

# Appraisers Ditch a la mode

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In 2015, Dave Biggers of a la mode stated:

“ I'll wrap up by wishing you a happy new year, in spite of all the recent fear mongering, and by thanking you for supporting us with your business. I'm confident that in 2015 you'll see even more reasons for that loyalty, **especially in terms of us continuing in our long-standing role as the independent appraiser's staunchest advocate**, and in being the most innovative, reliable, and accessible technology provider. We look forward to working with – and for – all of you this year.

Time and time again, we were assured that our data would be ours and would not be sold.

“ Let me be clear however: Any database we build for sharing comps will not be a database for us to use for our own purposes. The data is yours. It isn't ours. We don't want to sell it, use it, move it, share it, or do anything else with it other than manage it for you. (We'll also put in place full controls to prevent others from misappropriating it.)...

### SmartExchange Q&A – Aren't you just going to build an AVM with our data?

Beyond the pro-appraiser position which I've proven repeatedly over the years, there are just too many solid financial reasons why that would be insane. First and foremost, you'd stop doing business with us and I'd go broke. (And I wouldn't blame you.) Then, as soon as you stopped using our product, your appraisal data would dry up anyway. We'd be twisting in the wind. The business model just doesn't work...

Then yesterday, the news release that CoreLogic acquired a la mode was issued. April Fools...right? Nope. And again, we are being assured that

“ **Question:** a la mode has always advocated for appraisers. Will that continue?

**Answer:** Absolutely. CoreLogic is one of the largest employers of Appraisers. In fact, we believe we can have an even stronger advocacy position as a part of CoreLogic.

**Question:** Will CoreLogic have access to my appraisal data?

**Answer:** a la mode, as part of CoreLogic, will continue to honor the product licensing agreement which outlines how we treat the data. We will continue to treat data securely and notify you to get your explicit agreement if something changes.

Per **their Q&A** regarding the sale of a la mode, future products like Titan Reports and SmartExchange were the driving forces behind this transaction:



3 Easy Steps  
1. Click "Continue"  
2. Run and Install  
3. Open new Tab

MyQuick → Converter

“ **Question:** Why did CoreLogic buy a la mode?

**Answer:** CoreLogic is a leading provider of technology, analytics and services in the Valuation space. Our commitment to appraisers plus our current products and future ones like Titan Reports and SmartExchange were driving forces behind this transaction. Both a la mode and CoreLogic are

*focused on helping you work faster, more accurately, and with the highest level of credibility and support. Our entire history of products, from DOS? TOTAL to Titan embodies that unwavering commitment. We see the acquisition by CoreLogic as a next exciting stage in a la mode's evolution.*

Should we be concerned about the future of our data knowing what we know about **Corelogic**?

About a month ago, we called a la mode and asked if the rumor of Corelogic's acquisition was true. Our annual subscription was coming up and we didn't want to renew if that was the case. We were told such rumors were baseless and unfounded. Reassured, we renewed our subscription less than two weeks ago. But when we heard the unsettling news, we called to find out if 1) we would get a prorated refund of our renewal fee when we cancel and 2) if they would confirm that we were not participating in their SmartExchange program. The answer to our first question was no. They do not offer a refund of the annual renewal fee. We also found out that we were automatically opted in the SmartExchange program even though we never chose to participate. We asked to be removed from the program immediately. They later called us back to let us know that they would offer us a full refund if we wanted to cancel. We are now looking at the few competitors and plan to switch:

- **Clickforms** is owned by Jeff Bradford. An appraiser is working with Bradford to offer a discount to those wanting to switch
- **SFREP** – "SFREP is giving away their current software to new customers for free for 6 months in the lead up to the release of their all new version, Appraise-It Pro, later this year. Appraise-It Pro is being re-written from the ground up and will be 64 bit aimed at the new generation of computer hardware. Features like flood maps and their mobile app will be charged but the full suite with comp management, image management and basic sketching will be free. Also, if you already own Apex 5 or 6, that will also integrate for free. After that, Appraise-It Pro will be just \$49 per month"
- **Homeputer** – "HomePuter® is an independently owned and operated company with decades of appraisal and programming experience, specializing in designing and selling Windows based Real Estate Appraisal Software. The HomePuter® FPS 9.2 includes software for the latest appraisal forms and addenda, building sketch processor, importing and labeling maps or documents, digital photo addenda, signature scan, Compliance Checker, UAD (Uniform Appraisal Dataset) Interface, Fannie Mae/FreddieMac /FHA / VA MISMO 2.6 GSE and non-GSE XML delivery, AI Ready™(AppraisalPort® and ENV delivery), StreetLinks Plug-In Delivery, HotSPOT and Sky Delivery Certified, and Adobe Acrobat PDF Compatible, all for one low price – \$249."
- **reggora** – there isn't much information about who owns this company and who is behind this software. We did not find an about page on their website. WHOIS information is **private**. It appears to be a free cloud base appraisal software. Not enough information to form an opinion and we are not too keen about cloud based software
- **ACI – First American** created one of the first and worst hybrids **PACE PRO** product with **ACI**. Needless to say, they won't be getting our business

**Mark Skapinetz** posted the following announcement on his 100% Real Estate Appraisers Facebook Group:



**Mark Skapinetz** Admin · 11 hrs · Marietta, GA

Ok. So let me say this. I would like everyone here who uses a la mode that is pissed or looking to jump ship to do me this favor. Wait. Wait about 2-3 weeks before you decide to go elsewhere. I've known something for a good period of time now and while I can't say what it is just yet I will soon. Take a deep breath and trust me on this. I wouldn't steer any of you wrong. You may like what I will present to you or hate it. But it saves you the hassle later if you love it like I do. Y'all are like family here and I just want to be honest and open with y'all.

  78 35 Comments

Social media was flooded with comments by appraisers disappointed with the news



Many wrote to the **DOJ**, the **FTC** and complained to their state organizations. And one appraiser wrote the following to the **U.S. Department of Justice**:

“ Dear Sir or Madam,

*I write to you today on the topic of the proposed purchase of Al A Mode technologies by Corelogic. Al A Mode technologies is a software company primarily in the real estate business, and more specifically & primarily geared toward use by real estate appraisers. Al A Mode provides the software for completing & reporting the actual appraisals and is the largest software firm in this industry by quite a degree.*

*Corelogic as you may know, has a hand in many industries, but is primarily also in real estate and mortgage financing areas.*

*The complaint I have, as do thousand of others, is that Corelogic is, per communication from Al A Mode, in contract to purchase Al A Mode. For an industry like this, where there has been so much consolidation already, and there are very few small players in the process left, Corelogic is becoming a full on monopoly in the appraisal industry. This purchase will help solidify this.*

*AVMs (automated valuation modules; Zillow, etc.) pull data from some public sources and MLS systems across the country. However, Corelogic, by purchase of Al A Mode, will have a distinct advantage over all of the others by getting actual human verified data from thousands of appraisers across the country, thus creating a monopoly in that field as well.*

*You see, about a decade ago when the real estate industry went into melt down, congress stepped in and worked to help protect independence for the appraiser (with mixed results), as it is important for humans to see, judge, verify, value, and report on real estate without pressure or influence to keep the real estate market in check. Since Corelogic is already the MLS (multiple listing service- where all listings and data are reported) for many major market areas across the country, hires appraisers through their own appraisal management company, provides the service to deliver these completed reports to many of the lenders across the country, and now wants to own the platform in which the majority of this work is already performed on, a company with this much involvement in the process can effectively put an independent appraisal professional, firm, or small appraisal management company out of business should they decide to 'cut them off' from the giant system of real estate they are working on consolidating. In addition, the more Corelogic owns of the system, the less of a competitive advantage smaller appraisal firms, appraisal management companies, credit unions, small banks, and any of the supporting industry individuals will ever have a fighting chance of being truly independent ever again. The size of Corelogic is fast becoming overwhelming to the appraisal industry and I truly believe this purchase needs to be examined and stopped.*

*I do not know much about trade laws, (I know nothing honestly) but I know that I choose to work as a self employed individual, where I protect the risk of buyers, sellers and lenders in the real estate world everyday. This purchase and consolidation will perhaps be a catalyst to putting myself and thousands of others out of self employed work in the short term.*

*Thank you for your time.*

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