

# Emporis Property Listings

User Research Report

April 2010

Personas

## Brad the Broker



“When I get a listing, I want to upload it as quickly as possible.”

### Site activities:

- Create & manage listings
- Qualify & communicate with buyers/lessees
- Search listings
- Track competitor activity

### Motivations & concerns:

- Creating listings should be quick and easy
- Wants to protect non-exclusives
- May be posting multiple listings at once, or the same listing across multiple sites
- Doesn't have time to figure out complicated functions
- Considers cost/benefit of any listing service vs. alternatives

## Amy the Assistant



“Posting listings, over and over...”

### Site activities:

- Create & manage listings
- Qualify & communicate with buyers/lessees
- Track competitor activity

### Motivations & concerns:

- Creating listings should be quick and easy
- May be posting multiple listings at once, or the same listing across multiple sites
- Usually first point of contact for potential buyers or lessees

*Newly identified, additional research required*

## Scott the Seeker



“I want to go straight to what I’m searching for, and not dig through lots of extra stuff.”

### Site activities:

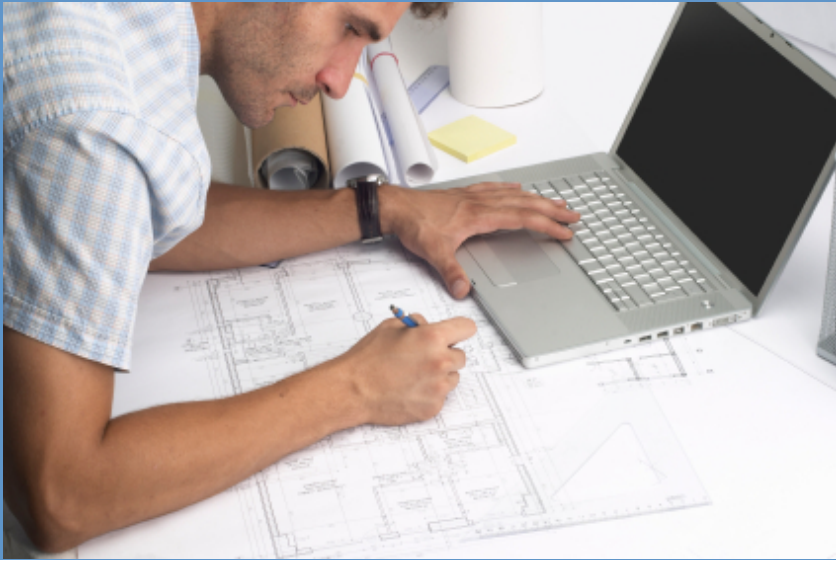
- Search listings for a property to buy or lease
- Contact brokers

### Motivations & concerns:

- Wants searches to be targeted from the start, and wants the first results to match his criteria
- Search criteria vary greatly...
  - Depending whether buying or leasing
  - For different property types
  - For different locations

*Additional research required*

## Dave the Deal Chaser



“What deals are happening? Can it lead to work for me? Who’s the decision maker?”

### Site activities:

- Search listings
- Contact brokers

### Motivations & concerns:

- Identifying properties requiring their ancillary goods or services (e.g. newly acquired office space that will require interior design)
- Looking for data to identify decision makers (new lessee, owner, et al)
- May contact brokers to reach decision makers; will establish ongoing relationship with brokers

*Newly identified, additional research required*

## Activity Summary

	<b>Brad the Broker</b>	<b>Amy the Assistant</b>	<b>Scott the Seeker</b>	<b>Dave the Deal Chaser</b>
Create & manage listings	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		
Search listings	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Qualify & communicate with searchers	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		
Contact brokers			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

# Findings & Recommendations



## Key Findings (page 1 of 4)

### Search Forms

- Search forms are missing certain listing/property types (rental buildings, vacant land, etc.)
- Search forms don't include amenities or other detailed options
- Space and price sliders don't indicate selected values
- Scales used for sliders may not be appropriate for all listing/property types; price slider doesn't account for magnitude variation between sale and lease
- Subjects found aspects of the sidebar search form on search results to be confusing (e.g. seeing "new search" as label vs. button; seeing "new search" button as method to submit refinements from sidebar form rather than linking to another page)

## Key Findings (page 2 of 4)

### Building/Property Data

- Key data types are missing from listing details
- Subjects indicated that which features and amenities are important varies...
  - Depending whether buying or leasing
  - For different property types
  - For different locations (“[displayed options] not suitable for us [in Singapore] to choose anything”)  
(Affects search forms and listing records)
- Location may also affect vernacular used to describe the same amenity
- Location should be very specific (e.g. NYC > Tribeca; city > specific street)
- Photos and floorplans are particularly important
- Users expect Google Map data, particularly “street view,” in property listings (“[searchers are] going to street view almost every time to take a quick look at the actual building”)

## Key Findings (page 3 of 4)

### Broker Business Process and Mentality

- Many brokers have administrative support staff who create and manage listings, and who handle initial contacts with potential buyers/lessees
- Many of the best listings may never be posted online; brokers will distribute information to networks of known buyers via email
- Brokers may be unwilling to accurately select and/or disclose the location of non-exclusive listings

## Key Findings (page 4 of 4)

### Miscellaneous

- In listing detail, subjects were confused by placement of “printable view” and file downloads within same section as broker information
- Subjects were generally confused by “active/inactive” and “open/closed,” thinking “active” and “inactive” referred to the listing’s real-world status vs. system status
- Watchlists received very positive feedback, although there was some confusion about how it would function (i.e. does dashboard display items from watchlist that have changed, or random items from watchlist)

## Special Note

### Listing Creation Process

- Wireframe mockups were inadequate to properly evaluate such a complex process
- Subjects generally claimed to understand the process, but were nonetheless confused by the various steps (e.g. confusing building record creation with listing creation)

## Recommendations (page 1 of 4)

### Search Forms

- Include all property types (mixed use, apartment buildings, land) and listing types (i.e. listings for entire buildings, as well as unit listings within a building)
- Include amenities and other features (see “search form data” on subsequent slide)
- Vary amenity filters based on building type, listing type and/or location
- Indicate selected value (not just min & max) on sliders
- Test direct form entry of price and space vs. use of sliders (possibly use direct entry on main form, sliders to refine within search results)
- Test variation of slider scale based on building/listing type
- Continue testing sidebar on search results for optimum layout

[Tech note: May need dynamic search form, with variable progressive disclosure based on previously selected options]

## Recommendations (page 2 of 4) Listing Creation & Management

- Continue testing listing creation process
- Vary feature/amenity options based on building type and listing type
- Test alternate labeling and status values for "active," "inactive," "open" and "closed"  
Possible option:
  - Listing status: published/unpublished
  - Deal status: open/closed
- Begin testing listing statistics, to allow brokers to see, e.g...
  - Number of times each listing has been viewed, and by how many unique visitors
  - Number of contacts for each listing

## Recommendations (page 3 of 4)

### Data Fields

#### **Search form data (i.e. data that appears in listing detail and should be searchable)**

- Class A, B or C for office buildings
- Floor where unit listings located (possibly as “N floor or higher/lower”?)
- Building area
- Land area
- Number of units in building
- Building story height

#### **Other data**

- Ensure sufficient photo uploads are permitted. Test to determine optimum amount, but start by setting the maximum number of photos no lower than 10
- Building developer
- Status/size of balcony or other outdoor space

(Conduct surveys to determine other fields common to all locations, fields specific to certain locations, and relative importance of various fields)



## Recommendations (page 4 of 4)

### Miscellaneous

- Change layout of listing detail so that listing-specific items (printable view, request tour, file downloads) are not in same section with broker information
- Allow email notification of on-site messages (settings editable in user preferences)
- Because brokers list newspapers as a popular listing outlet, consider newspapers for advertising Property Listings and for other business development opportunities

## Additional Research Needed (page 1 of 3)

### Site Features & Data

- Usability of listing creation process (multiple variations: new building, existing building with no current listings, with current listings, etc.)
- User needs and technical feasibility for searching by specific locations (neighborhood, single street, zip code, radius)
- Data fields common to all locations, fields specific to certain locations, and relative importance of various fields
- Feasibility of varying feature/amenity options based on location
- Feasibility of user-generated amenity options (generated in listing creation, searchable)
- Integration with other Emporis products (for, e.g. ownership information)
- Options for bulk creation & management of listings
- System's handling of multiple listings for the same property (concurrently active for non-exclusive listings, as well as non-concurrent for subsequent offerings for the same property)

## Additional Research Needed (page 2 of 3)

### User Needs and Behavior

- Broker behavior related to non-exclusive listings
- Demand for email alerts for new listings, changes to watchlist items, etc. (all user groups)
- Emphasis on commercial brokerage companies vs. individual brokers, as it relates to
  - Broker interest in promoting own profile
  - Searcher interest in broker profiles
  - Creation & management of listings
  - Communication between brokers and potential buyers/lessees

## Additional Research Needed (page 3 of 3)

### Miscellaneous

- Emporis Property Listings' perceived value to brokers in different locations (may vary based on alternative services or other factors)
- User accounts for non-brokers (deal chasers, searchers)
  - Necessary for watchlists, email alerts, etc.?
  - Willingness to pay (may vary by location and intended use)
  - Benefits to Emporis in identifying searcher preferences and demographic data
- Effect of offering free trial period prior to payment, and/or other promotional incentives
- Individual countries' restrictions on commercial payments to foreign companies, which affects brokers ability to pay Emporis for the service (restrictions exist in Croatia)

# Appendix

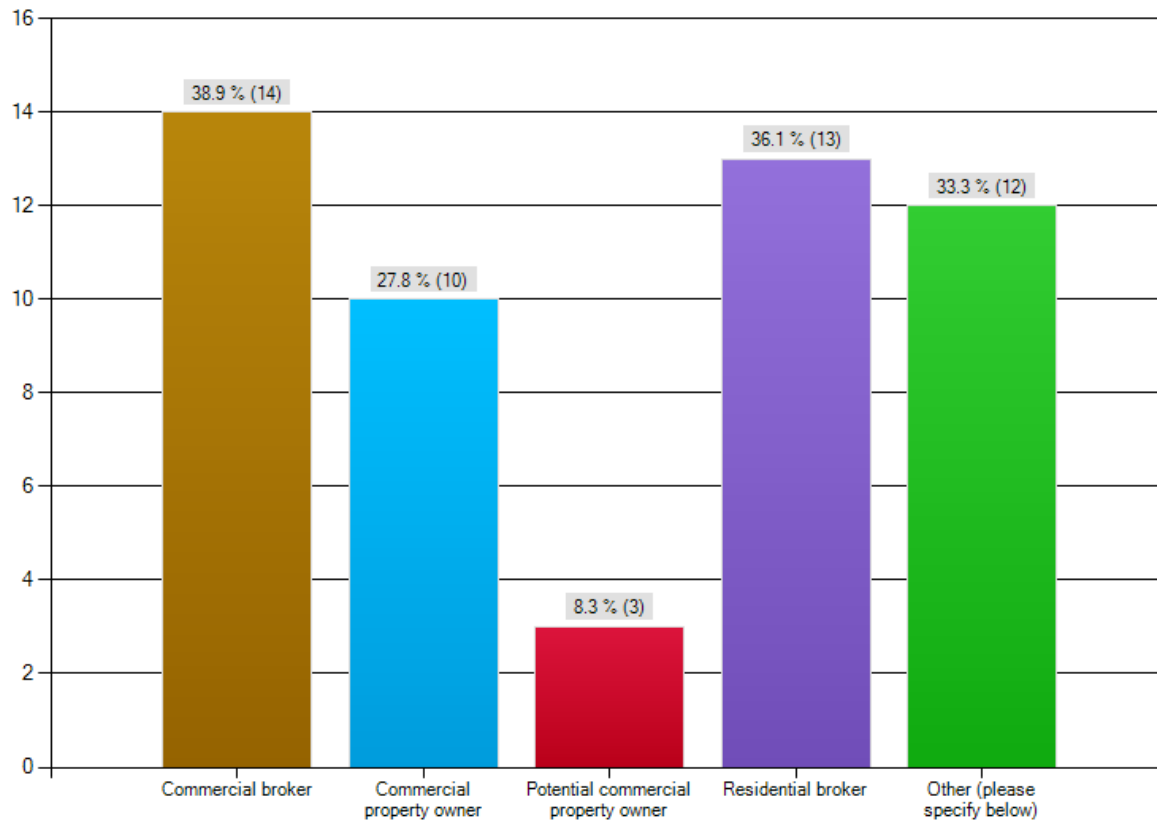
## Interview/Test Subjects

Name	Profession	Location	Email	Number	Duration (hrs)	Recording

\*Not in survey, referred by H. Green

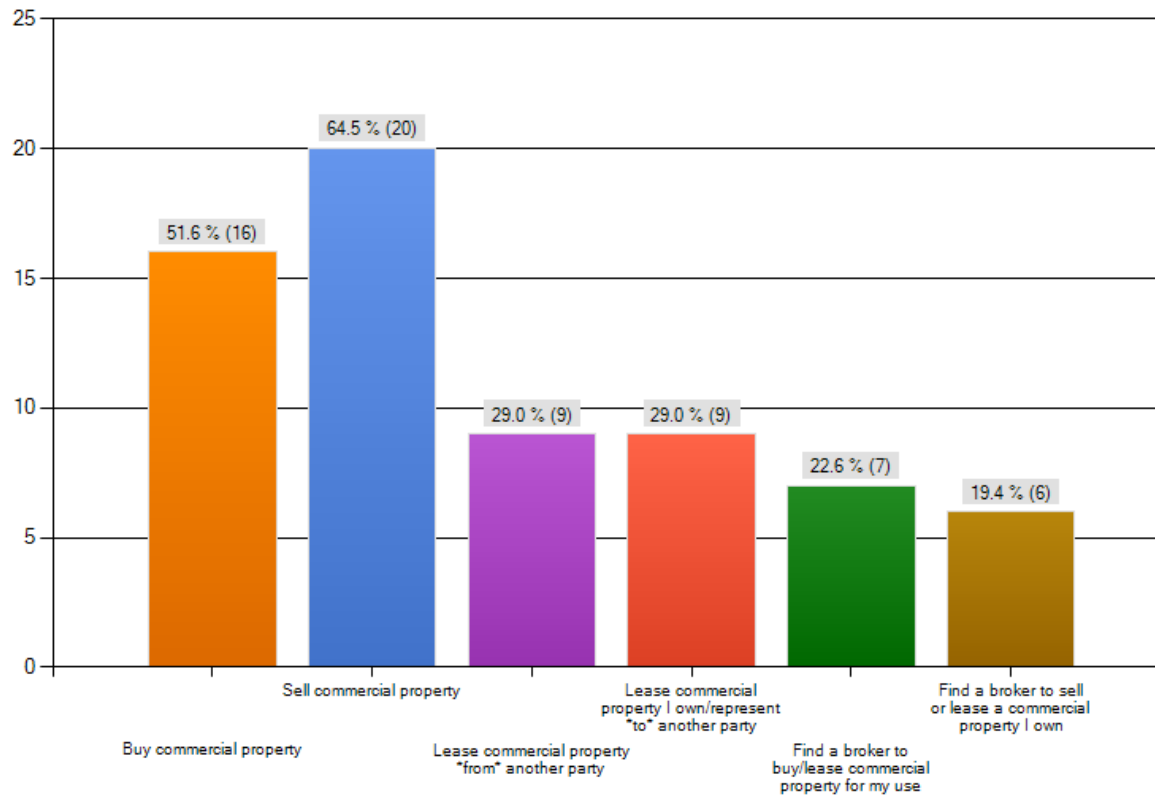
# Survey Results (page 1 of 4)

Which of the following describe you or your business? Check all that apply.



# Survey Results (page 2 of 4)

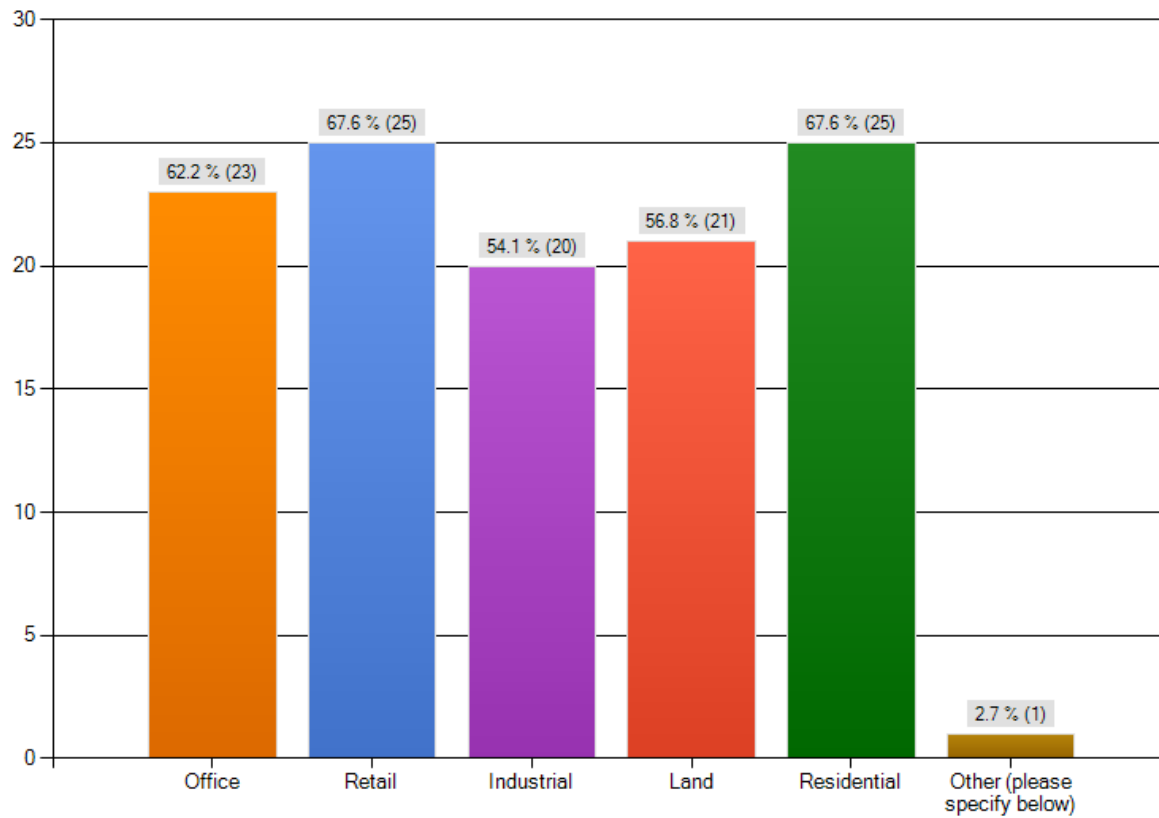
In which of the following activities do you participate, or are interested in participating?  
Check all that apply.





# Survey Results (page 3 of 4)

In what types of properties are you interested? Check all that apply.



# Survey Results (page 4 of 4)

**Which websites or other services do you currently use for commercial property listings?  
Check all that apply.**

