PROPERTY VALUES AND OTHER KEY REAL ESTATE DATA:

How They're Determined & Documented by the Pros

CRS Data

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	01
How the Process Begins	02
What Exactly Is CRS Collecting and Recording?	02
No 'Giant Plug' Securing Real Estate Data	03
CRS Data Following the Mortgage Crisis	03
Unleashing the Power of Knowledge	04
What's On the Horizon?	05

INTRODUCTION

What is a home or piece of commercial property worth? Who says so - and how do we know they're right? These questions are asked countless times daily by consumers and even real estate industry members, but few stop and ask how real estate values are actually determined. Between buyers and sellers, there is a lot of subjectivity on values, as their own personal opinion can play a major role. But for the cast of characters that include REALTORS®, appraisers, and lenders, there is precise, objective and provable information that resides in county courthouses all over the country. CRS Data is a key player in an important industry devoted to collecting, delivering and updating real estate data and maps for personal and professional use.

The real estate data collection process can be exacting and time consuming. Much of the real estate information and public property records people see online were arduously input into various systems and protocols. Some even entail inputting records in person and by hand at courthouses in communities nationwide. Then, it all must be delivered through online software that makes it universally searchable and understood.

CRS Data is one of only a few companies to create a comprehensive system that helps professionals easily understand and interpret this complex information. The company is a major source of the real estate data aggregation process. For anybody who deals with real estate information, there's a good chance it was compiled by CRS Data

The company has a full-time real estate data entry operation, with more than 300 people working around the clock to provide this information for residential and commercial real estate professionals. At the helm of this department is Edward Gettelfinger, who founded the company more than 20 years ago.

"Many professionals linked to the real estate industry might be under the impression that this data just falls out of the sky or magically appears on the Internet," says Gettelfinger. "However, the laborious nature of data collecting and processing is something that takes numerous hours, hand keying of data, and cutting edge Internet technology."

HOW THE PROCESS BEGINS

It may seem archaic in this technological age, but the baseline of property values begins with an employee from the tax assessor's office.

1. A tax assessor visits a home or commercial property and physically measures the exterior footprint and examines construction materials, condition of the building as well as amenities, including porches, outbuildings and any other property features, such as swimming pools. The measurements provide the square footage - the first building block of a structure's value. Of course, cost per square foot can range significantly from ZIP code to ZIP code and subdivision to subdivision. Meanwhile, even the basic condition of a home can go a long way in determining its overall value.

2. The next logical step for the assessor is to submit collected information to the respective county courthouse. Once a real estate transaction of any kind is complete, documentation is submitted to update records and determine property tax rates.

3. Now, this is where CRS Data comes into play. It is from this progressively rich database of transactions, sales amounts, mortgage details and assessor data that property values derive. Most counties only update their assessor files once a year, but thousands of transactions occur on a daily basis. CRS Data prides itself on data currency, meaning it is known for quickly retrieving information on recent sales and making them available through its own system.

WHAT EXACTLY IS CRS COLLECTING & RECORDING?

There is a wealth of real estate information available at county courthouses, all of which play an intricate role in determining property values. However, the primary information targeted by CRS Data includes:

- Tax records
- Sales and Mortgage Histories
- Warranty Deeds
- Interactive GIS and Plat Maps
- Area demographics
- Property analyses

By incorporating all of this information into a single system, it makes it simple to paint a picture of the conditions in a given market, which in turn, makes the job of real estate and mortgage professionals easier and much more efficient.

NO 'GIANT PLUG' SECURING REAL ESTATE DATA

Gettelfinger notes that there are many people who think that data collection is a function of sticking a giant plug into the side of a courthouse that obtains the data. However, this is just not the case, he says. Instead, data collectors must read each individual deed and hand key the content into the system and check it for errors. This is often where there is a major disconnect between CRS Data and real estate professionals. Many people are under the impression that collecting real estate data is a breeze, when it couldn't be further from the truth. Collecting and aggregating data is a costly enterprise.

CRS DATA FOLLOWING THE MORTGAGE CRISIS

In 2008, when the mortgage and foreclosure crises began, the real estate game radically changed. Property values plummeted due to corruption of Wall Street. Unfortunately, our nation's community banks which by and large were not complicit in the crisis, had to bear an arduous regulatory burden. As waves of distressed properties made their way into the market, radically falling real estate prices made it extremely difficult for community bankers to defend the values of their real estate holdings. Bank failures were an everyday occurrence. But with more than two decades of experience under its belt, CRS Data was ready to supply current and accurate information to real estate and banking industries in crisis. Survivors turned to the company to be more thorough and to work more intelligently. Armed with knowledge based on facts, buyers, sellers and lenders had confidence and less fear, as they were able to adjust to their new reality.

As waves of distressed properties made their way into the market, radically falling real estate prices made it extremely difficult for community bankers to defend the values of their real estate holdings.

UNLEASHING THE POWER OF KNOWLEDGE

With each new generation of product development, CRS Data has made it easier to search, analyze and report on property information. Users vary widely in job function and responsibility. Therefore, two years ago the company created the Customer Experience Department. It is dedicated to training and customer support. Training and ensuring user adoption has become a key component of delivering value to every customer.

From an MLS perspective—
"The CRS staff is extremely quick to resolve any issue reported, although, we have not encountered very many issues at all," says Donna Roach of the Knoxville Area Association of Realtors. "I feel we are a bit special as our offices are only a couple miles apart, but from what I have heard from other REALTOR® Associations, they treat everyone the same. Same great support no matter where you are located geographically. I strongly recommend any real estate related organization or professional to use Courthouse Retrieval System."

From a banker's perspective Charlie Harper of Sunmark Bank in Georgia had this to say, *"The quality of our work would not be as good without CRS Data. And it would take hours to get the work done without CRS Data. In less than an hour on the project invested, there is NO WAY I would have come up with five good comps on this 200-acre tract. And they are all within a five mile radius. How can you argue with comps on a two hundred acre tract of land and all the sales being in 2012? How can you argue with that?"*

With each new generation of product development, CRS Data has made it easier to search, analyze and report on property information. Users vary widely in job function and responsibility.

WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON?

To maintain an edge in a dramatically shifting real estate industry, CRS Data plans to continue expanding both its product capabilities and the number of markets it serves across the United States. Matt Casey, President & CEO reflected on the past couple of years and what is ahead for the company. "When you are in the information business as we are it is easy to forget it is really not about the information—it's about relationships and finding ways to better help people. It has been said of us that we are refreshingly human as a data and software company. More than anything else, that's our secret sauce."

CRS Data

800 374 7488
getinfo@crsdata.com

341 Troy Circle Knoxville, TN 37919