

RESO Style Guide

This guide is meant for all content and products produced by RESO staff and volunteers. Suggestions and questions can be directed to RESO Head of Communications, Greg Sax, at gsax@reso.org.

Spelling

Merriam-Webster is used for most word treatment. Where Merriam-Webster does not offer an opinion, Internet research and Wikipedia are used.

Style

RESO follows the rules of the Chicago Manual of Style, but other respected style and grammar guides are consulted regularly, such as the AP Style Guide and Grammarly.

For sentence structure, the shortest way to say something is best. Words like “the,” “very” and prepositional phrases are easy to remove without ruining meaning.

Links

Bold links, not underlined.

Spacing

The APA, Chicago Manual of Style, AP, Microsoft Word and HTML require one space after a period. This has been the norm for several decades since the advent of word processing.

Oxford Comma

Serial lists do not need an Oxford comma unless there is an “and” or “or” within the series:

“tigers, lions and bears in the zoo”

“tigers and lions in one zoo, bears and wolves in another zoo, and hawks and eagles in a third zoo”

Due to the ongoing debate about this comma, there is no harm in including it, and many of RESO’s technical documents use the Oxford comma as a matter of choice by the authors. But for most RESO output, the more modern approach of no comma is in use.

More Than vs. Over

This has historically been another hotly debated topic, but English usage has made both forms common. Thus, “more than” and “over” are now interchangeable to describe something that is above a certain number (e.g., more than 10,000 people, over \$30,000).

Title Case

Use Title Case in all titles, including blog posts and news releases. Capitalize all words in titles of publications and documents, except a, an, the, at, by, for, from, in, of, on, to, and, as, with, or and nor. RESO uses the **Title Case Converter** with the CMS style turned on if there is ever any doubt.

For Example and That Is

There are specific rules for the use of e.g. and i.e. While it is not always necessary to offset e.g. and i.e. in parentheses, it is a good practice, especially in the context of where we use it the most, which is in the Data Dictionary.

For example (e.g.): “...(e.g., tigers, lions and bears).” No need for etc. in e.g. items.

That is (i.e.): “...(i.e., tigers, lions, bears, etc.).” You can use etc. for i.e. items.

Quotation Marks

In general, periods and commas go inside quotation marks; question marks go outside of them.

Most words and phrases don't belong in quotations; people tend to overuse “quoted” content. Use bold or italics for emphasis instead.

RED-B

RED-B is the designation for the course known as Working with Real Estate Data – Business. Note the lowercase “with” and en-dash followed by pairing it with the designation name of RED-B, as in **Working with Real Estate Data – Business (RED-B)**.

RESO Logos

Logos are available in vertical and horizontal orientations, as well as in five colors (black, blue, gray, white and RED-B red). | [SEE ALL RESO LOGOS](#)

RESO Web API

The RESO Web API should have a space between “Web” and “API.” Never WebAPI, WEBAPI or WEB API.

Time

For time zones, use ET for Eastern Time and PT for Pacific Time. We tend to not list CT (Central Time) or MT (Mountain Time). Times should lead with the ET, because the larger number comes first. There is no penalty for using EST for Eastern Standard Time or PDT for Pacific Daylight Time, but the additional detail is superfluous.

Times should be followed by lowercase am or pm with no periods.

Hyphens, En-Dashes and Em-Dashes

Hyphens are used only for hyphenated words. En-dashes are used between numbers. The em-dash (—) is still widely used in book publishing to give a longer pause than a comma in sentence structure, but the concept of space, en-dash (–), space has become acceptable in online publishing for better paragraph breaks. RESO uses this newer standard.

Don't overuse hyphens. Pre-, un-, re-, non- and other prefixes are almost always not hyphenated.

Web3

Sometimes this is stylized as Web 3.0, Web 3 or WEB3. At RESO, we use Web3, per Wikipedia preference.

Data Dictionary

Data fields are explained in the [Data Dictionary Terms and Meta Definitions](#) on the wiki.

Standard Names

Shown as StandardName in the official Data Dictionary spreadsheet, standard names are created in PascalCase. Some items created in the past did not religiously follow this convention, and will be considered for updating over time.

Display Names

Presented as DisplayName in the official Data Dictionary spreadsheet, display names are given in Title Case with smaller words like of, on, the, and, etc. presented in lowercase per common style guide rules (e.g., Days on Market; Member County or Parish).

Definition Style

Data Dictionary definitions begin with a capital letter as a sentence fragment that closes in a period. This is a stylistic choice that has been in place for as long as the Data Dictionary has existed, and it's meant to define items quickly. (Even Merriam-Webster uses incomplete sentences in its definitions.)

Definitions should be statements, not questions.

Capitalization

Lowercase common nouns unless referencing a specific field name, pick list or otherwise.

Lowercase “resource,” “field” and “lookup” when not used in a Title Case capacity.

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMS) treats genus and species, vernacular names of plants and animals, geological terms, medical terms and physical/chemical laws/principles with a capitalized first word and lowercase second word, such as *Populus tremuloides*, Canada thistle, English setter, Tertiary period, Hodgkin’s disease, Avogadro’s theorem.

For the naming conventions of Data Dictionary resources, fields and lookups, we will stick close to this style, except for resources (e.g., OpenHouse Resource, RoomDescription field, HotWater lookup). Less capitalization is generally preferred, but resources have been deemed rare enough to warrant proper noun treatment.

When an item appears in the Data Dictionary Wiki itself as a header, the three examples above would appear in their Display Name value as Open House Resource, Room Description Field and Hot Water Lookup.

Avoid ALL CAPS in the midst of a sentence. Sometimes it's used at the end of a paragraph for a link separated by space-pipe-space.

Don't capitalize common nouns. The real estate industry, in particular, tends to do this. It is common to see broker, agent, association and other common nouns incorrectly capitalized.

Jargon and Acronyms

Do not assume prior knowledge of terms with jargon and acronyms (or initialisms). Spell out acronyms in their first usage in the definition. Definitions should be written as though talking to someone not already embedded deep within the real estate industry.

NAR and REALTORS®

National Association of REALTORS® standards require the use of the registered trademark symbol for REALTORS® unless an organization elects to NOT use it, like the Charlotte Regional Realtor® Association and Realtors Property Resource®, two of the few organizations that prefer Title Case to ALL CAPS.

It should always be the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), not N.A.R. or any other variation on the full name. Always spell out its use the first time with the acronym in parentheses, then it is acceptable to use the parenthetical version as an acronym.

Inches and Feet

The inches (") and feet (') symbols must be adjacent to the number, which puts the period at the very end (e.g., 4" × 5"). Note that the symbol for inches is supposed to be the double prime symbol (") and that feet should be the single prime symbol ('), but these symbols are not common on most keyboards and data systems may not recognize them. Thus, whatever works is acceptable.

Data Dictionary Spreadsheet

Arial 10 pt aligned vertically to the top with the first row frozen provides good readability. Additionally, some members are using the spreadsheet as a learning and building tool (e.g., RESO staff, Data Dictionary Wiki builders).

Specific Word Examples (with shorthand explanation)

A good style guide covers a single usage style for words that are often written in multiple ways. "Consistency is king." – Rob Larson, Data Dictionary Workgroup Chair

aka: allowed without periods

automated email: not auto email or automatic email

backend: one word, no hyphen

backup: one word, no hyphen

backyard: one word, no hyphen

bathhtub: one word

beachfront: one word

biweekly: one word, no hyphen
bimonthly: one word, no hyphen
Boolean: capitalized, not boolean
built-in: hyphenated
cancel: on its own, not a difficult word to spell, but past tense canceled is preferred to cancelled
cancellation: double-l
carport: one word, no hyphen
catchment: tricky spelling
cedarwood: one word
chatbot: one word
chain-link fence: hyphenated because chain-link is an adjective in this situation
co-buyer: one word, hyphenated
cooktop: one word, no hyphen
co-op: short for cooperative; hyphenated
cooperative: one word, no hyphen
cotenant: one word, no hyphen
crawl space: two words
data set: two words
double-wide: hyphenated
down payment: two words according to Merriam-Webster; some outlets may use one word, no hyphen, but RESO has elected to go with M-W in this situation, matching Investopedia, NerdWallet and SmartAsset
downtime: one word, no hyphen
drop-down: dropdown is also acceptable
end user: two words, no hyphen
ENERGY STAR: ALL CAPS
Ethernet: capitalized by both Merriam-Webster and [Wikipedia](#)
fixer-upper: one word, hyphenated
floor plan: two words
freestanding: one word
French Canadian: two words, unhyphenated (as noun)
French-Canadian: one word, hyphenated (as adjective)
front end: two words (unlike backend)
front-end: hyphenated as an adjective
geospatial: one word, no hyphen
giveaway: one word
gray water: two words; grey water and greywater are also acceptable
handheld: one word, no hyphen
hands-free: one word, hyphenated
home buyer: two words, no hyphen
homeowner: one word, no hyphen
homeowner association: homeowner as one word; phrase as not possessive but singular
Internet: capitalized
lakefront: one word, no hyphen

livestock: one word, no hyphen
lockbox: one word; *Supra uses this style as well*
log on and log in / **log-on and log-in**: two words as a verb; hyphenated as a noun
long-term: one word, hyphenated
longtime: one word, no hyphen
mini storage: two words
multifamily: one word, no hyphen
multiunit: one word, no hyphen
multi-select: one word, hyphenated
multistory: one word, no hyphen
nondescript(ive): one word, no hyphen, as are most words prefixed with “non”
nongovernment: one word, no hyphen
nonmember: one word, no hyphen
nonstandard: one word, no hyphen (you get it by now; non- words are not hyphenated)
nonrepresentative: one word, no hyphen
oceanfront: one word, no hyphen
OData: should be presented as such, not ODATA or odata; correct PascalCase, however, is Odata
off market: two words, no hyphen unless being used as an adjective (e.g. off-market listing)
off-site: one word, hyphenated
online: one word, no hyphen
on market: two words, no hyphen unless being used as an adjective (e.g., on-market listing)
on-site: one word, hyphenated
opt out: two words (same for opted out)
overestimate: one word
partway: one word
pick list: two words; picklist is not officially a recognized word
postconsumer: one word, no hyphen, as are most words prefixed with “post”
presale: one word, no hyphen, as are most words prefixed with “pre”
proptech: short for property technology; an evolving term, but lowercase is preferred to other iterations
rainwater: one word, no hyphen
reactive: one word
refer: referred and referring, two r’s in the middle
riverfront: one word
row house: two words
runoff: one word, no hyphen
salesperson: one word
saltwater: one word, no hyphen
seawall: one word
showerhead: one word, no hyphen
single-family home: “single-family” is an adjective in this situation and should be hyphenated
single-family residential: “single-family” is an adjective in this situation and should be hyphenated
stand-alone: hyphenated
stormwater: one word, no hyphen

subagency: one word, no hyphen

subtype: should be one word; larger DD implications

sunroom: one word, no hyphen

timeframe: commonly two words, but one word is acceptable and preferred at RESO

time-share: hyphenated by Merriam-Webster; one word, no hyphen by Wikipedia; RESO tries to use less punctuation whenever possible so uses the unhyphenated option

time zone: two words

trilevel: one word, no hyphen

turfgrass: one word

twin home: two words

underestimate: one word, no hyphen, as is the case with most words prefixed by “under”

up-front: one word, hyphenated

uppermost: one word, no hyphen

U.S.: short for United States; do not use US without periods

voice mail: two words

walk-through: one word, hyphenated

watercraft: one word, no hyphen

watertight: one word, no hyphen

webhooks: one word, no hyphen

website: one word, lowercase

wheelchair: one word, no hyphen

Wi-Fi: hyphenated, capitalized

woodstove: one word, no hyphen

wraparound: one word, no hyphen

year-round: one word, hyphenated

Other Wikipedia Helpers

Common-Interest Development (hyphenated adjective)

Manufactured Homes Glossary of Industry Terms (expando may no longer be offered; it's just quad, not quad-wide)

Acronyms of Note (spell them out for first usage in a definition)

Assessor's Parcel Number (APN)

Association of REALTORS® (AOR)

Coordinated Universal Time (UTC)

Home Energy Rating System (HERS)

National Association of REALTORS® (NAR)

National Green Building Standard (NGBS)

Short Message Service (SMS)

U.S. Postal Service (USPS)

Uniform Resource Identifier (URI)

Uniform Resource Locator (URL)

Unique Organization Identifier (UOI)

For other rules on hyphens, fractions and numbers, please visit [Hyphens, Fractions, Numbers](#).

PascalCase Inconsistency

Unfortunately, PascalCase inconsistencies in StandardName and LegacyODataValue are widespread.

Examples: MemberAORMIsId, MemberAORkey and MemberAORkeyNumeric.

We should try to erase discrepancies over time. Memorizing discrepancy is a bad way to do business. At the very least, we should publicly document where there is variation from the norm. The [Data Dictionary Policies and Procedures](#) document makes note of the discrepancies and the long-term desire to match them to the standard.

See below for specific items which are **noted but remain unchanged**.

AOR (e.g., BuyerOfficeAOR, MemberAORMIsId; should be Aor, like MIs and Id)

ASAP (should be Asap)

Country LookupValues (perhaps we should consider making an exception for 2-letter abbreviations)

DailySchedule LookupValues (MondayPm, not MondayPM, unless we except 2-letter abbreviations))

DMQL2 (should be Dmql2)

DOH1, DOH2, DOH3 (should be Doh1, Doh2, Doh3)

ePRO (odd as it may be, this would be Epro in PascalCase)

FHA203b, FHA203k (should be Fha203b, Fha203k) – **FIXED!**

HTML (Should be Html, as in MediaHtml)

ID (interchangeable between ID and Id throughout the dictionary; we should attempt to be more consistent.

[Microsoft has rules about 2-digit abbreviations being ALL CAPS.](#))

IDX (should be Idx)

MLS (these are MIs throughout the dictionary)

NARsGreenDesignation (should be NarGreenDesignation; no need for plural on Nars)

REBR (should be Rebr)

StateOrProvince LookupValues (should be Ca, not CA; On, not ON, unless 2 letters are excepted)

StreetDirection LookupValues (should be Sw, not SW, unless 2 letters are excepted)

TTYTDD (TtyTdd)

URL (e.g., CoBuyerAgentURL, MediaURL; should be Url to match MIs)

USDA (should be Usda)

YN (it is understandable why this is not Yn)

Hyphenated words are treated as two words, which is fine if we're consistent (e.g., CoBuyer, Co-Buyer; EPro, e-PRO® [notice how the hyphen affects this one]; but CoBuyerAgentURL should be CoBuyerAgentUrl and CoBuyerOfficeAOR should be CoBuyerOfficeAor).

PascalCase That Looks Odd But Is Actually Correct

Hvac

Javascript

Mls

Stumbleupon – **This was shut down in 2018 and can be removed from the DD**

Youtube

PascalCase Within DisplayNames

ObjectIDType lookups retain PascalCase for LookupDisplayName

Unique Organization Identifier (UOI)

RESO's Unique Organization Identifier (UOI) provides a singular ID for a growing list of individual organizations within the real estate industry.

Current organization types being tracked are as follows:

- Broker
- Commercial
- MLS
- Pooled Platform
- Technology Company
- Local Association
- State or Provincial Association
- National Association

Many associations are tax-exempt, nonprofit organizations and operate Multiple Listing Services (MLSs) as wholly-owned subsidiaries that often have the same name, physical address and staff.

The UOI lists these entities separately with different IDs and describes the connections with a field called AssnToMls (meaning the connection between an association and an MLS).

This field may receive a name change in the future, because it does not describe all possible connections. For example, Zillow is a broker and a technology company. It can be argued that several MLSs operate as technology companies as well. But for now, knowing which local associations use which MLSs has been valuable to the industry.

Currently, ID numbers are nine digits long and usually begin with the letter of their organization type, except for Pooled Platform, which begins with T or M, and for all association types, which begin with A.

There is a proposal to change to a completely numeric, six-digit ID that needs to be further vetted by RESO workgroups.

Organization Names

- REALTORS[®] is generally capitalized and includes the registered trademark symbol per NAR guidelines
- Commonly used acronyms are included in organization names. Examples:
 - MLS Property Information Network (MLS PIN)
 - Midwest Real Estate Data (MRED)
 - California Regional Multiple Listing Service (CRMLS)
 - Arizona Regional Multiple Listing Service (ARMLS)
 - Regional Multiple Listing Service (RMLS)
- Business-related extras like Inc., LLC and dba are generally not used in organization names. These extras are not frequently used in outward marketing, like on websites, and they are not used consistently. They appear as comma Inc, Inc with a period, Inc without a period, INC capitalized, etc, creating unnecessary inconsistency. These business distinctions are, however, collected in a RESO local field called OrganizationNameLegal.
- RESO-specific organization names are established to create consistency and to maximize searchability for association-owned MLSs with different brand names and to decrease confusion between same-named MLSs. Some examples are provided below.

Base Organization Name

1. CLASSIC MLS
2. Dothan Multiple Listing Service
3. Mountain Home MLS
4. Real Estate Information Services
5. Southern New Mexico MLS
6. Southwest MLS
7. West Central Association of REALTORS[®]
8. West Central Association of REALTORS[®]
9. West Central Association of REALTORS[®]
10. Washington County Board of REALTORS[®]
11. Washington County Board of REALTORS[®]

Enhanced RESO Organization Name

1. CLASSIC MLS (Athens Area Association of REALTORS[®])
2. Dothan Multiple Listing Service (Southeast Alabama Association of REALTORS[®])
3. Mountain Home MLS (North Central Board of REALTORS[®])
4. Real Estate Information Services (REALTOR[®] Association of Southern Kentucky)
5. Southern New Mexico MLS (Las Cruces Association of REALTORS[®])
6. Southwest MLS (Greater Albuquerque Association of REALTORS[®])
7. West Central Association of REALTORS[®] (OH)
8. West Central Association of REALTORS[®] (MI)
9. West Central Association of REALTORS[®] (MO)
10. Washington County Board of REALTORS[®] (IN)

11. Washington County Board of REALTORS® (UT)

Addresses

The UOI adheres to USPS address style for street addresses with no periods, including the following:

- St for Street
- Ave for Avenue
- Blvd for Boulevard
- Pkwy for Parkway
- Cir for Circle
- Pl for Place
- Ste for Suite (always following a comma and a space)
- Directional instructions as letters: N, S, W, E, NW, SW, NE, SE

Latitude/Longitude

The RESO Certification Map works with the UOI to fill in placemarks, so addresses are kept current and geocoordinated. Sources for mapping: [Latitude and Longitude Finder](#) and [GPS Coordinates](#).

Map Notes

- For companies that share the same address, RESO moves the latitude/longitude slightly to avoid overlap.
- If there is not a physical address, RESO picks one in the geographic area and makes a note of it.
- If multiple associations are managed out of the same address but that address is of a larger entity, like a state association, RESO records the latitude and longitude in the area in which the association/MLS serves.

At some point, RESO will go through the addresses for the above map notes and ensure that dots are present and do not overlap for MLSs.