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## Web designer finds success in real estate video

Real Estate Connect Speaker Profile: Fred Light  
BY INMAN NEWS, WEDNESDAY, JULY 23, 2008.  
Inman News

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Fred Light is a video producer with Nashua Video Tours in Nashua, N.H.



Fred Light

He's been working with Realtors to produce video tours of property listings for several years, after working as a Web designer for agents.

Light will speak at [Real Estate Connect](#) in San Francisco, July 23-25, 2008.

He answered a set of questions posed by Inman News:

### What do you see happening in the real estate market in 2008?

I think you're going to see a great deal of agents who got into the business when it was easy, getting out of the business altogether. I also think the use of the Internet as a marketing tool will become clearer to even more people, as they struggle to find business the old-fashioned way.

### What advice do you have to help real estate agents and brokers get through this market?

You have to realize that the real estate business has changed dramatically in the past 10 years. Whether you agree with it or not, you must embrace the new technologies and availability of real estate information and make it work for you, not continue to try to hang on to old-fashioned marketing techniques. Many more experienced agents are still attempting to retain "control" over their industry, and that no longer works.

### What was your first job?

I worked in my father's furniture store warehouse unloading, unpacking and delivering furniture.

### What sparked the idea for your company?

I began learning Web design in 1994. I owned a roommate referral agency, and I felt that the Internet was going to play a vital role in our business. So I began learning as much as I could about the Web and Web design, and built our first site in 1995. It was great, except we were about the only people who actually could see it at the time. I felt that the Internet would change marketing in a big way, although I wasn't sure exactly how. In 1996, I built a real estate portal, Dwellings.com. My goal was to sell real estate agents on the idea of becoming a part of this -- having their own Web page on our umbrella site to advertise their apartment rentals, etc. After two years of beating down the doors of Realtors and getting doors slammed in my face, I gave up. All Realtors had desks with IBM Selectric typewriters and kept their inventory on index cards. Most didn't even know what the Internet was -- the rest just thought I was simply nuts. "Who would rent an apartment on a computer?"

I enjoyed designing Web sites and was doing it on the side when I decided to get out of the roommate business and do Web design full time. I did one real estate site in 2000, and was then referred to another, and another, and another -- and the next thing I realized is that I was designing sites and marketing real estate online pretty much full time. Over the next few years, even though I was still having doors slammed in my face from Realtors who just couldn't wrap their heads around the concept, I developed a reputation in my region for being the top Web design and marketing person for real estate, as many of my sites were ranking very high on search engines and those agents were making loads of money!

I believe with real estate sites that it's extremely important to set yourself apart -- to do something different than everyone else. In that vein, I felt that video tours would be a great way to showcase properties. Of course, I had never even held a video camera, nor understood how to make it all happen and get it on the Web. In 2005, I bought a video camera and realized very quickly that this couldn't really be done. The files were too big; most people couldn't download or watch it; there were too many competing formats; bad compression utilities. It was not meant to be.

I broke down and bought a lens to allow me to take 360-degree spin-around tours. That lasted four weeks as I detested that lens and the concept. They were blurry, distorted and unrealistic. I popped the lens on eBay and got rid of it.

Magically, within a few months, YouTube became popular; compression utilities became better; Flash video got much better and became mainstream; broadband became mainstream -- and voila! It could now be done. Of course, I still didn't know how to do it.

So over a few months, I read everything I could about video cameras, compression software, Web video, editing software -- and learned how to do it. And it's taken off from there. Eighty percent of my business is currently video tours, video testimonials, community tours, etc., for real estate Web sites.

### What's been your biggest challenge in running the business?

Oddly enough, convincing Realtors that video makes sense! Buyers totally get it. Sellers totally get it. Realtors look at me as yet another invoice. They just can't grasp the concept, even today. Fortunately, those who do get it, get it. And they do videos for most, if not all of their listings. I've resigned to work with that 15 percent of Realtors who understand today's Internet marketing, and not bother with the rest -- it's not worth the effort. It's more than frustrating.

### If you had one thing to do over again in your life, what would it be?

Nothing really. I look at everything I've done up to the present as part of what makes me me. I've never been afraid of failure and have learned from my many mistakes in life. I would never do it any other way.

### What style of home do you live in and when did you buy it?

I live in a modified cape/gambrel. I bought it in October 2002.

### What worries keep you awake at night?

Nothing. I sleep like a baby through the entire night. Thank you, Temperpedic!

### What lesson did you learn in the last year?

My best friend is very sick, and it only makes me appreciate and not take for granted my good health, which I have always just accepted. Things can change quickly. You never know what tomorrow may bring.

### What would your second career choice be?

Not sure! Never really thought about it, as I have morphed from one career to another to another as I get bored or see new opportunities arise. I began in retail (owned two furniture stores), then went into the roommate referral business, then went into the cell phone rental business, then the Web design business, and now I do video tours and photography! Who knew? I do what I want. When I get bored, I'll change.

### What kind of music do you listen to?

All kinds, except heavy metal, hard rock and rap.

### Who is your hero?

My parents.

*Hear Light speak at Real Estate Connect in San Francisco, July 23-25, 2008. The conference program and registration are available online via the [Connect Web site](#).*

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