



## Microsoft SQL Server Customer Solution Case Study



### Real Estate Website Helps Customers Make Better Decisions with Higher Quality Data

**Customer:** RealtyTrac

**Web Site:** [www.realtytrac.com](http://www.realtytrac.com)

**Customer Size:** 80 employees

**Country or Region:** United States

**Industry:** Professional services—Data services

#### Customer Profile

Based in Irvine, California, RealtyTrac provides an online marketplace of foreclosure properties.

#### Solution Spotlight

- Gives customers more useful data so they can make confident purchasing decisions
- Gives RealtyTrac unique solution that sets it apart in the industry
- Offers data stewards familiar environment in which to manage authoritative list of lender data
- Provides cost-effective, full-featured data solution

For more information about other Microsoft customer successes, please visit: [www.microsoft.com/casestudies](http://www.microsoft.com/casestudies)

"With SQL Server 2012 Data Quality Services, we will help our customers clearly see all lenders involved in a foreclosure. This will help our customers make better, more informed buying and selling decisions."

Richard Sawicky, Senior Director of Database Technology, RealtyTrac

To help its customers make real estate decisions, RealtyTrac needed to provide more accurate property data and a clearer view of each property's mortgage information. The company deployed a Microsoft solution to take advantage of tools that information workers can use to improve data quality and analysis. With accurate and comprehensive data, RealtyTrac can help its customers make better decisions and improve its own competitive advantage. It also expects to save IT time and costs.

#### Business Needs

RealtyTrac operates a real estate website that lists up-to-date information on more than 1.5 million U.S. pre-foreclosure, auction, and bank-owned properties. "For consumers and real estate agents, this is mission-critical data that they use to make buying and selling decisions," says Richard Sawicky, Senior Director of Database Technology, RealtyTrac. However, variations in public foreclosure data made it difficult for RealtyTrac to consistently and accurately extract specific slices of the data that many of its customers requested.

Because the company collects data from 2,200 counties, each using its own standards, RealtyTrac has struggled to extract and post some portions of the raw public record data. "There is no standard for the data we process, so it is subject to high variability," says Sawicky. The financial crisis and the complexity of the mortgage industry have also made it challenging to obtain reliable data. Each mortgage now involves a huge amount of data from all financial parties, and many of the 1.6 million rows of lender records in the company's primary database were slight





variations of similar entities. The RealtyTrac lender database also required two full-time employees to monitor and manually correct data variations.

In addition, RealtyTrac had no way of clearly presenting which financial parties fell under the primary lender and which were from a lender that had been acquired by the primary one. That meant customers had difficulty deciphering reports and did not follow through on property purchases.

RealtyTrac sought new technology that would help it provide a solution framework to model the complex relationships of the financial companies involved in a mortgage.

## Solution

Although it considered building an internal solution, RealtyTrac decided instead to deploy [Microsoft SQL Server 2012](#) data management software. "It was not a difficult decision because we have been using Microsoft technologies successfully for many years," says Sawicky. The company was also interested in using new data-quality tools in SQL Server 2012.

In March 2011, RealtyTrac implemented a proof of concept for a new lender database solution, which it populated with 275,000 known good records about lenders and their business lines. For several months, the company used [Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Data Quality Services](#) to create a knowledge base about the data, using that knowledge to cleanse data on the 850-gigabyte transactional database. Each night, Data Quality Services cleansed new foreclosure records via [Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Integration Services](#). The data will be exposed on the company's website and business-to-business products.

RealtyTrac also wanted to take advantage of the [Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Master Data Services Add-in for Microsoft Excel](#), which helps users easily update master data in Microsoft Excel 2010 spreadsheet software without compromising data integrity. The

Add-in for Excel provides subject matter experts with direct access to information in a tool they are familiar with.

RealtyTrac expects to implement the solution in November 2011, on Dell PowerEdge R905 server computers. The firm is also considering using Data Quality Services to assist with the address matching and validation process.

## Benefits

With the Microsoft solution, RealtyTrac will offer higher quality data, helping website users make better decisions and improving the company's competitive advantage. RealtyTrac will also give employees better tools while saving IT time and costs.

### Improves Decision Making and Competitive Advantage

With SQL Server 2012, RealtyTrac will have a solution that accurately presents ground-breaking data showing the complex relationships of all parties in a mortgage. During its proof of concept, RealtyTrac saw solid improvements in data accuracy by reducing the number of variants in transactional data and creating hierarchical relationships between a large bank's acquisition and the business lines of both entities. Sawicky says, "We were able to roll 105 unique names into a single entity, while retaining the relevant details for all entities involved in a mortgage loan."

With the ability to capture accurate, comprehensive data, RealtyTrac will give its customers more useful lender and servicer data so they can make confident decisions. "With SQL Server 2012 Data Quality Services, we will help our customers clearly see all lenders involved

in a mortgage," says Sawicky. "This will help our customers make better, more informed buying and selling decisions, and will give us a unique solution that we believe will set us apart in the industry."

### Empowers Employees to Enhance Data

RealtyTrac subject matter experts will now be able to take ownership of the data they understand best. "With the Master Data Services Add-in for Excel in SQL Server 2012, our data stewards will use a familiar environment to manage the authoritative list of lender master data," Sawicky says. With that ability, these experts will quickly categorize and enhance the array of companies associated with larger lenders. "Now, we can provide unsurpassed insight into this data, including information that is difficult to correlate such as loan pools. This is critical for business growth because loan pool data analysis is an area that no other consumer website is addressing."

### Saves IT Time and Costs

Once deployed, the solution will eliminate the previous manual data scrubbing processes. Sawicky says, "As our SMEs directly enhance the master data, the more detailed, unique, and valuable our data will become without additional development".

RealtyTrac also expects cost savings. "To create an internal solution would have been labor-intensive and costly for IT," says Sawicky. "We would have to build a custom solution that would only get us 60 percent of the way there. Instead, we have a cost-effective, full-featured Microsoft data solution that can be set up quickly, is simple to manage, and is highly adaptable by the users."

## Software and Services

- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
  - Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Enterprise
- Technologies
  - Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Data Quality Services

- Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Integration Services
- Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Master Data Services Add-In for Excel

## Hardware

- Dell PowerEdge R905 server computers