

# What video production companies have to offer

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Inman News

Editor's note: In an increasingly competitive marketplace, brokers and agents are trying new things to gain an edge. In this four-part series, Inman News offers a look at new tools available for Realtors, including online communication plug-ins, online video and single-property Web site marketing. (Read [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#) and [Part 3](#).)

For those who aren't inclined to shoot their own real estate video footage, independent video production houses like TurnHere (see [Part 3](#)) have sprung up in cities around the country -- some that specialize in real estate.

Henrik Joreteg, the 24-year-old founder of Loma Linda, Calif.-based HouseFLIX, is just one example. HouseFLIX, which turned into a full-time job for Joreteg after he finished business school, offers to shoot, edit and host videos for \$99.

"When we first started, we were selling videos for \$250 each," Joreteg said. "We realized most agents are not willing to invest that in a listing. We figured out some efficiencies from doing a standardized video production, and are now able to do it for a more affordable price."

Although the company has fewer than 100 listings at the moment, it's a Realtor.com-approved vendor, allowing clients to link to listings on the official Web site of the National Association of Realtors. Joreteg said all the MLS providers in Southern California's Inland Empire region are able to incorporate links to virtual tours and video in their listings.

[Fred Light, the founder and owner of New Hampshire-based Nashua Video Tours](#), also strives to provide high production values at affordable prices.

"It's very time-consuming, and I've played around with the pricing," he said. "Realtors don't want to spend money. But I have some people that do it for all their listings. If it was a (mobile home) they'd do a video."

Like most [Videographers](#) who offer package deals, Light will help clients put their videos on their own Web sites, the local MLS or listing aggregators such as Realtor.com.

Prices range from \$129 to \$300, depending on the complexity, and whether features like music and narration are desired. Listing agents who

pay for Realtor.com's enhanced Showcase services can incorporate video into their listings on the site for free. Light charges an additional \$20 for those who don't.

"It helps sell the house, but it's also a good listing tool," Light said. "It's harder to have something different these days. Five years ago, if you had a Web site, you had a leg up on everybody. Now, they all have the same cards, the same Web sites."

"If you go into a listing presentation (with video), you're going to blow away the customer," Light said. Because most agents haven't yet jumped on the video bandwagon, "Nobody's going to come in and trump you."

Light, who is also a professional Web site designer, posts his clients' videos to six free host sites -- places with familiar names like YouTube, Google Video, Grouper, Veoh, BlipTV and [WellcomeMat](#). Whether anybody ever watches the videos doesn't matter. They're a cheap and effective search-engine-optimization tool, Light said.

"I don't think anybody's looking (on YouTube) for real estate, but the links back to your Web site boost your rankings," he said. "It's kind of like blogs. The blog thing is taking hold because they show up in search engines."

Light says he's got all the business he can handle at the moment, and offers a wealth of advice to real estate agents who'd like to shoot their own video through his blog on the ActiveRain Real Estate Network.

Some of his tips, as outlined in Part 1 and Part 2 of a series on shooting real estate video: use a wide angle lens, and avoid zooming. Use a tripod and make slow pans, and a monopod to get shots from unusual heights. Avoid direct sunlight streaming through windows. Use a high-quality microphone. Take lots of footage (Light makes three passes through each house he shoots), and put the best shots in the beginning of the edited video.

#### Video on Realtor.com

Many multiple listing services and listings aggregators that offer virtual tours, such as Realtor.com, already allow listing agents to provide links to videos instead. The videos are hosted by approved virtual tour vendors in Realtor.com's Picture Path network.

But sometime in the next few months, Realtor.com plans to roll out a new feature that will let listing agents upload video directly to the site, said

Joe Detuno, senior vice president of product development at parent company Move Inc.

"Some Realtors have already started using video using the Picture Path technology, which allows a URL to be uploaded to the site," Detuno said. "We intend to have that be much more accessible from the consumer standpoint, so video is much more prominent on Realtor.com and in the listings."

As it stands now, listing agents must choose between virtual tours or video at Realtor.com and other sites. But once the new video upload capabilities are in place, listing agents will be able to use still photos, virtual tours and video in the same listing, Detuno said.

As was the case when virtual tours were first introduced, direct video uploads will at first be available only to subscribers to Realtor.com's Showcase listing enhancements, Detuno said.

Although video is "still in its infancy," Detuno said he foresees the day when Realtors use all three visual aids -- still photos, virtual tools and video -- in their listings.

"I don't see video replacing virtual tours and pictures, I see it augmenting them," Detuno said. While more homes have the broadband Internet connections needed to view Web video than ever before, listings sites still serve mobile devices and other users without video capabilities.

WellcomeMat.com co-founder Christian Sterner took the site live in July to help real estate professionals and local businesses create and distribute Web video.

Although the site features some YouTube-like features -- users can upload videos in multiple formats, create a "channel" featuring all of their videos, and use links to embed a video player into virtually any Web site -- WellcomeMat offers additional options tailored for real estate pros.

Like TurnHere, WellcomeMat will connect clients with [professional videographers](#), although it's up to the client and shooter to negotiate the fees for their services.

WellcomeMat will accept digital uploads or videotapes, and offers five video players designed to work in many different situations. Sterner said ad-supported Web video host sites like YouTube must compress videos "within an inch of their lives," in order to stream millions of videos a day, and that image quality suffers as a result.

WellcomeMat corrects the settings of the video its clients upload, and transcodes and compresses the images with the goal of preserving image quality, Sterner said.

Move Inc.'s Detuno said picture quality will also be a selling point for Realtor.com when it launches a service in the next few months allowing listing agents to upload video directly to the site.

One WellcomeMat feature Light likes is the ability to carve video up into segments.

If virtual tours have an advantage over video, some say, it's that they give viewers the ability to pick and choose which areas of the house they want to see. With video, prospective buyers may have to sit patiently through a two- to five-minute video before seeing what they're interested in. WellcomeMat has a chaptering tool that lets agents highlight scenes they want buyers to see -- such as a particular room or features -- while allowing buyers more control over the process.

WellcomeMat plans to add the ability to allow agents to automate the process of adding videos to listings on Realtor.com. For now, agents with "Showcase" privileges at Realtor.com can provide a link to their WellcomeMat videos using the listing's "virtual tour" button.