precisely

Case Study:
Real estate site helps millions of homebuyers secure the education they want for their children

Overview

Individuals selecting a home are usually making one of the biggest financial decisions of their lives. They weigh a wide assortment of criteria, but for many, the schools assigned to each property are crucial. The quality of local schools will directly impact the educational prospects of homebuyers' children and may shape many aspects of those kids' future. That's why one of the United States' top real estate web portals began incorporating high-quality data about school boundaries into its search results. The company began working with Precisely when it was an early adopter of real estate search technologies in 2008. Now its use of Precisely School Boundaries data is a great example of how a search portal can leverage data to optimize value for its users.

Business challenge

When a website becomes the online resource of choice for more than 50 million unique users each month, it's clearly doing something right. Still, leaders at one of the largest real estate websites in the U.S. wanted to add one more dimension to the information they offered buyers, sellers and prospective renters of homes: data on local schools.

The quality of local schools is the fifth most important factor influencing neighborhood choice among all homebuyers across the country, according to the "2018 Home Buyer and Seller Generational Trends Report" from the National Association of Realtors. For buyers aged 38 to 52, quality of the school district is the fourth most important factor, and convenience to schools is fifth. Moreover, performance of local schools affects property values, so understanding school zoning boundaries is crucial for real estate agents and developers, mortgage originators and other real estate professionals.

Client profile
- Leading residential real estate website
- Serves homebuyers, sellers and renters, as well as real estate professionals, across the U.S.
- More than 50 million website visitors each month

> Feedback and research have shown that offering the ability to search and compare properties by neighborhood is absolutely key to our customer base. After extensively testing various sources, Precisely provided the best data and solutions to fit our needs.
>
> — VP, Product and User Experience, Leading Real Estate Web Portal

Solution

The real estate website was already leveraging Precisely ZIP Code Boundaries, Neighborhood Boundaries and Residential Boundaries data to provide detailed information about the area surrounding an available property. When the site's management team decided to better serve buyers and renters by providing accurate, current information about the schools assigned to each home, it made sense to leverage Precisely School Boundaries data as well.

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The firm incorporated information about school catchment areas into its residential property searches. Search results not only list the assigned elementary, middle and high schools for a particular home, but also provide a clear visual representation of school boundaries on property-search maps. In addition, they present school demographic and performance data.

Benefits

Now, when a user searches for available properties, the site returns up-to-date information from any of more than 12,000 school districts. School boundary maps enable homebuyers and renters to see, for example, when houses on opposite sides of the same street are assigned to different schools. Because school quality is a key factor driving home purchases and property pricing, this clarification of school boundaries is a crucial feature for the real estate website.

The site also enables users to tailor their searches to reflect their schools of choice. This makes search results more valuable. Because homebuyers and renters no longer have to look elsewhere for this information, the new dataset helps boost traffic and gives the site an advantage over competitors that do not offer this functionality.

When the real estate web portal began working with Precisely a decade ago, it was a startup with limited resources. The innovative company leveraged technology and spatial data to grow and propel itself to the top of its industry. Now that it has access to extensive resources, it continues to see the value in partnering with Precisely.

Datasets used
- ZIP Code Boundaries and Centroids
- Neighborhood Boundaries
- Residential Boundaries
- School Boundaries

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