

Reagan's Responses:

1. Tell me a bit about the process you typically go through when you are searching online for a new place to live.

I usually use multiple types of online home search engines and then get a realtor.

2.How often do you visit each of the following: Zillow, Craigslist, and Trulia?

Right now? Not very often at all.

3.If you had to guess, how much time do you spend on each site each time you visit?

I would say about a half an hour.

4.What causes you to stop using a site or switch over to a different one? (I.e., I run out of properties to look at, the site doesn't work the way I want it to, etc). Please explain.

Both of the examples provided- a lot of times the sites freeze up and so I have to move to another site or I've run out of properties.

5.Are there any features that stick out to you about Zillow, Craigslist, or Trulia as being particularly helpful or that you appreciated while you were using the tool?

I like how you can search by neighborhood with Trulia.

6.How about anything that you found annoying or frustrating?

How slow each site seems to be.

7.What search criteria is important to you when looking online for a new place to live? (I.e., Do you need properties to be pet friendly, do you need a yard, information about the neighborhood, location, budget, etc?)

When I was looking for housing, and probably from now on, I'll be looking to buy. I definitely need a backyard, I want a safe neighborhood, and I need it to be within my budget.

8.Please explain why these are important to you.

I have two dogs and a kid, so a backyard is a must. Like I said, I have a kid so I want to live in a safe neighborhood. We only make so much, so budget is also very important.

9.Once you have found a property you are interested in, what usually happens next? What are the next steps you take? Has it been clear what you needed to do in order to move forward in the process?

I save the info for the house, either online or I print it out. Then I try and visit the property with a realtor. I think the steps are pretty clear.

10.Please explain.

N/A.

11.Did you end up actually renting or buying any of the properties you found on any of the sites? If so, which one?

Yes, I bought a property that was found on Realtor.com.

12.Why or why not?

It was the right price, and was a nice house with space for my family.

13.Which online site/tool was your favorite to use? Why is that? Please be as specific as you can!

I prefer Realtor.com as I feel it's most in tuned with the MLS and so the info is very up to date.

14.Describe what your ideal home search process looks like including anything that you wish was available to you when you were looking for a new place to live.

I wish I had access to the actual MLS.

15.If you wished for anything additional to be available to you during your home search, how would that have been helpful?

Not sure.

16.Overall, how satisfied are you with the ways that exist for searching for homes online? Please explain your response.

See answer for question 14.

Emily's Responses:

1. Tell me a bit about the process you typically go through when you are searching online for a new place to live. I typically search a bunch of rental sites all using their search by map functionality. In a city like Chicago it is really important to see the location before looking any further into an available space. I also make sure to filter by rent/month, number of bedrooms, whether or not the listing has pictures, and any other filters that are important to me like A/C, in unit laundry, parking, etc. Then I click around for awhile and if something looks like it would be great, I usually reach out directly to the lister via whatever site I am on. Also! If move-in date is an option I definitely would filter by that too. I am honestly surprised how few listings included the move-in date.
2. How often do you visit each of the following: Zillow, Craigslist, and Trulia? I've used all 3 pretty equally... Sometimes I search around for homes to buy and then I only use Zillow for that. Craigslist has a lot but so many duplicate postings, so much spam, and so many shitty places. Trulia I used a lot too but it had less listings than other sites.
3. If you had to guess, how much time do you spend on each site each time you visit? Each time I visit a site, I probably spend at least 15 minutes.
4. What causes you to stop using a site or switch over to a different one? (I.e., I run out of properties to look at, the site doesn't work the way I want it to, etc). Please explain. Definitely switch then the site runs out of properties to look at.. I also switch if it doesnt have filters I need.. There are so many properties available in Chicago every month, so if I dont find anything I like on one site, I am convinced there will be something else on other sites.
5. Are there any features that stick out to you about Zillow, Craigslist, or Trulia as being particularly helpful or that you appreciated while you were using the tool? Zillow is just super user friendly and nice to look at, in my opinion. Trulia is the same way and I liked their app. When looking at homes to buy, I like how Zillow provides the past tax info as well as the estimate of how much your mortgage would be each month.
6. How about anything that you found annoying or frustrating? Craigslist is just a mess. It is so frustrating to see so many duplicate posts, the filters dont usually work super well (or people work around them -- like, saying they have pics when they dont or putting in a fake rent cost), and they have so much spam. You never know what is legit on Craigslist.
7. What search criteria is important to you when looking online for a new place to live? (I.e., Do you need properties to be pet friendly, do you need a yard, information about the neighborhood, location, budget, etc?) Location (info about the neighborhood would be nice -- especially when moving somewhere completely new... but i dont know what is allowed), budget, move-in date, heating and air conditioning, in-unit laundry (+ what else is included? dishwasher, etc), yard/outdoor space, parking, building amenities, utilities included etc. any/all info possible to include would be nice to have during a search.

8. Please explain why these are important to you. These are so important to know about when searching so you don't have to waste time going to physically see places that won't work for you. For example, I don't have a car so I need to be close to public transportation but Mike drives so we also need an enclosed parking spot and need to be close to the expressway for him.
9. Once you have found a property you are interested in, what usually happens next? What are the next steps you take? Has it been clear what you needed to do in order to move forward in the process? I usually use the tool in the site to contact the lister. I let them know my desired move-in date and provide times I can come look at the property. I hope they email me back instead of call. I'm not sure how explicit the sites have been when wanting to take next steps.. I think there is just always that "contact now" button or something like that which is intuitive. I think they should be more clear about when the property is available and how soon you should contact/go see the place. I also wish they would explain the next steps within the listing about how to apply (is there a cost to that?), if there is a move-in fee/move-in process, etc.
10. Please explain. [above](#)
11. Did you end up actually renting or buying any of the properties you found on any of the sites? If so, which one? honestly no! For all of the time i spent on these sites and all of the times I have moved the answer should be yes. One time i used Trulia and set up a showing. The girl never came to the showing but their just happened to be a land-lady outside another building close by putting up a for rent sign so we looked at it right there and locked it in. Another time I found a place through one of the sites (im not sure which) and it was posted by a realtor so he took us to see the place and others and we went with another. A different time, I used a realty company (apartment finders?) and they showed me a place that seemed great but was actually awful -- so if there was some way to review the property owners/buildings/units/etc. that would be cool.
12. Why or why not? [above](#)
13. Which online site/tool was your favorite to use? Why is that? Please be as specific as you can! I think Zillow is my favorite. It is just so user friendly, they have a lot of filters and options, and if you click a home, it comes up in the same window as like a box that you can click out of and come back right where you were (Trulia gives you a whole new tab which is annoying AND then you can just scroll through the pictures... you have to find a little tiny box and click which then brings you a box on that new page - so weird!!!). Also, Zillow postings are trust worthy -- i never feel like they are fake like I do with the other sites. The worst part about Zillow is that they use Bing maps and Trulia uses google maps lol.
14. Describe what your ideal home search process looks like including anything that you wish was available to you when you were looking for a new place to live. Ideally there would be one location holding every single listing. Every listing would have pictures of the entire space (not just the outside or the one good room in the place), they would also have tons of filters that actually worked! Then, when you contact the lister, they only tell you about that listing and don't

try to sell you on other listings they might have. I also think reviews would be helpful - it would be hard to curate them but it would be nice to know like how the landlord is, how the place was upon move-in, etc.

15. If you wished for anything additional to be available to you during your home search, how would that have been helpful? [a lot less time would be wasted.](#)
16. Overall, how satisfied are you with the ways that exist for searching for homes online? Please explain your response. [not really satisfied! I feel like even realtors are supposed to be better than searching on sites like these but they aren't hahaha.](#)

[Aiyana Responses](#)

1. Tell me a bit about the process you typically go through when you are searching online for a new place to live.- it depends on the site I'm using for my search, but I would generally put in certain parameters like 2 bed, 2 bath, etc.
1. How often do you visit each of the following: Zillow, Craigslist, and [realtor.com](#)?- Zillow- rarely// Craigslist-- often// Realtor.com- probably the most
1. If you had to guess, how much time do you spend on each site each time you visit?- Maybe 15 to 20 mins
1. What causes you to stop using a site or switch over to a different one? (I.e., I run out of properties to look at, the site doesn't work the way I want it to, etc). Please explain. I would run out of places to look at that fit my criteria or if I was looking for a very specific property and didn't see it, I would search using another site.
1. Are there any features that stick out to you about Zillow, Craigslist, or [realtor.com](#) as being particularly helpful or that you appreciated while you were using the tool? Craigslist has a feature that allows you to put how many miles from a certain zip code you want your search to include which I appreciate. Realtor mobile app has a feature where you can take a picture of any realty sign like in a front yard and it will give you the listing/details about the property no matter who is realty company is.
1. How about anything that you found annoying or frustrating? I notice a ton of ads when I'm browsing in [realtor.com](#). They integrate them in the listings too so that's annoying.
1. What search criteria is important to you when looking online for a new place to live? (I.e., Do you need properties to be pet friendly, do you need a yard, information about the

neighborhood, location, budget, etc?) I think it's pretty easy to sort for things I'm looking for and all sites allow you to filter by price, sqft, etc.

1. Please explain why these are important to you.
1. Once you have found a property you are interested in, what usually happens next? What are the next steps you take? Has it been clear what you needed to do in order to move forward in the process? I will usually star it to save it and research further. In the case of my current apt, I reached out to the agent I was working with, told her the MLS# and she contacted the agent listing it. If I wasn't working with an agent, I probably would have contacted the listing agent myself personally and just hoped he/she got back to me.
1. Please explain. see above.
1. Did you end up actually renting or buying any of the properties you found on any of the sites? If so, which one? Yes, ended up renting from a site found on Realtor.com
1. Why or why not? Because it had the property I was most interested in.
1. Which online site/tool was your favorite to use? Why is that? Please be as specific as you can! Realtor.com b/c it's more trust worthy than Craigslist. It requires pictures and they're generally better quality. Craigslist I feel like is at the whim of the lister and doesn't have any criteria to meet.
1. Describe what your ideal home search process looks like including anything that you wish was available to you when you were looking for a new place to live. I think Realtor.com does a good job including everything I want when I'm looking (which I do often). I do wish it was updated more often, I think there's a lag.
1. If you wished for anything additional to be available to you during your home search, how would that have been helpful?
1. Overall, how satisfied are you with the ways that exist for searching for homes online? Please explain your response. Overall, pretty happy. If there was a new techy advancement to the process, I'd probably be very interested though!

Dan's Responses

Number one generally we would pick out some things that we liked whether it was price or location or proximity to stuff and then we would come up with an area to look for and then we would go to the various tools and type in that area and then get some alerts when house is going to Market or something like that or apartments we generally don't use the tools for anything until I can look around because they're pretty bad like their walkability scores are wrong and stuff like that. then since you can't actually rent anything on that any of those web sites or or buy anything on those websites we would probably just contact the ones that we found and then see if there is availability is directly with their offices or something and then if there are any in the area that we didn't know about we would ask them about them as well and maybe that leads to something that we didn't even find ourselves and then we'll buy through them.

Number two how often do we spend usually I don't know 5 to 5 minutes to half an hour on each one particular neither none of them any more or less than the others just whatever for fun

Number four what causes you to stop looking for a site usually they all have about the same features so it's not a big deal but Redfin I think is the one that shows the recently sold prices other websites don't show the prices that things were recently sold for so that's nice that helps us get actual data as opposed to just like what the listing price was

5 redfin shows u actual sales prices which is great. I think they all have alerts when a new property comes on the market. But these are not that great for finding houses to buy because you have to go through the realtor and MLS anyway. And they are usually out of date. So I use it for historical or research reasons.

6 out of date, late to show new updates on what is actually available right now.

7 generally I know the area already (that's why I'm looking to rent or buy there!) So I just really care about exact address, price, and features about the property itself.

11 I think Craigslist and trulia is the only site that I actually rented as a direct result.

14 just a simple way to find what things are for rent/sale and what the features are of that property. Actually accurate data would be nice too. alerts upon that accurate data would be very nice too, for when new listings are added. The map overlay of the properties is nice because otherwise you have to look up the address location of each listing. If the alerts could be actionable, like integrated with my realtor or a direct contact on the website would be nice.

15 I am not really satisfied with them. Due to the MLS monopoly, realtors are required to set up a custom search for me instead of allowing me to do it myself. Also the data available outside of the MLS is not accurate so its just used for 'dreaming' (looking around, daydreaming about cool houses, etc.). connecting buyers and

sellers directly would be nice, there is no real need for a realtor except that they are the only ones with the information that we need.

Mindy's Responses

1. Tell me a bit about the process you typically go through when you are searching online for a new place to live. **Search Zillow (Not the app, just go to the website through chrome browser) based on zip codes most often on my cell phone (iphone). Hire a realtor when we are ready to begin looking and possibly purchasing.**
2. How often do you visit each of the following: Zillow, Redfin, and Realtor.com? **Zillow - several times a day, Redfin - rarely but my husband searches on here a few times a day in addition to zillow app. Realtor.com - also rarely but my father sends me houses from this site every few days**
3. If you had to guess, how much time do you spend on each site each time you visit? **Depends on if new active listings become available or not. Zillow - If a new house for sale is listed in the areas we are considering, 2-5 minutes per new listing. If no new houses are listed then 1 minute simply letting the page load and scrolling through for any price drops on old listings.**
4. What causes you to stop using a site or switch over to a different one? (I.e., I run out of properties to look at, the site doesn't work the way I want it to, etc). Please explain. **I will check other sites if something is sent to me from that site from my husband or father, otherwise I stick to Zillow due to easy user interface. (My minimal experience when searching Realtor.com there are soo many ads :/)**
5. Are there any features that stick out to you about Zillow, Redfin, or Realtor.com as being particularly helpful or that you appreciated while you were using the tool? **Zillow - I like how they list open house dates and times and any price drops in the top left corner of each property on the search page so it is quick and easy viewing when scrolling through.**
6. How about anything that you found annoying or frustrating? **Zillow - don't love having to click to load more information, esp when having to look for school districts. Sometimes the site doesn't load at all.**
7. What search criteria is important to you when looking online for a new place to live? (I.e., Do you need properties to be pet friendly, do you need a yard, information about the neighborhood, location, budget, etc?) **School district, Price, # of bedrooms/bath, Square footage, price per square footage, Location, being able to see photos of the inside of the property. Not essential but nice: pool and garage.**
8. Please explain why these are important to you. **These factors impact whether we decide to go see the property in person or not.**

9. Once you have found a property you are interested in, what usually happens next? What are the next steps you take? Has it been clear what you needed to do in order to move forward in the process? **If there is an open house in the near future we may check it out if we have time, if no open house soon or if we don't have time, we ask our realtor to schedule a showing for us. Yes it has been clear.**
10. Please explain. **Working with a realtor helps clarify the process immensely as well as expedite the process of seeing any properties we are interested in.**
11. Did you end up actually renting or buying any of the properties you found on any of the sites? If so, which one? **Not yet, still in the process of searching.**
12. Why or why not? **Haven't yet found what we are looking for/wanting/needing.**
13. Which online site/tool was your favorite to use? Why is that? Please be as specific as you can! **Zillow because of reasons stated above. Also like the map feature where you can easily see properties for sale in the areas and the price at a quick glance / also able to zoom in and out.**
14. Describe what your ideal home search process looks like including anything that you wish was available to you when you were looking for a new place to live. **Tax rate being listed. Being able to know how soon/what days and times the property is available for showings (ex. if there are tenants there or not, if an appt is required and if so, how far in advance the appt needs to be made)**
15. If you wished for anything additional to be available to you during your home search, how would that have been helpful? **Knowing the information outlined in 14 would help us decide whether we are interested in the property sooner (without us having to do the tax rate research). We would also be able to better plan in advance our schedules if we have more information on the availability of showings, which is extremely helpful information to have when having a toddler.**
16. Overall, how satisfied are you with the ways that exist for searching for homes online? Please explain your response. **Very satisfied. I do still feel that having a realtor makes the process less stressful and run more smoothly and allows for quicker access to showings of the properties (although I have not used the contact agent features on the online sites so I do not know how seamless that process is vs. having your own realtor), but having the online access to listings allows home buyers to be more proactive in their/our search efforts rather than solely relying on the realtor and the filters applied to the MLS for us. Online sites allows for us to expand our search and possibly find a house that a realtor may not have thought we would consider. We are also in the process of selling our house so the online sites allow for us to help us better understand the market supply and demand in our area.**