

'PcPics' Virtual Office

Quick Start Guide

Minimum System Requirements:
Windows 95 / 98 or Windows NT4 SP3
Pentium Processor 32 Meg RAM

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Installing Virtual Office

- (1) Close ALL applications
- (2) Place the Virtual Office CD into your computer.
- (3) Choose START ... RUN... In the command line text box, type D:\SETUP where D: is the letter of the drive with the Virtual Office Disk. Then click OK.
- (4) Follow the screen directions to complete the installation.
- (5) At the end of the install you will see a message 'Installing Components – Please Wait'. **This may take some time** – do not be overly concerned.

NOTE: You may be asked to RESTART your computer at least once to complete the install.

Starting Virtual Office

With the program successfully installed, you will see a new application folder or Program Group called 'Virtual Office' on your Windows™ desktop. To start Virtual Office, double-click on the icon or shortcut labeled 'PcPics' Virtual Office.

Running Virtual Office for the First Time

When the program first runs you will be prompted to enter your password. Click "OK" or press ENTER to continue. The system presents a drop down combo box and asks you to select your State and then your Board or MLS Association. BE SURE TO SELECT THE CORRECT ONE! If your Board is NOT found then select DEMO from the very end of the list.

Registering Your Software

When you first install the software you have up to 30 days to register. Until you do so your software will say "Virtual Office Demo" on all screens and reports. Once you have registered your own name will appear. If you do not register within 30 days your software will stop running. To register click the Menu Bar selection "Help" and then click "Register". The Registration Form allows you to enter all of the necessary registration information. Simply type in your information and submit it to receive a registration code. Agent Setup Before you can DOWNLOAD Listings you need to tell the system some information about yourself. Click the Virtual MLS MENU BAR and select SETUP "Agent Info". Under 'MLS Access' you need to enter your Login ID and Password. Make sure that you have the correct MLS Phone number and any required dialing prefix such as a 9. Complete as much information on this screen as you can. NOTE: You cannot change the 'Agent Information' section on the left side of the screen until you have REGISTERED the program and obtained a Security Code.

Searching

To perform a local SEARCH, click the "SEARCH" button located in the tool bar on the main screen. Select your search criteria from the items in the column on the left by clicking on the item with your mouse. Scroll down the list to see more Search Items.

Depending on the search item you select, a list of valid options will appear in the middle column on the screen. A numeric choice such as PRICE or BEDS will present you with a FROM and TO box. Some search fields require multiple response choices. For example a VIEW field may have options such as Bay View, Ocean View, Golf Course View, and so on.

Whenever you select an option from the Search Items list the possible responses are displayed in the “Select From” area in the top middle portion of the screen. You can then make your selections and click the “OK” button to accept them. Your Search Criteria will appear under the “Selected Items” list on the right hand side of your screen.

To run your search against the information stored locally on your computer click the “SEARCH” button. To call the MLS and download these listings, click on ‘DOWNLOAD’. (Note this is only available on certain MLS systems.) Either way the listings found will appear in your ‘LIST VIEW’. See the next chapter on ‘List View’.

Downloading

‘PcPics’ Virtual MLS allows you to download MLS information into your computer where it is permanently stored until you delete it. In this way you can access previously downloaded MLS Information without having to dial in again. There are two ways to do this. The first is to define a specific geographical area and download listings in this region on a regular basis (usually daily). Once you have performed your initial download the system will then ONLY download NEW LISTINGS and CHANGES. To do this select MLS from the Main Menu Bar and choose ACCESS MLS. Then press the DOWNLOAD button and select your download criteria.

The second method is to download listings ‘on demand’. Using this approach you only download listings as and when you need them – for example if you are preparing a CMA or a Buyers Handout. To do this go back to your SEARCH Screen (see the earlier section on SEARCHING) and enter your search criteria. However this time instead of performing a LOCAL SEARCH click on the DOWNLOAD button. The system will call the MLS and download all listings which match your criteria. You can now work off-line to prepare your CMA and reports.

List View

Once you have created a LIST of properties by running a SEARCH, use the LIST VIEW to view them. You can move up and down through this list by using the UP & DOWN arrow keys or by using your mouse to CLICK on each line as required. Clicking on each line displays the property photo, remarks and MLS information.

NOTE: You will see a button called ‘PICS VIEW’. Click on this button to bring up the ‘PICTURES View’ of the property. There is also a button called ‘FULL VIEW’. Click on this button to display the ‘FULL VIEW’ showing the full MLS Info Screen.

Use these 'VIEW' buttons while working through the list whenever you quickly need to display more information about the property.

Printing Flyers

Click on the "Print Flyer" button and the FLYERS Menu appears. There are a number of professionally designed templates to choose from. Click on the template you wish to use and then press the "OK" button to continue. Virtual MLS allows you to edit any information that will appear on the flyer. You can change the following: (1) The contents of any of the white boxes. Just click on the appropriate box and edit accordingly. (2) Labels. To change any of the labels (the green fields), click on the label and make your changes. For example you can change "Baths" to read "Bathrooms". (3) "Drop Downs" (similar to those in 'List View' and 'Thumbnail View') You can change an entire field - for example to show 'Lot Size' instead of 'School District'. To do so, click on the button between the label and the text (it is labeled "..."). The dialog box allows you to choose from most of the fields available in the MLS. This is a great feature when preparing a flyer for a client who is primarily interested say in school districts, for example. Simply edit the data fields on your flyers to display elementary, middle, and high schools for each listing.

Printing Reports

Click on the REPORTS button to access the numerous reports available with the system.

Printing Magazine

Create a magazine by clicking on an address and dragging it over to one of the six boxes on the template. The magazine will print with the remarks and optionally the address (if there is space). Click the HTML button to create a Web Page or to e-mail this document.

E-Mail and HTML

One of the most exciting features of Virtual MLS is the ability to create HTML flyers and reports which you can either upload to your Web Site or e-mail to clients. Reports and flyers which support this feature will display a button marked HTML. Whenever you select this button you have two options. The first is to e-mail the document you are working on right now. The second is to save this document and send it together with other saved documents later. Please note that all these HTML documents are kept in your default HTML folder. If you are going to create and save a number of documents for a specific client, be sure to CLEAR this folder of any previous documents before you start.

When you run the VOMAIL program it combines all the documents in your HTML folder into a single file called CLICKME.EXE. The VOMAIL program will automatically attach this file to your e-mail message.

If you are not using VOMAIL and are using some other program such as America OnLine be sure to attach this CLICKME.EXE file yourself. When your client receives the e-mail all they need to do is 'Click On' and 'Run' this CLICKME file. CLICKME will launch their Web Browser and present a Table of Contents with all the documents you have just sent. Using their Web Browser clients can easily select documents from the 'Table of Contents' and view them.

Client Tracker

The 'Client Tracker' option allows you to save client searches and automatically match these against recently downloaded listings. The system gives you the option of printing letters notifying clients of these matches or you can automatically create e-mail messages to be sent to these clients.

Using Tracker is a two step process.

Step 1: Is to save the search associated with the client. To do this first make sure that your client's information is entered into Virtual Assistant. Be sure to include the e-mail address if you intend to use this feature. From the Virtual MLS Search screen select the 'Tracker' button. This will allow you to link the current search with a client in your Virtual Assistant database. Tracker gives you the option here to Add/Modify/Remove searches.

Whenever you add a new search Tracker needs to know which client to link to. Use the Find button to find the client either by first name or last. Once you have done this accept the record and return to your Virtual MLS Main Menu.

Step 2: To process these matches against recently downloaded MLS listings, select the TRACKER option from your Main Menu. You will be presented with 3 screens:

Screen 1: Tracker presents a list showing each saved search as well as the date of the last run. You can select individual clients or just use the default which is ALL. You can reset the 'Date of Last Run' by double clicking on the Client Name and then entering the new date. Press 'Next' to continue, and the system will start the matching process.

Screen 2: This gives you a summary of the results of your search. You can print this report if you decide to do so.

Screen 3: This screen lists all clients with successful matches as well as the number of matching records. Here you are presented with 3 options: (1) Print Letters. (2) Prepare E-Mail. (3) Create a List View. If you select the last option and return to the 'Virtual MLS' List View these properties will now be in your list. Use this option if you intend to process these matching properties manually – i.e. print reports or flyers. Screen 3 also gives you the option to edit the letter which your clients receive. Note that 'Prepare E-Mail' does not actually send these e-mail messages.

To send these use the 'Tracker' button on the VOMail program Menu. Finally when you exit the program you will be given the option to reset the 'date of last run' for these clients. Press 'Ok' unless you want these same properties to show up again next time you run this report.

Data Reporter

The Virtual Office comes with numerous professionally designed flyers and reports. Use the Virtual Office 'Data Reporter' to create, modify and save your own flyers and reports. Run the 'Data Reporter' and select flyers (usually one listing per page) or reports (as many listings as will fit on the page, each on their own line.) Whichever option you choose the system will present you with a workspace and a list of available features on the right hand side. Just drag and drop the features you require (or double click) onto the workspace. (Notice that there is a 'splitter bar' separating the workspace from the features list. Use your mouse to resize your workspace by moving this 'splitter bar' to the left or right). Use the toolbar buttons on the top of the screen to save and preview your work. Additional toolbar buttons on the Flyer Screen let you add Photos, Images and Text to your report. Note that all flyers and reports created with the 'Data Reporter' also appear on the 'OTHER' tab in the Reports & CMA module.

Virtual Maps - 'VMAPS'

Note: VMAPS is not available for all areas of the USA.

Before you can use the VMAPS program successfully it is essential that you GEOCODE your properties. **VMAPS WILL NOT SEARCH OR PLOT PROPERTIES WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN GEOCODED**

GeoCoding: To GeoCode your listings, select GEOCODE from the options under MLS on the Virtual Office Main Menu Bar. First decide if you wish to process ALL the listings in your database as opposed to just the listings in your current 'List View'. Next choose whether to proceed automatically (Press 'Auto Process') or to geocode each listing one at a time (by pressing 'Previous' and 'Next').

Plotting Properties: From 'List View' press the 'Map List' button. VMAPS will display a map and automatically plot these properties for you. Now you can 'Tour' each listing by clicking on each house icon. The MLS information for that property together with a photo (if it is available) will appear.

Searching Properties: From 'Search Screen' click on the MAP SEARCH Button. VMAPS will present a map of the USA.

Use your left mouse button to zoom in on the area you wish to search. (The entire USA map appears only the first time) Once you have zoomed in close enough to the area you intend to search click on the 'DEFINE' button. Now using your left mouse button draw a rectangle on the screen enclosing the area you wish to search. Now press 'Exit' and VMAPS will return you to the SEARCH

SCREEN. Notice that VMAPS has automatically added the Latitude and Longitude to your Search Parameters. Enter any additional search criteria such as Price exactly as you usually do. Then press 'Search Local' to run the Search.

Very important note: For the Map SEARCH to work you need to REINDEX your database after you GEOCODE properties. You do NOT have to do this if you only use the MAP PLOT feature.

Tips and Tricks:

- (1) Pressing your Right Mouse Button while anywhere on the map displays a map popup menu.
- (2) If you cannot get an address to geocode properly it may be because the information entered by the listing agent is wrong. YOU CAN CHANGE THIS ADDRESS. Return to the Virtual Office FULL VIEW. Notice the address in a white box on the lower part of the screen. Go ahead and change it. Now return to the Geocode option of VMAPS and try geocoding this property again.

Getting Help

At any time on any screen you can PRESS the F1 KEY for context sensitive help. This is a great feature as it does away with the need for a printed manual. For those people who still like manuals it is included on the Virtual Office CD-Rom. From the Main Menu Screen, click on HELP then PRINT MANUAL. Visit our Web Site at www.hillsoft.com for the latest news on the program. There is a special section for frequently asked questions. You can also contact Hillside Software directly via e-mail at info@hillsoft.com.

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