



AGENT TRAINING

Using the Internet in Real Estate

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It may seem obvious to some of you "techy" types that spend a lot of time on the computer and the internet, but many agents today still don't know how to use some of the basic "e-tools" available to them. This class will focus on the following e-tools.

- 1) E-mail
 - A) How to set up pop3 accounts.
 - B) How to access web mail when you are using someone else's computer.
 - C) How to set up and use signatures .
 - D) Using read receipts and auto-responders
 - E) Using E-Flyers
 - F) Setting up contact groups
- 2) Other Web Sites
 - A) Setting up favorites
 - B) Useful web sites
- 3) Your Web Site
 - A) Your HAR.com web site
 - B) Your ERA.com website
 - C) Creating your own domain and web presence



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Setting up Pop3 Accounts on your email

1. Before you get going, make sure you know your email address along with the following information. (You may need to contact your ISP, Internet Service Provider, to get it.) First, information about the e-mail servers: •The type of e-mail server you use: POP3 (most e-mail accounts), HTTP (such as Hotmail), or IMAP •The name of the incoming e-mail server •For POP3 and IMAP servers, the name of the outgoing e-mail server (generally SMTP) Second, information about your account: •Your account name and password •Find out if your ISP requires you to use Secure Password Authentication (SPA) to access your e-mail account—yes or no is all that's required.

2. Start Outlook Express, and on the Tools menu, click Accounts. If the Internet Connection Wizard starts up automatically, skip ahead to step 4.

3. Click Add, and then click Mail to open the Internet Connection Wizard.

4. On the Your Name page of the wizard, type your name as you want it to appear to everyone who gets e-mail from you, and then click Next. Most people use their full name, but you can use any name—even a nickname—that people will recognize.

5. On the Internet Explorer Address page, type your e-mail address, and then click Next.

6. On the E-mail Server Names page, fill in the first block of information that you gathered from your ISP in step 1, and then click Next

Note: If you chose HTTP as your incoming e-mail server—as for a Hotmail or MSN account—this wizard page changes slightly so you can identify your HTTP mail service provider.

7. On the Internet Mail Logon page, type your account name and password.

Note: If you're concerned about break-ins to your e-mail, click to clear the check in the Remember Password box. You'll then be prompted for the password each time you send or retrieve mail.

8. Click Next, and then click Finish. You're ready to send your first e-mail! *Unsure if your new e-mail account is working? Send an e-mail message to a friend. If they get the message, your account is ready to roll! But if you run into problems setting up your account, Outlook Express offers help. Search for troubleshooting topics from Contents and Index on the Help menu.*



Using a Webmail Account

Most email services allow for both pop3 and webmail viewing. If you are using someone else's computer you will not be able to access your email through the traditional pop3 service because your email account name and password are not stored in their Outlook Express mail program. However, you can still check your email by logging in to the website of your email provider. Below are the most used web mail providers in our area. If yours is not listed, check with your internet provider and ask if webmail is available. The advantage to using webmail is that the mail stays on the server and can be accessed from any computer, not just the one you opened it on.

  <p>Yahoo Mail or SBC Global: Go to www.yahoo.com and click on the word "mail" located just right of the envelope icon. Enter your yahoo ID and password OR your SBC Global email address and password and you will be taken to your email. If you don't have a Yahoo account, you can easily open a free account by clicking where it says "Free Mail: Sign Up"</p>	 <p>MSN Hotmail: Go to www.Hotmail.com and enter your Hotmail email address and password. This will take you to your email. If you do not have a Hotmail account, you can get a free account by clicking on the icon that says "Sign Up"</p>
 <p>Google / Gmail: Go to http://gmail.google.com and enter your Google / Gmail id and password. If you don't have one. You can create one by clicking on "Sign Up For Gmail"</p>	 <p>Time Warner / Roadrunner: Go to https://webmail.houston.rr.com and enter your logon id and password. There is NO free version of Roadrunner webmail. You must have an account with Roadrunner high speed internet.</p>



How to Set Up and Use Signatures

- 1) If you are using **Outlook Express** open the program and look on the top left hand toolbar and click on "**TOOLS**"
- 2) Click on "**OPTIONS**"
- 3) Click on the tab that says "**SIGNATURES**"
- 4) Check the box that says "**Add signatures to all outgoing messages**"
- 5) You may or may not check the box that says "**Don't add signatures to replies and forwards**"
- 6) In the empty box that says "**Signatures**" click on the tab to the right that says "**NEW**"
- 7) Under "**Edit Signatures**", click the dot that says "**Text**" and fill in your details such as name, company, and contact info.
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- 8) You can also "**insert**" a signature file in on each individual email, rather than have it automatically added to every email that you send. If you want to do this, be sure **NOT to click the box that says "Add signatures to all outgoing messages"**. Then each time you get ready to send an email that you want your signature on, you can A) after writing your email, go to the toolbar at the top left and click on "**Insert**" and then "**Signature**". It will then insert your stored signature. OR B) If you have made a photo signature like the one below, click on "**Insert**" and then "**Picture**" and then find your photo file by clicking "**Browse**" and click on the file you want and click "**Open**" and then click "**OK**". The file should automatically be inserted into the body of your email.



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Using Read Receipts and Auto Responders

To make sure that the person that you sent the email to has read it, use a read receipt request by taking the following steps prior to sending your email

- 1) If you are using **Outlook Express**, before sending your email, click on "**Tools**" and then click on "**Request Read Receipt**". This will give the person who receives the email a pop up request to click on a button that they actually received your email. *One hint though, DO NOT send a "Request Read Receipt" with every email that you send. It will annoy the receiver and they will start ignoring your requests.*
- 2) If you use **Microsoft Outlook** you can click on "**Options**" and then "**Options**" again. Here you can check off the importance level, the request for delivery receipt and/or request for read receipt
- 3) Auto-Responders are a great way to get back to people immediately even when you are not at your computer. **Not all email is set up with auto responders so you may have to check yours to see if it is.** We do have the capability to place an auto responder on your @SanJacRealEstate.com email account, that way anytime anyone emails you at this email it will automatically respond with a message that you have chosen to send such as "*Thank you for emailing Dave Turnquist at San Jac Real Estate. Your message is important to me and I will respond to your message, if needed, as quickly as possible.*" Basically your auto responder message can say anything you want it to say, but remember that the same message is being sent to every person who sends you an email, so it needs to be generic.



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Using E-Flyers

E-Flyers can be created by you or a professional e-flyer company and can be sent to select individuals or mass emailed to thousands of people. Whether you are just advertising a broker open house or wanting to let everyone in town know who you are, e-flyers are a simple way to advertise.

Here is a link to a tutorial on how to make your own e-flyer

http://desireesavory.com/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/creating_a_quick_email_flyer.pdf

Here are some of the companies that do E-Flyers

www.alwayskeepintouch.com www.eliteemail.com www.emailflyerads.com

www.emailflyers.net www.homeflyer.net www.houstoneflyer.com

http://www.thevirtualsalesrep.net/video_e_flyers

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Setting Up Contact Groups

If using **Outlook Express**

- 1) Go to "Tools", then "Address Book", then "File", then "New Group"
- 2) In the blank column labeled "Group Name", type in the name of the group you want to create. For example if you are making a list of all the agents in La Porte only, you can name your contact list "La Porte Realtors"
- 3) Next, you need to add the people/contacts that belong in that group. If they are already in your address book, just click on "Select Members" and add the people you want. If you don't have the people already in your address book, click on "New Contact" and type in the name and email for each person you want to add to the group and click "ok"
- 4) When you now want to send an email to all of the La Porte agents (or whatever list you have created) you can just send it to the group rather than clicking on each agent or person individually and adding them in the TO: list. To do this click on "Create" to open a new email message and then click on the "TO:" and find the "group" that you created. Highlight the group and then click "to" and then click "ok". You are now ready to send the message to everyone in the group.

If Using **Microsoft Outlook**

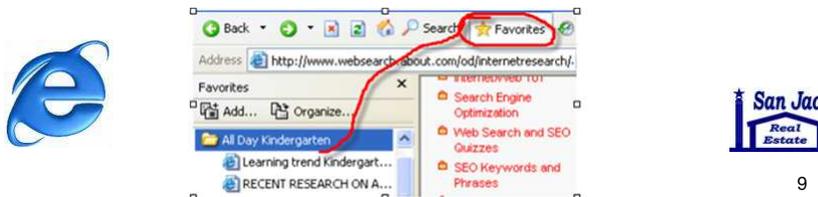
- 1) Go to "Tools", then "Address Book", then "File", then "New Entry", then "New Distribution List"
- 2) In the blank column labeled "name", type in the name of the group you want to create. For example if you are making a list of all the agents in La Porte only, you can name your contact list "La Porte Realtors"
- 3) Next, you need to add the people/contacts that belong in that group. If they are already in your address book, just click on "Select Members" and add the people you want. If you don't have the people already in your address book, click on "Add New" and type in the name and email for each person you want to add to the group. When you are finished click on "Save and Close"
- 4) When you now want to send an email to all of the La Porte agents (or whatever list you have created) you can just send it to the group rather than clicking on each agent or person individually and adding them in the TO: list. To do this click on "New" to open a new email message and then click on the "TO:" and find the "group" that you created and send the message like you would any other time.



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Web Site Favorites

You should always store your "favorite" or "frequently used webs sites in an easy to find place. Fortunately your web browser has already set up such a place. Open [Internet Explorer](#) and go to one of your most used web sites such as HAR.com. Once the web site opens, look towards the top of your screen and click on "Favorites" and then click on "Add to Favorites". You will now have a shortcut direct link to HAR.com in your favorites folder on [Internet Explorer](#). The next time you need to go to HAR.com, you can just click on the "Favorites" icon and then click on HAR.com. You can add an infinite number of favorites here. Be careful not to put unnecessary web sites here (ones you may only visit once and never again or use only once or twice a year) because this makes the list really long and wastes space. You may notice that some web sites will also have a tiny logo next to their name in your favorites list to make it easier to identify them (depends on which version of [Internet Explorer](#) you are using). Another tip is to alphabetize your list so that you can find them easier (by default they are put in chronological order which makes them difficult to find). To alphabetize them LEFT CLICK ONE TIME AND HOLD on the link you want to move on the list and then DRAG IT to the spot it belongs and then RELEASE the left click button. The link should now be where you placed it. You can move all the links until they are in alphabetical order. You can also change the name of any link on the list by RIGHT CLICKING ONE TIME on the link and then choosing "RENAME". Type whatever name you want for the link and hit the ENTER button to save the change. It is also possible to create separate "Favorites Folders" where you place your favorite links for work, home, real estate, or whatever. This is kind of overkill, but if it makes you feel comfortable, set up different "Favorites Folders" by clicking on the "ORGANIZE" link located in the grey colored area and follow the directions.



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Helpful Web Sites You Should Know About

Here are just a few of the web sites you should know about and have in your favorites. They are all on our website too.

www.SanJacRealEstate.com and www.SanJacRealEstate.com/agentsonly.htm

<http://www.trec.state.tx.us> TREC <http://www.texasrealtors.com> TAR

<http://www.har.com> HAR <http://www.realtor.org> NAR <http://www.realtor.com> Realtor.com

www.pdfonline.com convert docs to .pdf <http://www.showings.com> Centralized Showing Service

<http://www.texasrealtors.com/web/5/47/members/web> ZipForm Online

<http://www.loopnet.com> Loopnet Commercial MLS <http://www.talkinghouse.com> Talking House

<http://www.realestateabc.com> Real Estate ABC <http://www.mortgage101.com> Mortgage 101

<http://www.realtyclipart.com/freerealestateclipart1.htm> Real Estate Clipart

<http://maps.huge.info/zip.htm> Zip Code Map <http://www.lincmad.com/locator.html> Area Code Finder

<http://www.irs.gov> IRS <http://www.texas.gov> State of Texas Government

<http://www.co.harris.tx.us> Harris County <http://www.brazoria-county.com> Brazoria County

https://records.txdps.state.tx.us/DPS_WEB/Sor/index.aspx Sex Offender Search

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us> Texas Education Agency <http://www.reliant.com> Reliant Energy

<http://www.centerpointenergy.com> Centerpoint/Entex

<http://www.att.com> SBC/ATT <http://www.comcast.com> Comcast Cable



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Your Web Site

Making a web site can be a fun and rewarding experience and is an awesome way to show off your talents as an agent. It's like an online resume for the world to see. But be careful not to put too much personal information or not enough information either. Give the person viewing your site a "reason to stay there" by providing them something useful and valuable. If a person is looking for a real estate agent and your web site talks all about you and your family and shows pictures of your dog, etc it is unlikely the person will stay on your page. They are probably looking for the ability to search for homes on MLS, maps of the area, links to local schools and restaurants, what services you provide, how long you have been in business, what makes you different, etc etc. The first web site you should focus on is your FREE HAR.com web site. Here are instructions on how to make your HAR.com web site.

- 1) Log on to HAR.com with your agent username and password
- 2) In the left hand column of your HAR home page click on My... Member Web Site
- 3) Using the right hand menu under the red "CONTROL PANEL" you can click on each of the options and start modifying and building your page.
- 4) PREFERENCES: here is where you type in your name and any Realtor designations you may have (e-Pro, GRI, CRS, etc). If you have a special web site that you want to send viewers to you can type it in here. If not, type in <http://www.silverstarrealty.com> and check the circle that says "Just show the link of my personal web site on my HAR Realtor Web Site"
- 5) NAVIGATION MENU: check ALL of the boxes and click "SAVE"
- 6) PROFILE: click on "Add New Profile" and start typing. Look at other agents web sites to get ideas about what to put here and say about yourself. Remember, why is anyone going to call YOU? Give them a reason here.
- 7) MULTI LINGUAL & CULTURE: Here is where you tell people you speak another language or have a different heritage or cultural background. If you don't speak another language, just skip this step.
- 8) FEATURED LISTINGS: Don't mess with this
- 9) UPLOAD PHOTO: Here is where you can upload a photo of yourself. HAR is very picky about the size and shape of this photo. It cannot be larger than 20K and must be a JPEG. The recommended size is 104x134 Pixels. If you have trouble reducing your photo talk to Dave Turnquist and he can help you.
- 10) LINKS FOR MY SITE: Don't mess with this
- 11) SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION: You don't need to mess with this
- 12) PREVIEW: This lets you look at your website and see what the public will see. If you don't like what you see, keep editing.
- 13) MEMBER WEBSITE HELP: Get tips and ideas about how to edit your website. When giving out your agent website URL, 99% of the time it will be www.HAR.com/yourname for example, mine is www.HAR.com/daveturnquist Once your site is up and running you can include it in your advertising and business cards



Creating Your Own Web Sites and Domains

If you are really brave and bold and want to try and build and maintain your own web site, here are some web design software programs that are widely used. Adobe Dreamweaver is the most expensive and Nvu is free to download at www.nvu.com. All programs have their pros and cons and, like anything, take some getting use to. I have used Microsoft Front Page for about 7 years now and I have memorized the sequences and tricks for the program, but it took a long time. You might be better off starting with something free like Nvu or inexpensive like CoffeeCup to start out. These are both drag and drop programs and, from what I understand, are fairly easy to use. Once you build your web site, you need to buy your domain name and pay for a service plan. The best and cheapest place to do this is at www.godaddy.com



CoffeeCup VisualSite Designer 5.5



In Review

Recent studies have shown that the majority of consumers look on the internet first when buying or selling a home. That being the case, it is imperative that you stake your e-claim on the web. Learn how to use your email to its fullest extent by setting up contact groups, auto responders, signatures, and even e-documents.

Use the FREE web sites that you already have and spiff them up to showcase your talents. Step out on the ledge and create your own personalized web site or community web site to bring attention to yourself and your services. Make the web surfer want to stay on your web site and not someone else's by offering lots of information, links, contact information, home searches, school information, etc.

The best way to create a web site is go and look at what other agents are doing and take note of the sites that you like and also note the things you don't like. **COPY WHAT THEY ARE DOING!!!! DON'T REINVENT THE WHEEL!!!** Be creative and think outside the box.

