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Social media is not just a means to keep up with friends. Blogging, Twitter and Facebook could all be paths to your next apartment or condo.

The real estate industry is tapping into social media to spread housing news with conversational ease.

"I think a blog is unique in a couple of ways," said Christina Aragon of Rent.com, a top Internet real-estate listing site. "It's a way of putting out information that is fresh. It spurs dialogue among users. It really builds community around rental living."

Rent.com has just launched its official blog, "The Shared Wall," to spread a wealth of info about the renting world.

Aragon said that because Rent.com, works with the rental industry, it has knowledge of apartments and apartment life that goes beyond rental listings, and now has a vehicle to share it.

"The blog is meant to be a resource for renters. We wanted to offer customers information they could use before, during and after the move," she said.

As one of its first posts, Rent.com observed Earth Day with a blog about green apartment living. Each week, renters can check for posts on breaking news, survey data, rental trends, and tips for renters on moving, rent-negotiating and more.

George Cahn, president of Hoboken-based Cahn Communications, a public relations agency specializing in real estate, is excited about blogging's potential to spark interest in both rentals and condos.

"What we recognize, like millions of others, is just how prevalent online communities have become, whether it's blogging or Facebook or another medium," he said.

"There are new ways to deliver info on our clients' communities in a way that they [prospective home buyers and renters] want to receive it," he said.

A "new vehicle to reach new audiences," blogging draws folks because it lacks the sales pitch one might find in a housing community's Web site, he said.

Cahn said that social media are a "much more casual way to communicate with people. It's not in your face, it's very quick, and it can be effective." They can also drive traffic to a Web site, and Facebook is a "great way to have the community sell itself."

People might not be looking for a new home at all when they connect to a blog.

"We know Morristown and what takes place in Morristown," he said, so the blog becomes a guide to shopping, restaurants, public transportation and events.

And who knows? While exploring Morristown and its treasures, folks might be inspired to explore housing opportunities in town, like those available at the 40 Park condo development, which also has ties to Twitter and Facebook.

If there's any drawback to these social media, it's that people can post negative views of a community. But rather than disregard the negative, Cahn said often it's a chance to gain public feedback and make changes where warranted.

Social media is also strong at AvalonBay, which offers apartments throughout the Northeast, and locally in Edgewater, East Rutherford and Jersey City.

"We have Facebook sites at many of our communities. They are set up and managed and monitored daily," said Kevin Thompson, vice president of marketing for AvalonBay.

With connections to hundreds of people, he said that Facebook becomes a "community within a community." Beyond the apartment community, he said Facebook, like the successful page at Avalon Fort Greene in Brooklyn, draws from the neighborhood with its vast array of info on local events, restaurants, and more.

Thompson said that AvalonBay does not see much potential for blogging to attract renters, but views blogging more as a means to share online editorials on a real-estate topic or the market in general.

He said that blogs can be a challenge to maintain for renters because of the need for fresh, relevant content.

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