Timeline: The Evolution of MLS Data Licensing

From Print to 2026

Saul Klein | October 30, 2026

Introduction

I have been an advocate of Data Rights Management for decades. This timeline traces the steps that brought us here, from printed MLS books to licensed data. The pattern in those steps is the reason.

Thirty years of digital MLS data licensing tell one story. Each time the industry left the terms of its data unwritten, someone else wrote them: a portal, a distributor, a court or a regulator. Display contracts written in 1995 were later asked to govern uses no one had imagined. A collective effort, REDPLAN, set terms it could not enforce. When Move bought Point2's U.S. syndication business in 2014, ListHub carried about 85 percent of residential listings, and its contracts became the industry's de facto licensing policy.

The real estate industry in North America must take on the mission of Data Rights Management, and its challenges, now. That means knowing who holds each right, granting only what we have received, and stating plainly what each recipient may do with the data.

The international real estate industry has the opportunity to learn from our mistakes. Together we can build the global real estate marketplace.

This timeline is a companion to The Evolution of MLS Data Licensing, which tells the full story. Each entry gives the date, the event and a short description. Where the sources give only a year or a season, so does the timeline.

From Print to Display: Before 1995 to 2007

Date	Event	Description
Before 1995	MLS books in print	Before widespread digitization, MLS listing and property data was printed and distributed to Participants and Subscribers in binders. Associations required every listing to be submitted, and sold data stayed inside the cooperative.
Jan 1995 to Sep 1998	REALTOR.com brings MLS listings to the public web	NAR's REALTORS Information Network persuades MLSs to display a subset of listing data as low-cost online classified advertising. Saul Klein manages the MLS data contracts that move roughly 500,000 listings. The contracts are written for display.
1995 to 2008	InternetCrusade evangelizes the Internet	Klein and his partners, as InternetCrusade, bring the real estate industry onto the Internet. Klein writes e-PRO, NAR's course of instruction to bring real estate professionals into the digital age.
1996	Point2 opens its doors	Point2 begins in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, in another industry, heavy equipment.
Mar 25, 1998	NAR reviews Microsoft's proposed MLS agreement	NAR General Counsel Laurene Janik's letter to Dale Ross of MRIS raises extraction of data, derivative use and payment for inquiries. Commercial questions were visible a decade before the industry named them.

Date	Event	Description
2000	Point2 enters real estate	Point2 begins its move into real estate.
May 2000	NAR adopts the IDX policy	Brokers may display one another's listings on their own websites. Affiliated MLSs must implement IDX by January 1, 2002.
2001 to 2002	Point2 begins Point2 Agent	Research begins in the spring of 2001 and development in 2002 on a product to help agents market homes, modeled on Point2's heavy equipment listing system.
Jul 28, 2002	Klein and Reilly draft the IDX and VOW article	They argue consumers are entitled only to what brokers choose to provide, and anticipate a national licensed aggregator much like the portals that followed.
2003	Point2 Agent launches	Point2 introduces Point2 Agent to the market.
Feb 28, 2003	Cendant warns against VOW misuse	Cendant's white paper urges broker opt-outs and a ban on referral-fee VOWs, framing the derivative-use problem in 2003 language.
May 17, 2003	NAR adopts its VOW Policy	The policy governs Internet delivery of brokerage services through Virtual Office Websites, with broker opt-outs.
2004	Point2 begins syndicating listings	Point2 starts syndicating its members' listings to consumer marketplaces.
May 2005	Listing broker ownership and consent	NAR policy provides that the listing broker owns the listing agreement and that MLS uses beyond the defined purposes of MLS require the Participant's consent.
Sep 8, 2005	VOW Policy repealed; DOJ sues NAR	NAR replaces the VOW Policy with the Internet Listings Display Policy. The Department of Justice files suit the same day.
Dec 2006	ListHub's first installation	ListHub, the first product to automate syndication for MLSs, goes live at Consolidated MLS in Columbia, South Carolina.
2007	Point2 NLS is born	Point2 launches NLS, an online marketing and management platform for agents, brokers and MLSs, with syndication built in.
2007	Data Rights Management defined	Klein defines Data Rights Management as any technology that inhibits uses of digital content not desired or intended by the content provider, and calls it the next phase of the syndication saga.
Apr 2007	Point2 offers NLS to boards and associations	Point2 proposes free NLS accounts for every member of a board, with listing data imported from the board. Members choose destinations by checkbox, so the board need not impose a global opt-in or opt-out policy. Boards earn a 25 percent residual on member upgrades.
Jun 15, 2007	Point2's white paper on DOJ v. NAR	Jason Golding argues the listing is a marketing asset owned by the listing broker and warns that the DOJ's requested relief could make it a public asset. He offers Point2 NLS as a third way: broker choice of destinations, tracking and reports.

Data Consciousness and Syndication: 2008 to 2012



January 2008, Times Square, New York. The PR Newswire and Reuters screens announce that Point2 Technologies has named Saul Klein Chief Executive Officer.

Date	Event	Description
Around 2008	Data Consciousness emerges	Systematic attention to permissions, controlling records, downstream use and economic return becomes visible across the industry, though practice remains uneven.
Jan 1, 2008	Klein becomes CEO of Point2	Klein is hired to lead a turnaround and refocuses the company on listing syndication and listing rights management, taking on the consumption, normalization and distribution of MLS data for MLSs throughout the U.S. and Canada. The announcement runs on the PR Newswire and Reuters screens in Times Square.
Jan 2008	Point2 launches Enterprise	Point2 begins partnering with MLSs and associations on the controlled delivery of listings, with controls that let members direct where their data goes. By October 2011 the program counts 180 MLSs and associations, about 300,000 REALTORS and more than one million listings.
2008	Walt Baczkowski consults for Point2	Klein brings Walt Baczkowski in as a consultant, and he joins Point2's board early in the year.
2008	Point2 NLS at scale	Point2 has 178,000 members in 90 countries and 29 syndication partners. Members choose destinations listing by listing and partner by partner, and receive reports for each partner.
Jan 2008 to Aug 2009	Point2 becomes the second largest syndicator	Point2 grows to second in North America behind ListHub, distributing to Zillow, Trulia and other portals.
Mar 24, 2008	Larson and Sobotka examine syndication	Their paper sets out the benefits, costs and risks of licensing MLS data for consumer advertising.

Date	Event	Description
May 27, 2008	NAR settles with the DOJ	The settlement comes six weeks before trial. The Final Judgment of November 18, 2008 imposes the Modified VOW Policy for ten years.
Aug 1, 2008	MLS 5.0: The MLS of the Future	Klein proposes one point of entry, broker-selected destinations, reporting and leads returned to the listing agent without charge.
Jan 2009	Walt Baczkowski joins Point2	Klein hires Walt Baczkowski as Vice President of Sales and Marketing.
Feb to Jun 2009	Point2 launches its MLS Partner Strategy	Point2 offers MLSs free syndication of every listing on an opt-out basis, in return for tacit endorsement of Point2 Agent and a small revenue share. Agents see results on a free dashboard that invites a paid upgrade. ListHub's MLS contracts are mostly opt-in.
2009	Point2 serves its first Opt Out MLS	Point2 normalizes MLS data and images for Realcomp in Michigan, headed by Karen Kage. Realcomp is Point2's first Opt Out MLS.
2009	Texas Association of REALTORS selects Point2	Point2 begins aggregating every Texas MLS feed into one normalized database for TexasRealEstate.com, reaching 44 of 62 feeds by October 2011.
Jan 2010	Gregg Larson joins Point2's board	The Clareity founder who later leads REDPLAN joins Point2's board to help carry its MLS relationships.
Apr 2010	CMLS documents commercial data programs	New Ways to Leverage MLS Data, prepared by WAV Group, compares programs already licensing MLS data for commercial and derivative uses.
Jun 10, 2010	Point2 prepares for sale	Point2 has about 100 MLS partners, 650,000 listings and 40 syndication partners, and aims to become the authoritative source of MLS Certified listings. Yardi buys Point2 four months later.
Sep 20, 2010	Move acquires ListHub	The leading syndicator joins the same corporate group as Realtor.com.
Oct 1, 2010	Yardi acquires Point2	Point2 continues its syndication business as a division of Yardi Systems.
Oct 2010	Point2's syndication network more than doubles	127 MLSs now syndicate through Point2, with 716,735 listings and 163,438 members, up from 55 MLSs a year earlier. Clicks delivered to MLS members rise from 1.9 million to 4.9 million a month. CRMLS signs on October 13, and Move's purchase of ListHub raises concern about what Move will do with the MLS data it holds.
Around 2011	Contract Alignment begins at Point2	Klein recognizes that Point2's MLS supply agreements imposed few limits on what it could do with the data. Each link in the chain should grant downstream only what it received upstream.
Oct 2011	Point2 answers CREA's DDF request	Point2 proposes a national Data Distribution Facility for CREA built on its Listing Rights Management service, with defaults, opt-in channel selection, notifications, lead and reporting APIs and a full audit trail, priced per listing. CREA selects Point2, which builds CREA's first DDF.
Jan 2012	Sandicor's advertising-remarks field	San Diego's MLS adds a syndication-only remarks field that carries agent contact and open-house information for publishers to preserve.

Date	Event	Description
Jun 15, 2012	Syndication: Is It Rocket Science?	In Dallas Klein tells brokers their listing information is an asset, contrasts ListHub's opt-in model with Point2's opt-out model for MLSs, and outlines tiered data packages for monetization.
Jul 2012	Waring maps listing flow	Malcolm Waring maps the distribution web from inside one local MLS, the Pocono Mountains Association of REALTORS® in Pennsylvania.
Sep 2012	Point2 master recipient agreement	Point2's restrictive agreement for listing recipients takes shape, including an Authoritative Source clause.
Fall 2012	Two proposals at the CMLS conference	Point2 discloses its restrictive master agreement in October. At the same conference an ASCAP executive urges MLSs to protect their data collectively, the origin of REDPLAN.
Oct 30, 2012	Point2 tells publishers to play nice	Point2 tells publishers they must accept its fair use terms to keep receiving broker opt-out data, or lose the feed. The terms limit display to authorized sites and active listings, reserve ownership, require tracking and prominent branding, and bar lead resale.

Contract Alignment, REDPLAN and Consolidation: 2013 to 2015

Date	Event	Description
Jan 2013	Clareity's Syndication Bill of Rights	Clareity's review, The State of Syndication: 2013 and Beyond, catalogues portal practices and calls for firm identification, traffic reporting and consent for additional uses.
Mar 22, 2013	REDPLAN's founding charter	REDPLAN's organizers set a mission to protect MLS and broker IP, including practical policies for licensing and syndication.
Jul 9, 2013	REDPLAN holds its first board meeting	Incorporated in Delaware in June, REDPLAN meets in San Francisco before Inman Connect. Antitrust attorney Claude Szyfer sits on the founding board.
Sep 2013	Take Back Your Future	Klein connects portal economics to control of the consumer relationship and sets out the Protect, Control, Monetize framework.
Oct 2013	Contract Alignment and REDPLAN outreach	John Reilly briefs The Realty Alliance on Point2's Contract Alignment phase. On October 28 Klein forwards REDPLAN's webinar invitation to colleagues.
Feb 2014	Point2's new recipient agreement	Point2's new agreement spells out what listing sites may and may not do, including a ban on diverting buyer leads from listing brokers.
Mar 6, 2014	REDPLAN reaches 21 charter members	Seventeen MLSs and associations and four technology companies join. No national brokerage, franchisor or portal is among them.
Sep 4, 2014	Move acquires Point2's U.S. syndication	ListHub takes on 112 MLSs and carries about 85 percent of the residential market. One intermediary's terms become de facto licensing policy.
Oct 2014	UpstreamRE incorporated	Brokers form UpstreamRE in Delaware to control the entry of listing data.

Date	Event	Description
Jan 2015	Point2 exits; Zillow leaves ListHub	Point2's U.S. syndication service is discontinued. On January 6 Zillow announces it will not renew with ListHub, effective April 7.
Early 2015	REDPLAN's model content license	REDPLAN asks portals for agent attribution, traffic data and unbiased display, and concedes paid placement and valuations. REDPLAN's model license spreads into MLS agreements.
May 2015	NAR funds Upstream and AMP	NAR's Board approves $12 million for RPR to build both.
Jul 6, 2015	Broker Public Portal draft license	BPP's license makes licensed MLS data the controlling source and builds in fair display terms.
2015	CCRE and Bloomberg reports	CCRE's Data-Sharing Dilemmas examines ownership of the industry's data. Bloomberg's Facts About Figures shows how financial data is licensed for defined uses.
After 2015	REDPLAN fades	No dissolution is announced. The broker initiatives take up listing control and fair display directly.

Brokers, Standards and the Licensed Marketplace: 2016 to 2026

Date	Event	Description
2016	RESO standards become mandatory	REALTOR® association MLSs must implement the RESO Data Dictionary by January 1 and the RESO Web API by June 30.
May to Jul 2016	Broker Public Portal launches	BPP selects Homesnap as its technology partner. MRED in Chicagoland becomes the first MLS to launch it.
Jan 2017	National Broker Portal formed	Broker Public Portal LLC and Homesnap form an equally owned joint venture.
2018	NAR steps back	NAR suspends AMP on February 1. The VOW Final Judgment expires in November. In December NAR ends its role as Upstream's technology vendor after committing about $15 million.
May 2020	Participant listing content feed	On request, an MLS must provide a Participant a feed of its own listings at cost-based charges and may not limit the Participant's use of its own content.
Nov 2021	Brokerage Back Office feed	NAR's clearest purpose-specific license limits use to brokerage management, CRM, transaction and reporting tools.
Jul 14, 2022	REdistribute formed	Bright MLS and CRMLS launch a joint venture to license aggregated data for mortgage, insurance and valuation uses, sharing revenue with contributors.
Feb 13, 2024	ICE signs with REdistribute	Intercontinental Exchange announces a multiyear agreement for permissioned MLS data access.
Aug 17, 2024	NAR practice changes take effect	The commission settlement changes take effect, and the defined purposes of MLS are revised. A data-use restriction becomes an enforcement trigger.
Early 2025	SDMLS implements MLS Router	SDMLS links permission, delivery, records and billing in day-to-day data licensing operations.

Date	Event	Description
Nov 2025	NAR defines syndication	The new policy defines syndication as advertising and display, confirming what the original contracts intended.
2026	Handbook on Multiple Listing Policy, 36th edition	The current rulebook requires Participant consent for uses beyond the defined purposes of MLS, and that consent cannot be made a condition of participation.

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