2005 REALTOR® Association Technology Survey

A NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® survey of state and local association use of technology tracking programs, products, budgets, hurdles, and success stories. Conducted March 2005.

Executive Summary

From offering members transaction management services to establishing T1 internet connections, REALTOR® associations of all sizes advanced their use of technology in 2004. According to the NAR's first association technology survey, associations are also sending out more e-newsletters and providing more online education then ever before, while struggling with battling spam and finding ways to secure members' listing data online.

278 REALTOR® associations took part in the online survey and shared their technology successes and challenges in 2004 and their plans for 2005.

* Nearly all (94.3%) associations send regular e-mail communications to members

* Most associations use technology primarily to communicate effectively with members

* Most associations believe they employ technology effectively

* 55.4% of associations provide class and event registration on their Web sites.

* More than a quarter of association have no technology staff, nearly a third use an outside technology consultant only.

* One quarter of associations spend less than $4,000 a year on technology, 12 percent spend more than $50,000.

* Most associations (61.3%) do not have a technology strategic plan.

* Nearly 86% of associations feel their e-mail communications to members are being blocked by spam filters.

* Nearly half (48%) of Multiple Listing Services monitor the use of member listings online.

***Note that when amounts in the charts do not add up to 100%, the remainder is "no answer."

The survey results that follow detail what technologies associations are using and what their technology priorities are, but the most revealing data from the survey came from the stories of progress and frustration that association executives shared. Here are just a few (most respondents preferred to have their candid remarks on challenges and plans remain anonymous).

"We replaced our existing server, backup system and firewall and upgraded to Microsoft's 2003 Small Business Server. Currently, we are strengthening the network to handle the installation of a new Cisco IP phone system in the next couple of months." —Reggie McCrary, Atlanta Board of REALTORS®

"We finally unveiled our new Web site. We hope to continue to enhance it to improve communication with our members as well as enable our members to communicate better among themselves." —Karan Ford, Fort Wayne Area Association of REALTORS®, Ind.

"[We] generated 423,000 leads to HAR members at no additional cost with our enhanced member Web site subscription program ." —Bob Hale, Houston Association of REALTORS®

"[We] established a private member side of our Web site for future payments, education, calendars, e-voting, and communication. Added a T-1 line for productivity and efficiency." —Frank Bemis, Northern Solano County Association of REALTORS®, Calif.

"[We] educated members on the importance of keeping up with the changes in technology, such as virus protection and spyware." —Patricia Nieboer, West Central Association of REALTORS®, Mich.

"We established a political call-to-action portal where members can send letters or e-mails called Action Alerts! to political representatives " —Cynthia Hooker, Vermont Association of REALTORS®

"We totally revamped our Web site, employing asset management software to administer the Web site along with exporting agent/office info from our MLS database." —Paula Gilbert, Wichita Falls Association of REALTORS®, Kan.
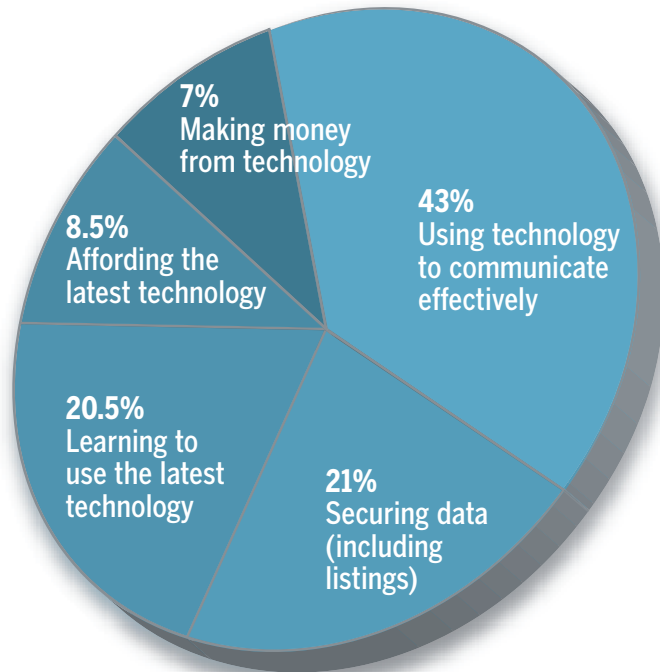
"We're updating our 24-station computer training lab to a wireless environment using a Citrix Thin Client system." —Kathy Roberts, REALTOR® Association of Greater Miami & the Beaches

"We offered Electronic Transaction Management System to all REALTORS® in the state for $7.50 per transaction." —Jacqueline Parkinson, Kona Board of REALTORS®, Hawaii
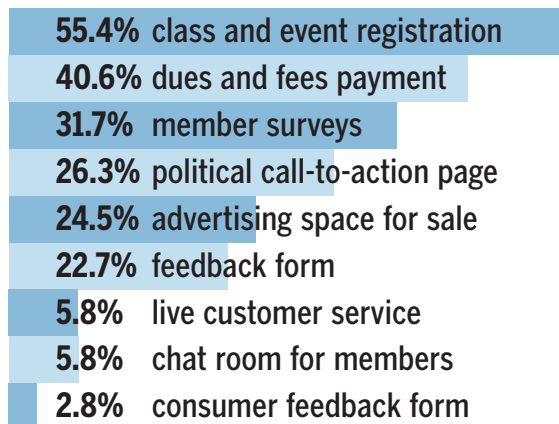
Survey Results

Associations' Tech Priorities

What's the technology task most important to your association?

7% Making money from technology

8.5% Affording the latest technology

43% Using technology to communicate effectively

20.5% Learning to use the latest technology

21% Securing data (including listings)

Association Web Services

What services do you offer on your association Web site?

55.4% class and event registration
40.6% dues and fees payment
31.7% member surveys
26.3% political call-to-action page
24.5% advertising space for sale
22.7% feedback form
5.8% live customer service
5.8% chat room for members
2.8% consumer feedback form

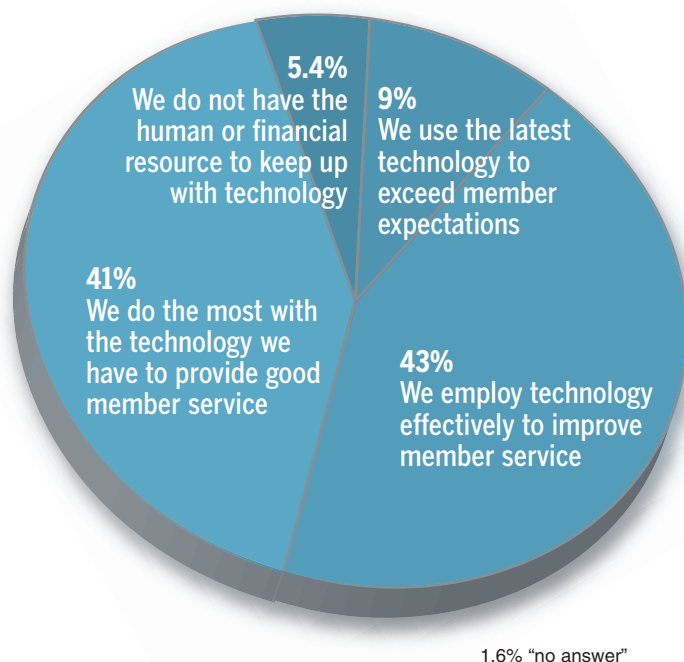## Electronic vs. Print

Do you send or post an electronic newsletter or publication?

50.5% in addition to a print version

31.3% in place of a print version

Associations' Tech Service

What is the state of your
technology service?

5.4%
We do not have the
human or financial
resource to keep up
with technology

9%
We use the latest
technology to
exceed member
expectations

41%
We do the most with
the technology we
have to provide good
member service

43%
We employ technology
effectively to improve
member service

1.6% "no answer"

MLS Data Monitoring

48% of MLSs monitor the use of
listings online by participants or
investigate reported misuse of
data.

MLS Data Download

MLSs: How to your provide listing data downloads to members*?

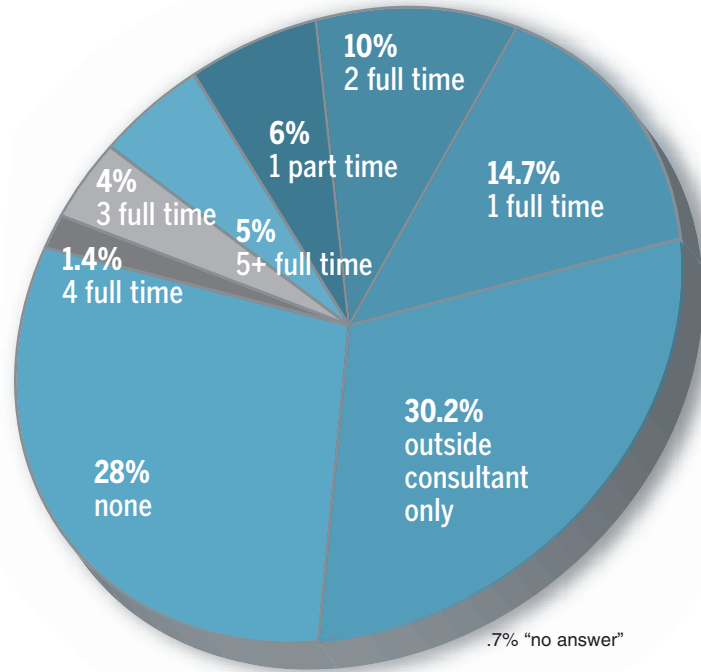|	
65.5%	Via persistent download to participants for their IDX site
17%	Via persistent download to participants for their VOW site
41%	Via transient download to participants for their IDX site
12%	Via transient download to participants for their VOW site

* percentages equal more than 100% because several associations offer a
combination of the options above.

A persistent download *is a transfer of MLS information from the MLS's server to a
participant's server from which it is available to be searched by registrants.*

A transient download *is where MLS information remains on the MLS's server and
queries from registrants are received by a VOW and only information responsive to
the query is extracted from the MLS's server and transferred to the VOW where it
is then formatted as desired by the VOW's software, and then transmitted to the
inquiring registrant.*

Association Tech Staff

How many technology staffers does your association employ?

10%
2 full time

6%
1 part time

14.7%
1 full time

4%
3 full time

5%
5+ full time

1.4%
4 full time

30.2%
outside consultant only

28%
none

.7% "no answer"

Computer Units

How many computers does your association have?

25%	1-3 computers
34.5%	4-10 computers
12.6%	11-19 computers
11.2%	20-30 computers
15%	30+ computers

Servers

Do you have your own servers?

58%	Yes
41.4%	No

Spam Blocking

Spam filters block how much of your
e-mail from getting to members?

1%
Nearly all

12%
None

59.4%
A few

25.5%
Many
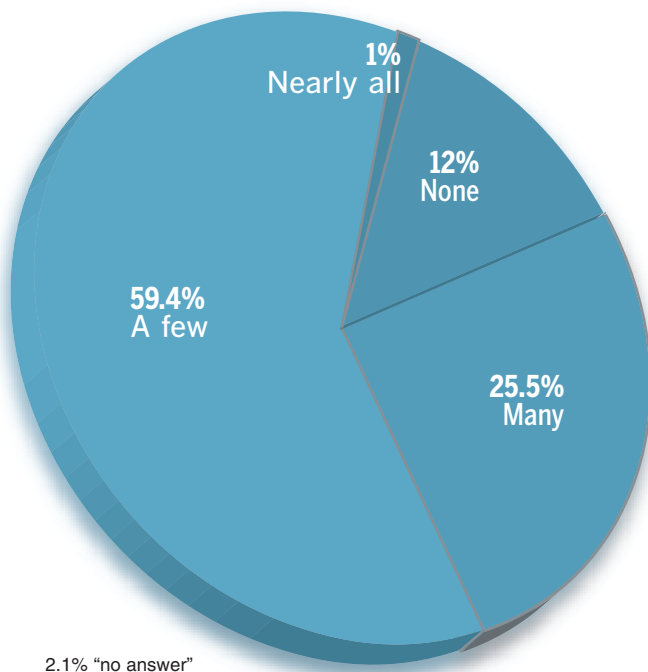
2.1% "no answer"

Spam's Toll

Spam is:

47.5% An inconvenience for
my association

27% A problem for my
association

16% A major problem for
my association

8% Not a problem at my
association

.7% No answer

Battling Spam

What percentage of your technology
resources (time and money) were devoted
to battling spam in 2004?

18.7%   no resources

51.8%   5% - 10% of resources

23.7%   10% - 30% of resources

2.5%   30% - 50% of resources

.4%   50% - 70% of resources

.7%   70% + of resources

2.2% "no answer"

Tech Strategic Plan

Do you have a technology strategic plan (or a section of your strategic plan devoted to technology)?

37.4%
Yes

61.5%
No

1.1% "no answer"
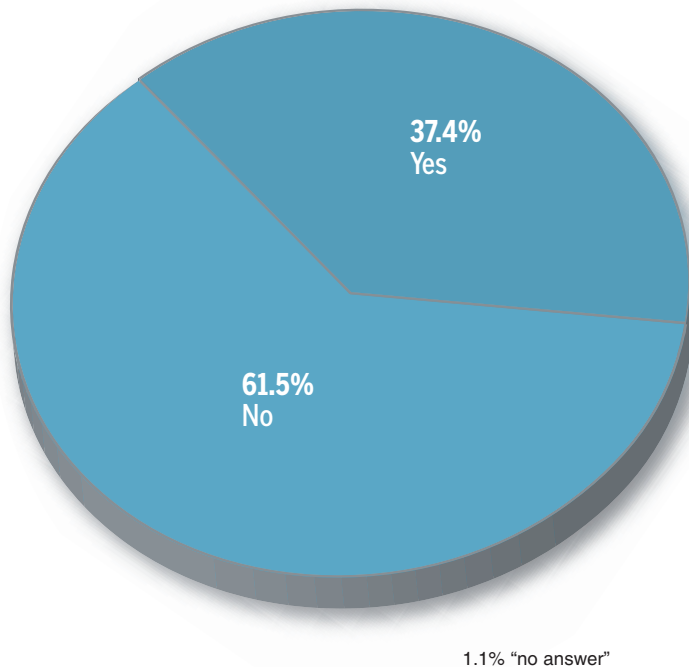
Technology Guidance
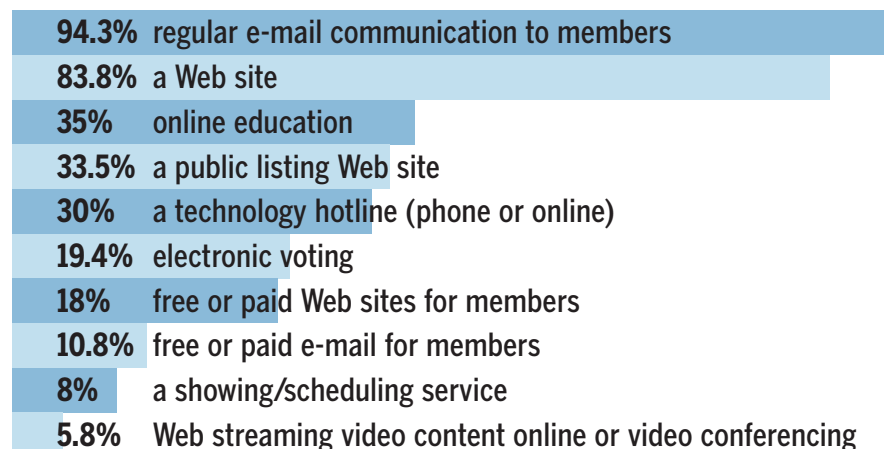
Does your association have a technology committee?

47.4%   Yes

52.6%   No

Tech Services

What technology services do you offer members?

94.3%	regular e-mail communication to members
83.8%	a Web site
35%	online education
33.5%	a public listing Web site
30%	a technology hotline (phone or online)
19.4%	electronic voting
18%	free or paid Web sites for members
10.8%	free or paid e-mail for members
8%	a showing/scheduling service
5.8%	Web streaming video content online or video conferencing

Associations' Tech Budget

How much did you spend on technology in 2004?

6.5% $1,000-$2,000
6% $500-$1,000
6% $6,000-$10,000
13.3% $2,000-$4,000
12.2% under $500
12% $50,000+
11.5% $4,000-$6,000
8.3% $20,000-$30,000
7.6% $30,000-$50,000
7.2% $10,000-$15,000
7.2% $15,000-$20,000

2.2% "no answer"
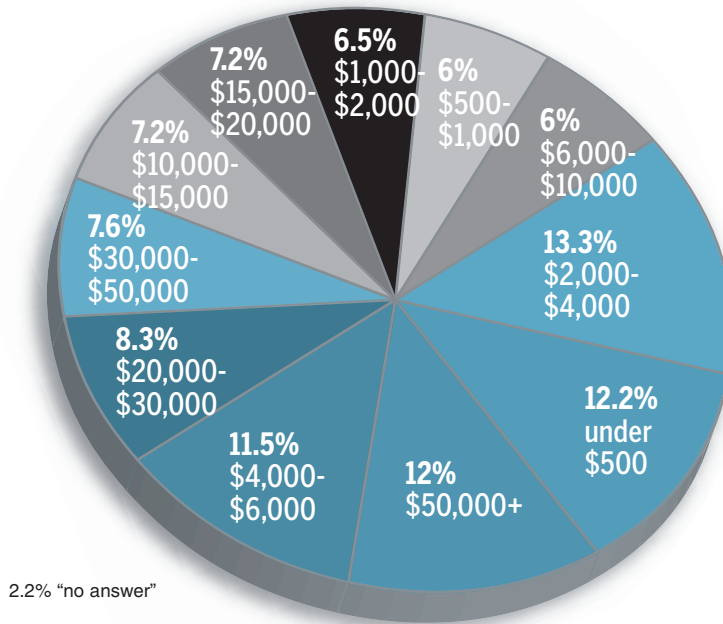
Customer Service Software

Do you use customer relationship management software?

8.6%   Yes

91%   No

Member Record Software

What member record software do you use?

31.6%   Rappitoni

22%   NRDS Manager

7.5%   Maryland Management

.9%   Bravepoint

Other software mentioned:
   FINIS
   Microsoft Access
   FlexMLS
   RISCO Access
   QuickBooks
   Microsoft Excel
   MemberClicks
   Custom built member software