



Mark Sampson

*This Article*  
**Compliments of Call Realty**  
[www.pvsouthbayrecareer.com](http://www.pvsouthbayrecareer.com)

# Build a better browser for your real estate business

*Add-ons can simplify, improve your online experience*

BY TOM FLANAGAN

There has been a huge shift from the desktop to the browser over the last few years. Real estate agents spend a tremendous amount of time working in the browser space, utilizing multiple listing service, e-mail, social media and other Web apps.

I thought it would be fun to break down some of the coolest browser extensions and add-ons that could be useful to the real estate industry.

I have showcased three add-ons from the top four browsers: Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome and Safari. I apologize in advance to all of the [Opera](#) users. We'll save that browser for another article.

Mozilla reports that 2,336,946,459 add-ons have been downloaded for Firefox. If you are not familiar with add-ons, they are simply applications that extend and customize your browser's functionality. They are fast and easy to install. Best of all, they can save you time.

Whether you are a Mac or PC user, there are plenty of add-ons for your browser of choice. Apple released the [Safari Extensions Gallery](#) with the fifth version of the Safari browser (the extensions are developed with HTML5, CSS3 and JavaScript). Internet Explorer offers three types of add-ons:

1. **Accelerator:** allows a user to utilize an online service when selecting text on a Web page. For example, highlighting a property address on a details page could launch a service such as Google Maps to access the location and directions.

2. **Toolbar:** a third-party app that is added to your browser's graphical user interface (GUI) as a plug-in.
3. **Web Slice:** introduced in Internet Explorer 8, Web Slice is a feed technology that allows users to "keep up with updated sites directly from the favorites bar," according to an online description. Internet Explorer is the only browser to support a Web slice natively.

Let's take a look at some add-ons and extensions.

## Firefox

- **WiseStamp:** I love this add-on and have been using it for quite some time. The WiseStamp app allows you to enhance and customize your e-mail signature by including your social media profiles. You can also include dynamic content, such as news headlines or tweets, which is an excellent way to engage clients. The signatures are clean and lightweight.
- **TinyURL Generator and Bit.ly:** Looking to generate short, clean URLs for Twitter, chatting or QR (quick response) codes for "just listed" cards? Both TinyURL Generator and Bit.ly offer Firefox add-ons to help avoid URL clutter.
- **Delicious:** It's been quite the saga for the popular social bookmarking service. Back in December, when rumors surfaced that Yahoo was planning on "sunsetting" the site, many users -- including myself -- began scrambling for alternative services. Despite the announcement that the service would not be shut down, many migrated to applications such as Diigo and Google Bookmarks. Until then, I never realized just how important bookmarking was to my workflow. Although the future of Delicious is still unknown, it is an essential add-on.
- Browse all [Firefox add-ons](#).

## Chrome

- **TabJump:** Chrome certainly offers some fantastic extensions, and TabJump just might be my favorite. "TabJump highlights frequently used tabs and related tabs so you can easily jump between them," according to an online description. The best feature, hands down, is the ability to relaunch closed tabs.
- **Turn Off the Lights:** I ranked video fourth in my "[Top 10 tech trends of 2010](#)," and it may rank higher in 2011. With so many cool video services

available on the Web, "Turn Off the Lights" is a nifty little tool that fades the entire Web page to dark to enhance the viewing experience.

- [Evernote](#): This add-on "makes it easy to remember and find all of the great stuff you see online. Save full pages, including text, links and images with a single click," according to an online description. Evernote works *extremely* well and syncs from your browser to multiple devices, including smart phones and tablets.
- Browse [Chrome extensions](#).

## Internet Explorer

- [Google Maps](#) (Accelerator): Mapping is an essential tool in real estate and Google Maps is a valuable Accelerator add-on. Just select an address on a Web page and click the Accelerator icon to launch Google Maps. It's a super quick way to obtain a location or driving directions.
- [Find on LinkedIn](#) (Accelerator): In "[Use LinkedIn for offline networking](#)," Inman News columnist Gahlord Dewald wrote, "LinkedIn sometimes feels like the forgotten stepchild of social media," and noted how LinkedIn can be a powerful business tool. Find on LinkedIn is an extremely handy Accelerator tool. Just highlight a person's name and click the Accelerator icon. You can quickly find the person on LinkedIn. IE users should definitely give this one a try.
- [StumbleUpon](#) (Toolbar): StumbleUpon is a "discovery engine" that helps people find and share websites. It utilizes a rating system for content. I'm typically not a huge fan of Toolbars, but with over 8 million users, StumbleUpon is a resourceful add-on. Enter real estate-related keywords as a topic to StumbleUpon.
- Browse [Internet Explorer add-ons](#).

## Safari

- [Twitter](#): The Twitter extension for Safari is an official release that integrates a ton of features, including search, trends and related tweets. The integration is seamless and, once authenticated, you can even tweet the page that you are viewing with a short URL included.

- **Bing**: The Bing Safari extension functions similarly as the Google Maps Accelerator for Internet Explorer. It's super easy to use: just highlight text on a Web page and get instant maps, translations, flight status, and more.
- **Amazon Wish List**: The Amazon Wish List extension is quick and easy to use. Just "add any item from any website to your wish list with one simple click," as the description states. I just recently installed the extension for Safari, and it works pretty well.
- Browse the **Safari Extensions Gallery**. Many add-ons and extensions support multiple platforms and browsers. Feel free to experiment with a few. I have discovered a few gems that I cannot live without.

*Tom Flanagan is the director of information technology at Residential Properties Ltd. in Providence, R.I. You can contact him at [tflanagan@residentialproperties.com](mailto:tflanagan@residentialproperties.com) or [@tflan](https://twitter.com/tflan) on Twitter.*