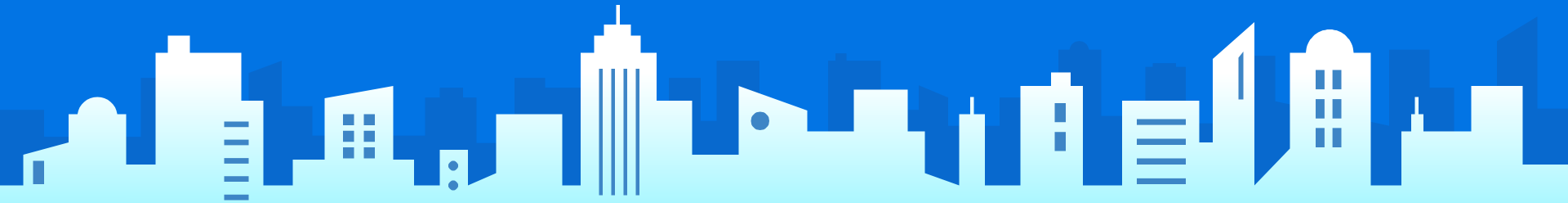


The background of the upper half of the image features several stylized, light blue clouds of various shapes and sizes scattered across a solid blue sky.

The Cultural History of Zillow[®]

By: Maura Minter



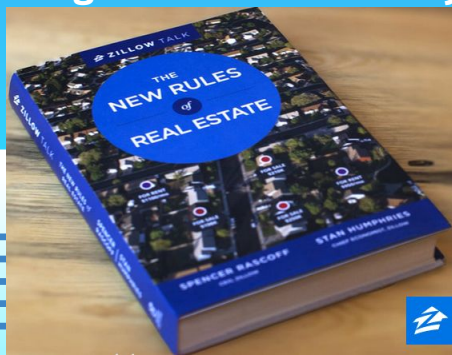
What is Zillow?

- A website and mobile app that acts as a real estate search engine for listings in the United States
 - Available to general public; not just agents and brokers
 - Helpful for people in the home buying and home selling processes
- The site is free to use; it makes its money from advertisements
- It is the most popular real estate website
 - Other sites include: Trulia, Redfin, Realtor.com, etc.
- Known for its *Zestimate* values that provide estimates for values of all the homes on its site
- The site receives 245 million unique monthly users



Production

- Founded in 2006 by Rich Barton and Lloyd Frink
 - Rich Barton was the previous CEO of Expedia
 - Lloyd Frink was a previous employee of Expedia and Microsoft
 - Brought in Spencer Rascoff, another employee of Expedia, to be their first CEO
 - Childhood chess prodigy and Harvard graduate
 - Preached the importance of a good work-life balance
 - Wrote a book called “The New Rules of Real Estate” that discusses how one can navigate the fluctuating market
 - Moved to Zillow to make an impact on a smaller company
- Barton and Lloyd were frustrated with the lack of Real Estate data available to the public when going through their own home buying processes and wanted to create a site that changed that



Expedia®

Production Cont.

- They came up with the name Zillow as a combination of the words “zillions” and “pillows”
 - Accounts for both the analytical and emotional aspect of the site
 - Came up with this while drinking
 - Wanted a cheap URL
- Idea of Zestimates
 - They were in Seattle looking over the Queen Anne neighborhood and were fascinated by the idea of seeing a price on every rooftop
 - Wanted people to get a sense of what their house was worth
- Creating Zestimates
 - Had to acquire a lot of data on every home in each county to create an algorithm
- When the site was launched in February 2006, it received over a million views in one day
 - People were fascinated by the first site to create semi-accurate estimates of home values



Consumption

- **Consumers of the site**
 - Includes agents and brokers, people looking to purchase or sell their home, people interested in simply browsing unique listings, or those wanting to stalk the prices of their friends and neighbors' homes.

Consumption Cont.

- **How Zillow makes money?**
 - They sell advertisements on Zillow and on sites of The Zillow Group
 - Advertisements for property management companies and real estate agents to promote their listings
 - Premier Agent Program:
 - Agents pay \$20-\$60 per lead to appear as the agent for the listing
 - Great way for agents to get noticed; 90% of all people use the Internet now to house hunt before even contacting an agent

Consumption Cont.

- **Zillow iBuying (aka Zillow Offers)**
 - Another way that Zillow makes money in addition to advertisements
 - Customers would sell their home to Zillow, Zillow would essentially “flip” the property and resell it for more
- Eliminates a lot of the time and effort required in the home selling process
- iBuying, however, drastically failed and was shut down due to its inability to predict market fluctuations
 - They were forced to fire 25% of their employees and accumulated an overall loss of \$450 Million Dollars
- Zillow plans to bring back this service by 2024

Consumption Cont.

- **Zillow Group**
 - Real estate portfolio that Zillow has created
 - Includes Zillow offers, Zillow Premier Agent, Zillow Home loans, Trulia, Out East, StreetEasy, and HotPads
 - It's mission is to provide customers with research before they embark on the home buying process
 - Wants consumers to have a positive experience
 - Does not want to take away the roles of agents and brokers
 - Wants to supplement their work
- Zillow Group has accumulated \$3.34 Billion as a whole

Consumption Images



Zillow – Premier Agent

Sponsored

Susan Peterson of Agent Group Brokerage just listed this 3bd, 2ba, 1250 sqft home in Seattle, WA.



JUST LISTED: \$435,000

By Susan Peterson

Seattle, WA | 3bds, 2ba, 1250sqft



123 Main Street, Seattle, WA

View photos and contact Susan Peterson for more details today.

ZILLOW.COM

[Learn More](#)



Regulation

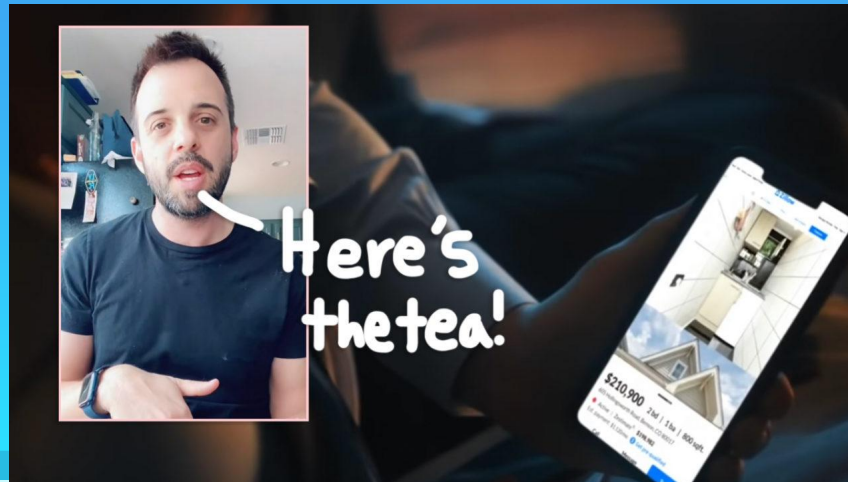
- **There is a Zillow Terms of Use Page and Privacy Policy that provide a basic set of rules for users of the site (linked on webpage)**
 - People cannot upload spam, partake in anything illegal on the site, or create an account if under 18
- **People do not need an account to simply browse the site**
 - An account is needed if consumers want to save homes or use other Zillow functions

Regulation Cont.

- **Zillow has been accused of violating antitrust laws on their site**
 - They are favoring listings of agents in the NAR (National Realtors Association)
 - Listings by NAR agents would appear at the top of the search; whereas, listings without agents would be placed in a hidden tab
 - Places some listings at a disadvantage
- **Zillow claims that they were forced to change this by MLS systems (Multiple Listing Services)**
 - Zillow still promises to provide the best and most recent information on Real Estate

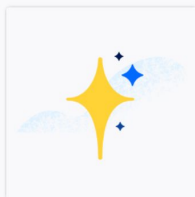
Regulation Cont.

- People also claim that Zillow has a monopoly on the Real Estate market
 - Zillow has the ability to control prices in the market with their Zestimate values and Zillow Offers function
- Man makes a Tik Tok about his frustrations with this aspect of Zillow and how it is putting young buyers at a huge disadvantage

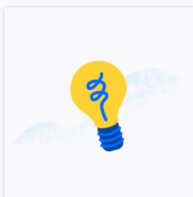


Identity

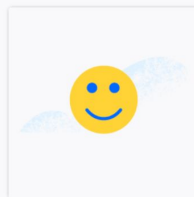
- **Zillow Mission Statement**
 - “To give people the power to unlock life’s next chapter”
 - Overall goal is to provide customers with a convenient and reliable access to Real Estate Data
- **Values:**



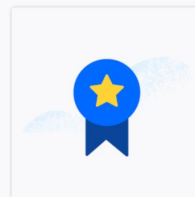
Customers Are Our North Star



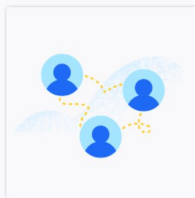
Turn On the Lights



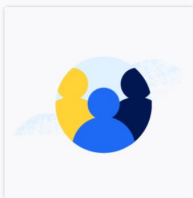
Do the Right Thing



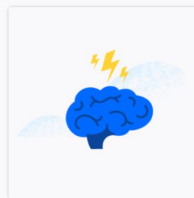
Own It



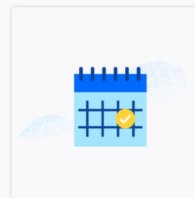
Better Together



Include and Empower



Think Big, Move Fast



Deliver Quality on Time, Every Time

Identity Cont.

Video on Values:



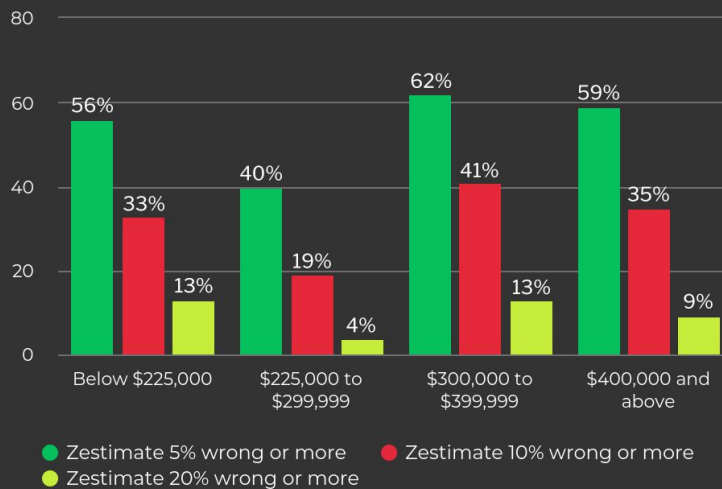
Identity Cont.

- **Agents and Brokers originally disliked Zillow because they thought the site would make their roles obsolete**
 - This is not true; buying a home is a very expensive purchase and people require guidance from a professional
- **Agents disagree with Zestimate values**
 - They are wildly inaccurate due to flaws in the algorithm; usually way over the actual price of the home
 - Consumers get frustrated when they make less than the Zestimate value for their home
 - Agents find it difficult to convince the consumer that a personal estimate is more accurate

Inaccurate Zestimate Values

ZILLOW VS. REALITY:

532 Tri-Cities Home Sales



Source: PACMLS & Zillow.com data

CARI MCGEE REAL ESTATE TEAM

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Representation

- Zillow has represented an escape for the public amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic
 - Newfound importance of the home
 - Zillow's total monthly views has gone up 50% since the start of the pandemic
- Zillow Surfing trend
 - People fantasize about homes that they can't afford & can only dream about living in
 - Zillow represents the American Dream; people are inspired after looking at beautiful listings and gain the motivation to work harder
 - Consumers have created a meme over zillow stalking their crushes homes
- Zillow has become a way for people to connect on social media platforms
 - Discords have been created to share interesting listings
 - Zillow twitter accounts have been created
 - Users are begging Zillow to create a comment section on the site to increase engagement

Representation Cont.

 **carina hsieh** 
@carinahsieh

on a date:

ME: lemme show u this meme i saw



[the zillow page of his childhood home is the last open tab]

ME: actually this isn't my phone


5:34 PM · Apr 15, 2017 


 6K  32  Copy link to Tweet

[Tweet your reply](#)


 **Guillotine-Worthy Zillow Listings** @Zillotine · Jun 13, 2021 


Replying to @Zillotine
interior (4/5)






 **Guillotine-Worthy Zillow Listings**
@Zillotine

bathrooms, patio & pool (5/5)



4:17 PM · Jun 13, 2021 

 4   Copy link to Tweet

Representation Cont.

- SNL skit comparing Zillow surfing to having sex
- People in their mid-late thirties are raving about the relatable content in this video



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