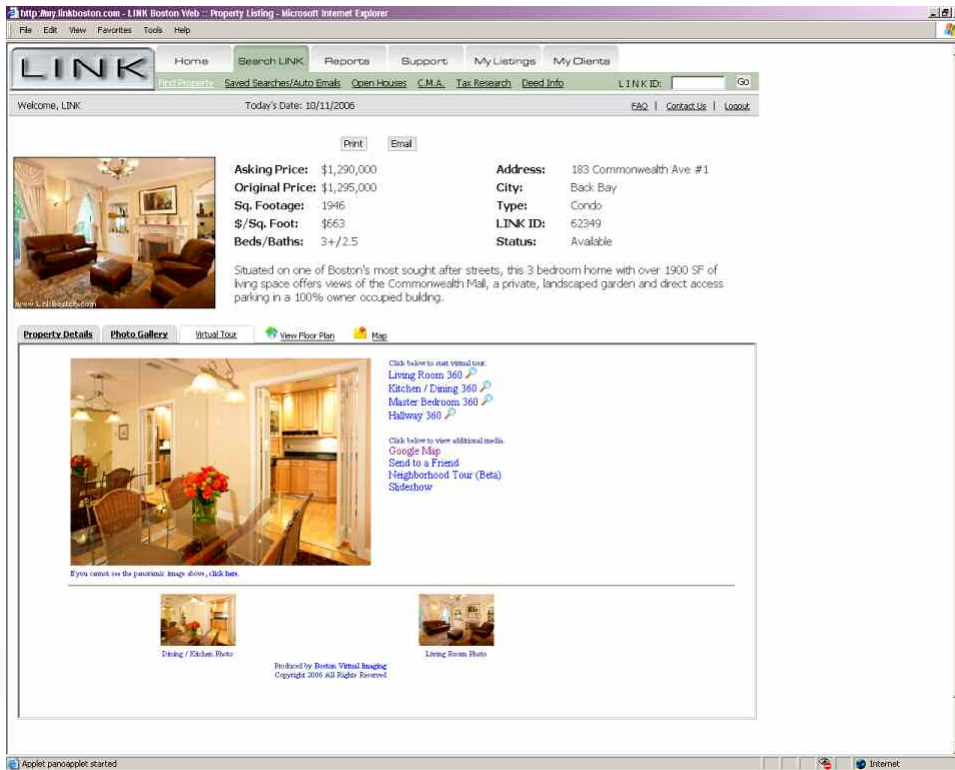
-Deb Taylor
President
Listing Information Network



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LINK CASE STUDY CONTINUED



This screenshot of a real estate listing shows a virtual tour as well as additional multimedia options including a photo gallery, floor plan, neighborhood map and the detailed property information available for users.

Solution Architecture

The solution was built with SQL Server 2005 and .NET 2.0, creating a solid and scalable foundation to build on in the future. Greystone implemented the solution by leveraging the developer productivity tools in Visual Studio 2005. My.linkboston.com integrates with Windows Live Local and runs on Windows Server 2003. LINK now provides subscribers with dramatically enhanced performance and usability by exploiting the personalization functionality in ASP.net, dynamic XML search capabilities in SQL Server 2005 and leveraging AJAX. The new architecture gives LINK the potential to expand beyond its current users without technical enhancements or additional staff.

Benefits

My.linkboston.com provides a user experience unmatched within the industry

LINK's new system offers their subscribers the benefits of enhanced features allowing users to not only able to create complex custom searches, but also to generate e-mail alerts. Now, users are sure to be aware of new and updated listings meeting their search criteria; meaning brokers and their clients can take action as soon as properties become available. Potential home buyers are treated to a multimedia experience complete with access to open house information, photos, virtual tours, floor plans and bird's eye views of the home and surrounding neighborhood, all conveniently available from the property listing page. In the future, LINK would like to build on the customizable aspect of the application with even more user settings.

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LINK CASE STUDY CONTINUED



LINK has the capability to expand to future markets

Built with the latest technology, the solution features a solid technical foundation fully scalable to build on in the future. The new architecture gives LINK the potential to increase its market penetration, enabling the company to exponentially grow the number of metro-Boston brokers they service without needing technical enhancements or adding on additional staff.

Additionally, LINK's new solution provides an opportunity to diversify and drive business in new markets. My.linkboston.com was designed to support growth into new regions and states, meaning as LINK continues to grow and serve new real estate markets, their IT budget will not grow as well. LINK has already been working to bring their listing services to new users. "We've added a whole new market in Nantucket using our existing infrastructure and will be going live in January," says Deb Taylor, President of LINK.

For More Information

For more information, please contact us today!

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Web-based solution improves user accessibility

By eliminating the client server application, new subscribers are able to immediately access my.linkboston.com without the delay of an installation. Subscribers are now able to access the site from any available internet connection, logging in to retrieve the latest property information at home, in the office or on-the-go. Now, brokers can receive the latest data on current listings and open houses while on the road showing properties. Looking forward, LINK hopes to introduce a mobile aspect of the application that would provide brokers with quick property information on-the-go.

We look forward to hearing from you and hope you build your next project with Greystone!

Brokers can rely on the accuracy and quality of listing data

My.linkboston.com provides an opportunity for LINK to build on their reputation and move toward their goal of becoming the primary source of real estate listing data. By eliminating the need for users to have local copies of client software, the new system speeds up the process to add new listings. Brokers now have the ability to log-in and instantly update their listings and open house information, assuring that the data in the system is accurate and up-to-date.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the My.linkboston.com search results page. The page includes a navigation menu, search filters, and a table of property listings. The table columns include: #, Yr, St, S, Price, City-Address, Sq. Ft., Beds, Baths, Price, Days on Market, Beds Loc, Amenities, and Price. The table lists various properties with their respective details.

#	Yr	St	S	Price	City-Address	Sq. Ft.	Beds	Baths	Price	Days on Market	Beds Loc	Amenities	Price
12	A			\$370,000	Back Bay - 591 Beacon St #5	1050	4	3.5	\$370	0/0/0	Garden	PetsOK	156 Prudential
12	A			\$475,000	Back Bay - 413 Beacon St #2	690	4	2.5	\$475				176 EPA Bost
12	A			\$499,900	Back Bay - 524 Commonwealth Ave #20	864	4	2.5	\$499		1st Floor - Corner	1, HW, D/D	Rentals
13	A			\$725,000	Back Bay - 411 Marlborough St #3	875	4	2.5	\$725		2nd Floor - Front	E,FP,FW,BayWin,Det,HCLN,DD	Street
14	X	A		\$725,000	Back Bay - 31 Massachusetts Ave #1	843	4	2.5	\$725		8th Floor	E,Sunny,View,HW,NewKk	Street
14	A			\$725,000	Back Bay - 282 Marlborough St #16	796	4	2.5	\$725		4th Floor - Front	1,DD,D,LP,Chg	Other
15	A			\$919,000	Back Bay - 145 Marlborough St #15	916	4	2.5	\$919		2nd Floor - Corner	A,BayWin,AC,E,Exp,HW,HW,HCLN	1 - Rental
15	X	A		\$629,000	Back Bay - WINGSB PLACE #201	927	4	2.5	\$629		2nd Floor - Corner	BayWin, AC, C, E, HW, NatPeta	1 - Airtag \$500,000
16	A			\$629,000	Back Bay - 336 Commonwealth Ave #1	1149	4	2.5	\$629		Garden - Floor Through	W/D,D/D,BayWin,Exp,AC,FP,Pe	1 - Det an
16	A			\$840,000	Back Bay - 136 Commonwealth Ave #15	946	4	2.5	\$840		1st Floor - Front	1, E, PetsOK, A, D/D, FP, HW, HCLN	Street
17	X	A		\$660,000	Back Bay - 461 Beacon St #2	1178	4	2.5	\$660		1st Floor - Duplex	1, Det, FP, HW, HCLN, PetsOK	Street
18	A			\$665,000	Back Bay - 145 Marlborough St #1	1230	4	2.5	\$665		Parlor - Duplex	Formal dining	1 - Decided
112	A			\$694,000	Back Bay - 76 Marlborough St #4	1312	4	2.5	\$694		Patio	FP, Det, AC, Exp, HW, D/D, W/D,	1 - Other
11	A			\$699,000	Back Bay - 205 Beacon St #9	900	4	2.5	\$699		4th Floor - Floor Through	HW, FP, 1, HW, BayWin, Stg, New	Street
15	X	A		\$699,000	Back Bay - 280 Commonwealth Ave #10	927	4	2.5	\$699		1st Floor - Rear	HW, HCLN, AC, Sunny, FP	1 - Det an
15	A			\$699,000	Back Bay - 320 Marlborough St #3	1161	4	2.5	\$699		3rd Floor - Floor Through	2+2 on Marlborough Street 11	Street
15	A			\$699,000	Back Bay - 172 Beacon St #4	1090	4	2.5	\$699		3rd Floor - Floor Through	BayWin, AC, Det, FP, HW, HCLN	Rentals

My.linkboston.com provides detailed search results making it easier for brokers to determine which listings have been added most recently as well as which properties have had recent price adjustments with simple color coded distinctions.

