



**“To Require Registration OR
Not to Require Registration,
That is the Question”**

And We Have the Answer!

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“To Require Registration or Not to Require Registration, That is the Question”

Forgive our reference to Shakespeare's Hamlet, but the issue of forcing website visitors to register or allowing them to have free access to MLS information has long been a source of controversy in the real estate industry. To date, little more than anecdotal evidence has been provided on either side of the debate. iHOUSE Web Solutions has gathered data from its 5,000 IDXPro clients to ultimately answer the question of whether or not it is better to require registration for access to the MLS.

The Two Sides of the Debate

It is now common knowledge that the vast majority of homebuyers – over 80 percent – utilize the Internet during their home search and that agent and broker websites are one of the primary resources for obtaining listing information. As a result, almost every REALTOR® places some sort of link on their website for searching the local MLS, whether it is a link provided by the MLS or a full-fledged IDX product. Many IDX vendors offer an option to require website visitors to register before viewing MLS listings.

So will a REALTOR® get more leads if she requires visitors to register in order to gain access to MLS information? Will the leads she gets even be worth her time? The arguments on either side are numerous.

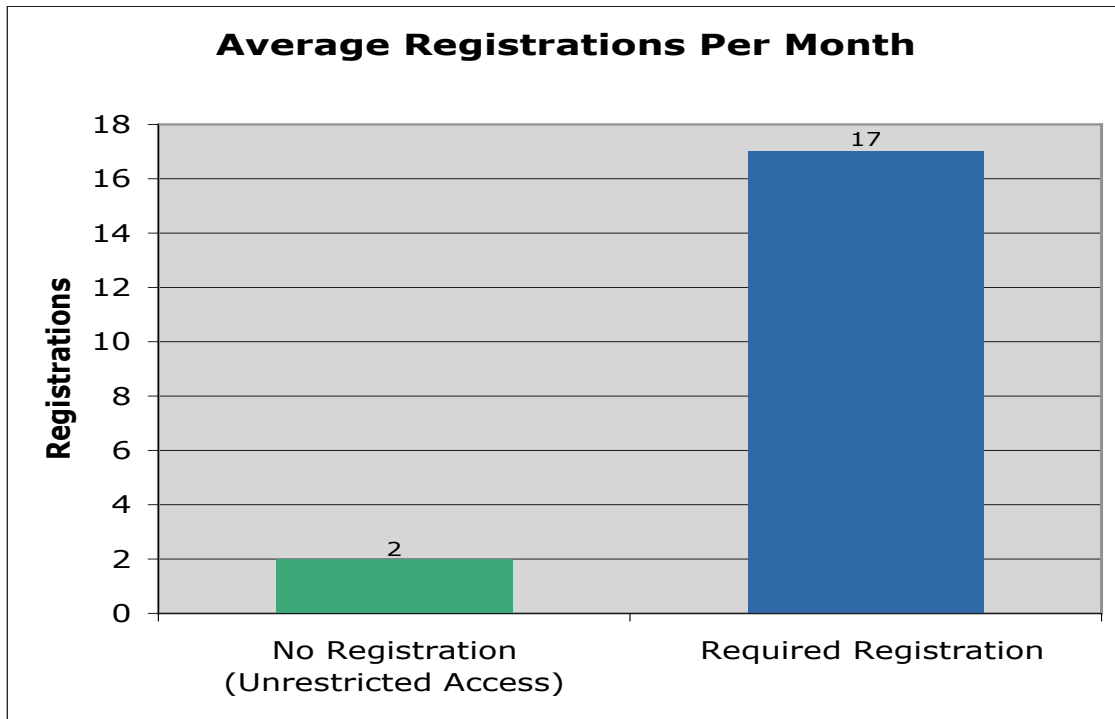
Required Registration. Many in the industry believe that the fundamental point of providing information is to generate contacts and leads. Requiring a visitor to fill out a registration form in order to view MLS data is one of the ways in which real estate professionals can get these leads. The idea is that the high volume of leads resulting from required registration is beneficial, even if some of the leads are bogus (the infamous “John Doe” with the 555 area code). These REALTORS® believe that the sheer quantity of leads will outweigh any associated decrease in quality.

Unrestricted Access. Some agents believe that even if forced registration does generate more leads, such a policy is essentially impolite and discourteous to the visitor. *“I would never go to a website that required registration”* is the common refrain. They also believe leads who proactively register or contact the agent on their own are of far higher quality and far more valuable, even if the volume of leads is lower. If visitors don't wish to register then they are likely not willing to give you their business anyway.

Theories aside, here are the cold hard facts.

Requiring Registration is Essential!

IDX Websites that Require Registration Generate More Leads. By analyzing registration activity on thousands of our IDXPro websites, it is abundantly clear that websites with no registration requirement for MLS access receive far fewer leads than their counterparts with registration requirements. **Websites that require registration to view any MLS data receive an average of 8.5 times more leads per month than those that do not!**

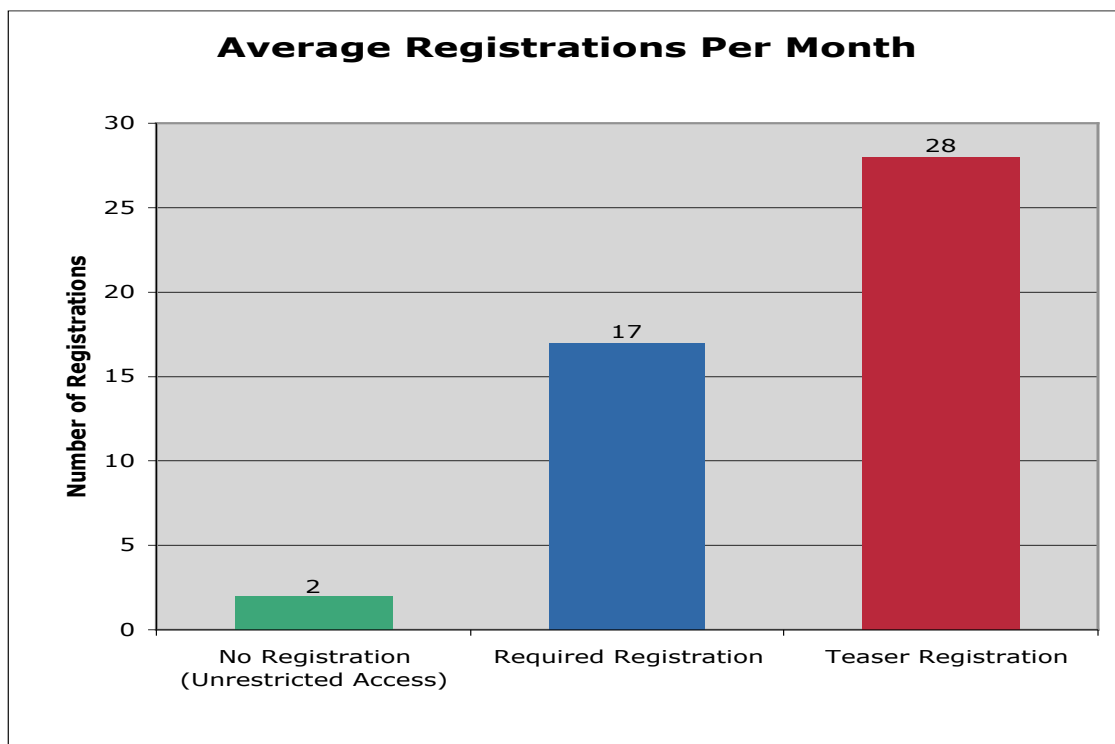


Leads are Still High Quality. The issue now is whether the increase in leads associated with required registration corresponds to a similarly large increase in bogus contact information. And of course high quantities of bad leads means wasted time sifting through them and possibly contacting people that don't exist. The truth is, **requiring registration does not yield a significant increase in bogus leads!** Websites with required registration receive comparable quality leads to those that give unrestricted access (see chart on Page 5). With no significant drop in lead quality, there is no reason not to include a registration requirement for viewing MLS data. The additional leads generated with a registration form are still visitors who are interested in the real estate services offered, not imaginary characters like "Mickey Mouse". Even if the new contacts are not ready to purchase until the following year, an agent is still doing himself a service in the long-run by contacting and keeping in touch with all potential clients.

The Best of Both Worlds – “Teaser” Registration!

Basic registration, which requires registration for viewing any MLS data, including a search results page, undoubtedly yields far more leads of comparable quality. However, there is an even more effective alternative – “Teaser” Registration.

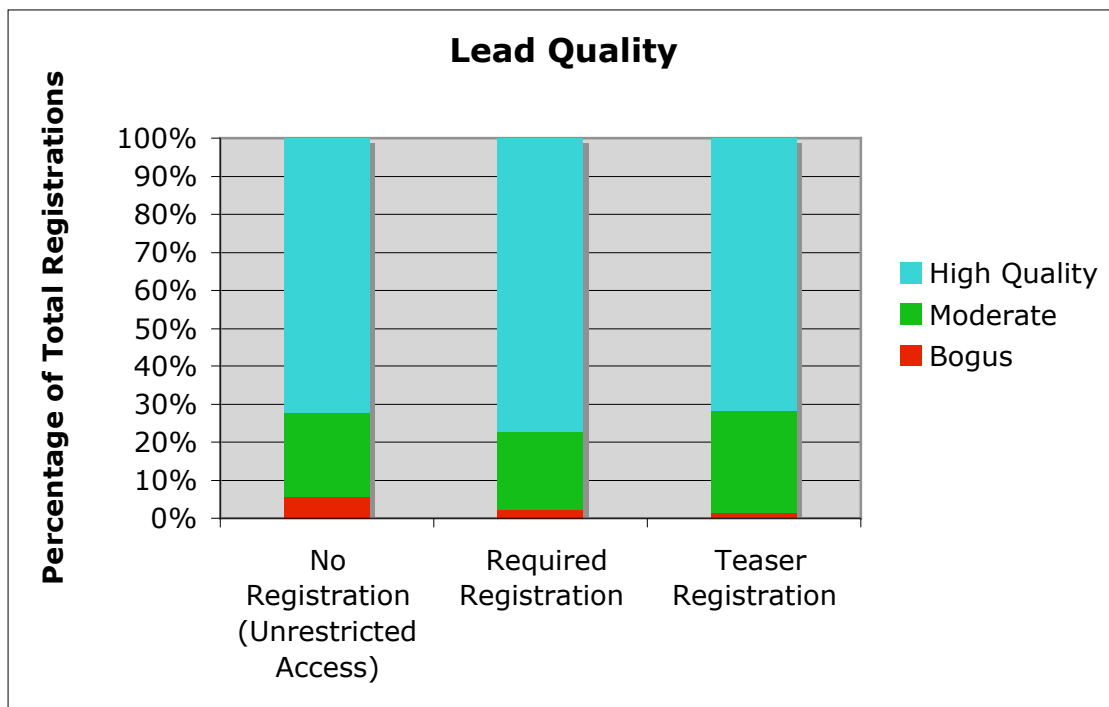
As opposed to basic registration, Teaser Registration allows a visitor to get a sample of the information available, and only then prompts him to register. For example, instead of being prompted to register to view the results of a search, the visitor might be able to view two or three of the listing results before seeing a registration page. The logic behind this strategy is that visitors will quickly learn that they are registering to view **extensive, valuable, and legitimate information**. Consequently, they are more willing to provide their personal contact information.



Effectiveness of “Teaser” Registration. So is Teaser Registration actually more effective at coaxing visitors into providing their closely guarded personal information?

The answer is Yes! From the above chart, you can clearly see that IDX websites that utilize the Teaser Registration approach get an average of 65% more leads than basic forced Required Registration. **That’s 14 times more leads than IDX websites that do not require registration at all!** Not only did Teaser Registration yield the most leads, but **Teaser**

Registration also generated the lowest percentage of bogus leads of any of the three registration methods.



Lead Quality data was gathered via a random sample of 1,500 registrations. High Quality leads contained legitimate name, email address, and phone number information. Moderate Quality leads had a legitimate name and either a valid email address or phone number. Bogus leads had completely false information.

Why Use IDXPro? iHOUSEweb has spent a great deal of effort making IDXPro the most powerful lead generation tool for any REALTOR® website.

- **“Teaser” Registration** – Generate more leads by giving visitors a sample or taste of the valuable MLS information available – if they want more they will register.
- **HouseTrack™ Email Updates** – Entice visitors to register with automatic email updates when new listings come into the MLS that meet their search criteria
- **Saved Searches** – Visitors can easily register and save their search to come back to it later
- **Saved Listings** – When visitors find listings they are interested in, they can easily register and come back to it later
- **Custom Questions** – Create custom form questions to qualify leads even more

- **Contact Forms** – Contact forms are on every page so visitors contact you instead of the listing agent
- **And so much more!** – Interactive Map Search, smart phone compatibility, contemporary designs and colors, and more

Interested in IDXPro's Powerful Lead Generation Features?

Contact us: (866) 645-7702 or sales@ihouseweb.com or take a FREE Test Drive of IDXPro at www.IDXPro.com.

