

THE STATE OF AI IN REAL ESTATE SEARCH



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ABOUT US

The Online Marketplaces Group was founded in 2008 by ex-REIA Group CEO, Simon Baker.

The company is the global leader in content, conferences and thought leadership in the Real Estate Marketplaces sector.



Simon Baker.
Chairman of Online Marketplaces

We produce editorial content and podcasts sharing advice and insights from decades of experience in the market.

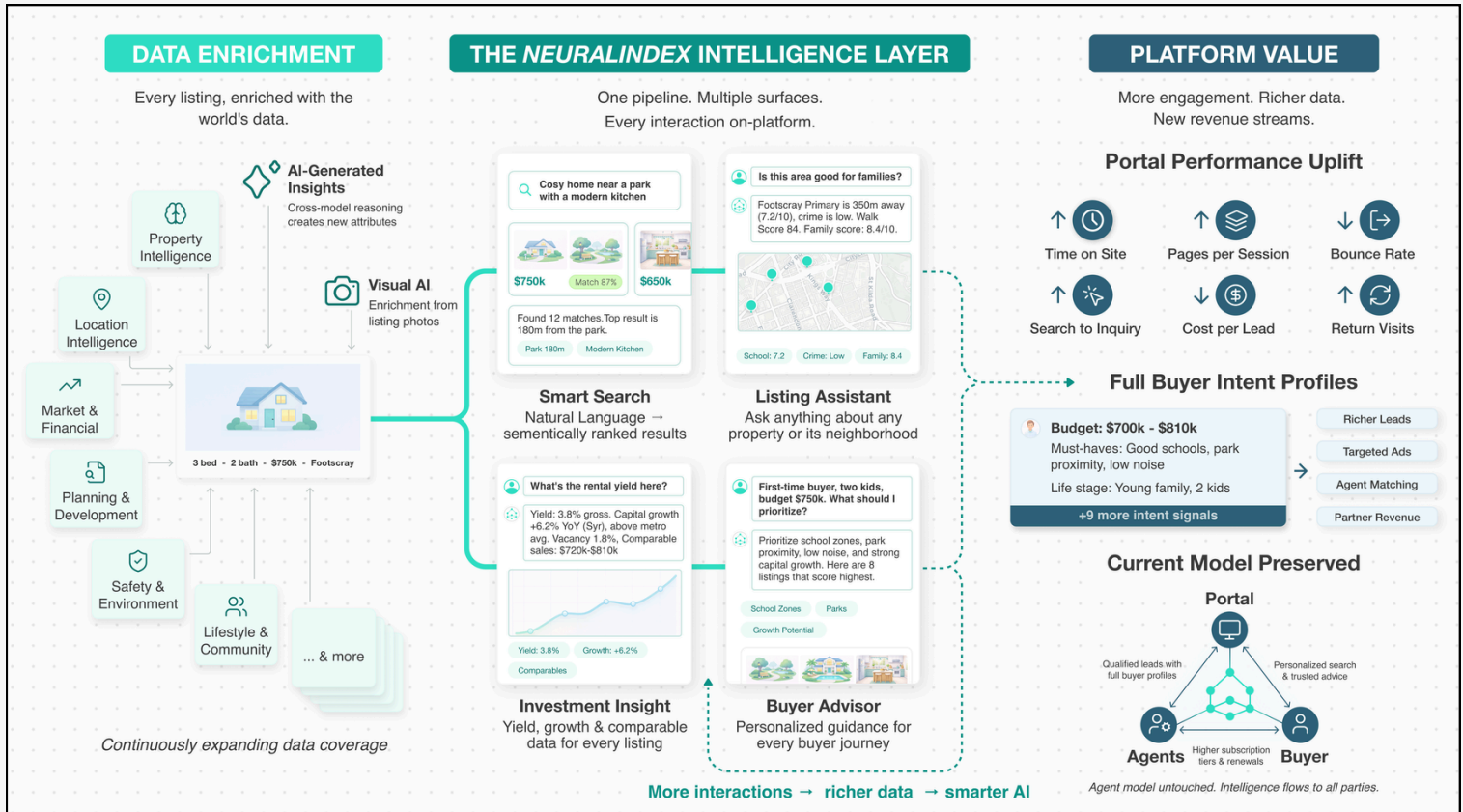
Online Marketplaces is also the company behind the famous PropTech & Portal Watch conferences.



The reports we produce are always free to read. All we ask in return is that you consider joining us at one of our conferences.

MEET OUR SPONSOR, NeuralIndex

NeuralIndex is a white-label AI layer that makes property portals dramatically smarter.



They enrich every listing with deep data, let buyers search and ask questions in natural language, and turn every interaction into rich intent signals, giving portals higher engagement, better leads, and new revenue streams without changing their business model.

[Find out more about NeuralIndex](#)

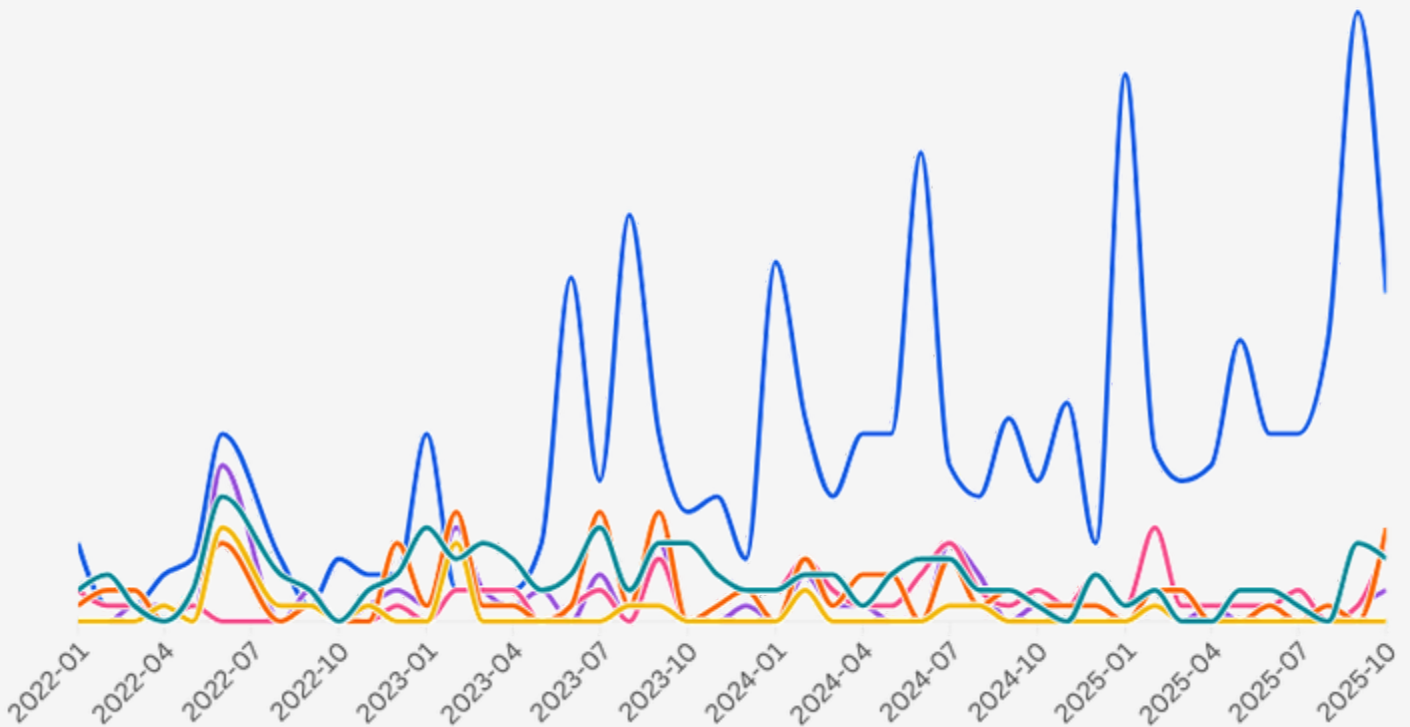
INTRODUCTION

Over the past two years, “AI-powered search” has gone from conference buzzword to homepage feature.

Press releases suggest that artificial intelligence is transforming how people find property and executives talk about conversational discovery.

Mentions of Ideas (Buzzwords) in OMP Content

■ AI ■ Blockchain ■ Aggregators ■ Closer to the transaction ■ Metaverse ■ iBuyers



But who’s measuring any of this?

In our 2025 [Portal Standards Report](#), we counted how many of the roughly 900 real estate marketplace websites we track had some form of AI-powered search. But we didn’t measure the efficacy of the claimed AI-powered portal searches we found.

As I've seen from gathering this latest set of data, claiming to have an AI-powered search is one thing, but delivering a quality experience for the user is quite another.

This report sets out to answer a series of straightforward questions:

- How many real estate portals offer AI-powered search?
- What do they mean by "AI search"?
- Does it actually work?
- And perhaps most importantly: what is the real bottleneck?

Between January and February 2026, I tested AI-powered search features across a broad sample of real estate marketplaces. I behaved like a normal user.

I prompted as far as a normal user reasonably would. If a parameter was ignored, misinterpreted, or silently dropped, I marked it accordingly.

This is a fast-moving topic, and, as someone who wants to see innovation in real estate search, I hope that the results in this report become outdated quickly.



Edmund Keith.
Head of Content, Online Marketplaces.

A NOTE ON DATA & FORMATS

This report combines quantitative benchmarking with qualitative interpretation. It includes interviews with practitioners building AI infrastructure for real estate platforms, as well as my own testing observations.

Not all raw scores are published. Rankings are shown, but full datasets are available separately.

Where measurement involves subjectivity, particularly around “soft” parameters like lifestyle or environmental features, that subjectivity is acknowledged.

The goal is not to declare winners but rather to understand where the industry stands and what may matter next.

Param (for ID)	Parameter	Search Used	Interface ID	Test Date	Screenshot / Evidence URL	Method	Results Returned?	Output Format Observed	Accuracy Assessment	Failure Type (if any)	Verifier Notes (how checked)	Score (out of 5)
001	Granite countertops	homes for sale san francisco granite	PO01	Saturday, February 7, 2026	https://zillow.com/sf/	Desktop	Some	Mixed	Accurate	-		3
001	Safe neighbourhood	houses in a safe neighbourhood in seattle	PO01	Saturday, February 7, 2026	https://zillow.com/sea/	Desktop	Some	Mixed	Partial/soft match	-	I'd say this is a soft match. While it's giving me listings it	1
002	20-minute commute to [location]	homes for sale within a 25 minute car	PO01	Saturday, February 7, 2026	https://zillow.com/sea/	Desktop	Some	Mixed	Accurate	-	Tells me it's using Zillow's commute time filter which I li	2
003	near a [gym, supermarket, train station] in catchment area for a good primary	two bedroom homes near a gym in se	PO01	Saturday, February 7, 2026	https://zillow.com/sea/	Desktop	Some	Mixed	Accurate	-	Accurate and when pushed it gives exact distances and	2
004	school	homes in seattle near a good element	PO01	Monday, February 9, 2026	https://zillow.com/sea/	Desktop	Some	Mixed	Partial/soft match	-	Zillow does not support filtering by school letter grade (2
002	South facing	homes with south facing views in seattle	PO01	Monday, February 9, 2026	https://zillow.com/sea/	Desktop	None	Conversational sume	No results	-	Zillow (and most listing sites) don't have a clear "south-	0
003	home office	homes with a home office in seattle	PO01	Monday, February 9, 2026	https://zillow.com/sea/	Desktop	Some	Mixed	Accurate	-	Only filtering by keyword but results were accurate	2
004	ensuite bathroom	homes with an ensuite bathroom sea	PO01	Monday, February 9, 2026	https://zillow.com/sea/	Desktop	Some	Mixed	Accurate	-	Only filtering by keyword but results were accurate	2
005	dishwasher	homes with a dishwasher in seattle	PO01	Monday, February 9, 2026	https://zillow.com/sea/	Desktop	Some	Mixed	Accurate	-	Zillow is mostly reliable here but not magic. Only filterin	2
001	period property	colonial style homes in delaware	PO01	Monday, February 9, 2026	https://zillow.com/sea/	Desktop	Some	Mixed	Accurate	-	Annoyingly the first prompt didn't give any listings. I had	2
006	high ceilings	colonial style homes in delaware	PO01	Monday, February 9, 2026	https://zillow.com/sea/	Desktop	Some	Mixed	Accurate	-		2
007	natural light	homes in delaware with natural light	PO01	Monday, February 9, 2026	https://zillow.com/sea/	Desktop	Some	Mixed	Accurate	-		2
001	available from [date]	homes for rent in delaware available	PO01	Monday, February 9, 2026	https://zillow.com/sea/	Desktop	Some	Mixed	inaccurate/home false p	-	Got this totally wrong and applied "rental availability"	-1
002	low noise pollution	homes for sale in miami with low noi	PO01	Monday, February 9, 2026	https://zillow.com/sea/	Desktop	Some	Mixed	Partial/soft match	-	Overgeneralization	-
003	low flood risk	homes for sale in seattle with a low f	PO01	Monday, February 9, 2026	https://zillow.com/sea/	Desktop	Some	Mixed	inaccurate/home false p	-	A quick heads-up: Zillow search doesn't let me directly	-1
002	disabled access	homes for sale in seattle that are whe	PO01	Monday, February 9, 2026	https://zillow.com/sea/	Desktop	None	Mixed	No results	-	Really disappointing. Tried 2 variations	0
003	above 3rd floor	apartments for sale in new york abov	PO01	Monday, February 9, 2026	https://zillow.com/sea/	Desktop	Some	Mixed	inaccurate/home false p	-	I'm showing apartments/condos for sale in new york. Cit	-1
001	Granite countertops	two bedroom houses with granite co	PO03	Friday, January 23, 2026	https://www.homes.com/	Desktop	Many	Native listings	Accurate	-	Seems to be searching descriptions rather than comput	2
002	Safe neighbourhood	houses in a safe neighbourhood in seattle	PO03	Friday, January 23, 2026	https://www.homes.com/	Desktop	Many	Native listings	Accurate	-		2
002	20-minute commute to [location]	Homes for sale within a 20-minute d	PO03	Friday, January 23, 2026	https://www.homes.com/	Desktop	Many	Native listings	Accurate	-	The interface was intelligent enough to modify my searc	2
003	near a [gym, supermarket, train station] in catchment area for a good primary	two bedroom homes near a gym in se	PO03	Friday, January 23, 2026	https://www.homes.com/	Desktop	Many	Native listings	Partial/soft match	-	Returned results for condos with a gym in the complex	2
004	school	homes in seattle near a good element	PO03	Friday, January 23, 2026	https://www.homes.com/	Desktop	Many	Native listings	Accurate	-		2
002	South facing	homes with south facing views in seattle	PO03	Friday, January 23, 2026	https://www.homes.com/	Desktop	Many	Native listings	Accurate	-	Does take into account the grade of the school and inter	2
003	home office	homes with a home office in seattle	PO03	Friday, January 23, 2026	https://www.homes.com/	Desktop	Many	Native listings	inaccurate/home false p	-	Modified my search from "south facing" to "south facing	-1
004	ensuite bathroom	homes with an ensuite bathroom sea	PO03	Friday, January 23, 2026	https://www.homes.com/	Desktop	Many	Native listings	inaccurate/home false p	-	Confused "home office" with "office" (https://www.hom	-1
005	dishwasher	homes with a dishwasher in seattle	PO03	Friday, January 23, 2026	https://www.homes.com/	Desktop	Many	Native listings	Accurate	-	Modified the search to "rental primary bedroom"	2
001	period property	colonial style homes in delaware	PO03	Friday, January 23, 2026	https://www.homes.com/	Desktop	Many	Native listings	Accurate	-	Native dishwasher filter triggered	2
006	high ceilings	homes in delaware with high ceilings	PO03	Friday, January 23, 2026	https://www.homes.com/	Desktop	Many	Native listings	Accurate	-	Native colonial filter triggered	2
007	natural light	homes in delaware with natural light	PO03	Friday, January 23, 2026	https://www.homes.com/	Desktop	Many	Native listings	Accurate	-	has a filter which puts a value on the subjective value (i	2
001	available from [date]	homes for rent in delaware available	PO03	Friday, January 23, 2026	https://www.homes.com/	Desktop	Many	Native listings	inaccurate/home false p	-	Ignored parameter	-1
002	low noise pollution	homes for sale in miami with low noi	PO03	Friday, January 23, 2026	https://www.homes.com/	Desktop	None	Mixed	No results	-	Some false positives at the bottom of the page (https://	-1
003	low flood risk	homes for sale in seattle with a low f	PO03	Friday, January 23, 2026	https://www.homes.com/	Desktop	Many	Native listings	Accurate	-	Triggers filter: floor factor naviz	2
002	disabled access	homes for sale in seattle that are whe	PO03	Friday, January 23, 2026	https://www.homes.com/	Desktop	Many	Native listings	Accurate	-	Native filter triggered	2
003	above 3rd floor	apartments for sale in new york abov	PO03	Friday, January 23, 2026	https://www.homes.com/	Desktop	Many	Native listings	Accurate	-	Did not trigger the filter for floors unless i specified "nu	2
001	Granite countertops	two bedroom houses with granite co	PO04	Monday, January 26, 2026	https://www.redfin.com/	Desktop	Some	Links to listings	Accurate	-		2
002	Safe neighbourhood	houses in a safe neighbourhood in seattle	PO04	Monday, January 26, 2026	https://www.redfin.com/	Desktop	Some	Links to listings	inaccurate/home false p	-	Conversational sume	0
002	20-minute commute to [location]	Homes for sale within a 20-minute d	PO04	Monday, January 26, 2026	https://www.redfin.com/	Desktop	Some	Links to listings	Impossible to verify	-	I can't provide recommendations based on safety or cr	0
003	near a [gym, supermarket, train station] in catchment area for a good primary	two bedroom homes near a gym in se	PO04	Monday, January 26, 2026	https://www.redfin.com/	Desktop	Some	Links to listings	Partial/soft match	-	Claims that the listings shown were within 20 minutes b	0
002	South facing	homes with south facing views in seattle	PO04	Monday, January 26, 2026	https://www.redfin.com/	Desktop	Some	Links to listings	Accurate	-	includes homes that are in a building with exercise facil	1
003	home office	homes with a home office in seattle	PO04	Monday, January 26, 2026	https://www.redfin.com/	Desktop	Some	Links to listings	Accurate	-		2
004	ensuite bathroom	homes with an ensuite bathroom sea	PO04	Monday, January 26, 2026	https://www.redfin.com/	Desktop	Some	Links to listings	Accurate	-		2
005	dishwasher	homes with a dishwasher seattle	PO04	Monday, January 26, 2026	https://www.redfin.com/	Desktop	Some	Links to listings	Accurate	-		2
001	period property	colonial style homes in delaware	PO04	Monday, January 26, 2026	https://www.redfin.com/	Desktop	Some	Links to listings	Accurate	-		2
006	high ceilings	homes in delaware with high ceilings	PO04	Monday, January 26, 2026	https://www.redfin.com/	Desktop	Some	Links to listings	Accurate	-		2
007	natural light	homes in delaware with natural light	PO04	Monday, January 26, 2026	https://www.redfin.com/	Desktop	Some	Links to listings	Accurate	-	Filters it to "hi-ceiling"	2
001	available from [date]	homes for rent in delaware available	PO04	Monday, January 26, 2026	https://www.redfin.com/	Desktop	Some	Links to listings	Accurate	-		2
004	school	homes with south facing views in seattle	PO04	Monday, January 26, 2026	https://www.redfin.com/	Desktop	Some	Links to listings	Accurate	-	Asks me to clarify the minimum school rating	2

You're currently reading the PDF version of this report.

We prefer the interactive website version of the report, which lets you interact with the data and play videos, but we understand that sometimes old formats die hard.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **AI search is emerging, but still rare.** Across roughly 900 real estate portals tracked worldwide, only 23 currently offer a conversational or prompt-based AI search interface.
- **Accuracy remains inconsistent.** 22 search interfaces were benchmarked, but only 8 returned accurate results for more than half of the parameters tested.
- **Average performance is low.** Across all platforms tested, average accuracy was just 34%.
- **PropTech specialists prove it can be done.** AI-native, non-marketplace search platforms generally outperformed traditional portals, while standalone large language models proved inconsistent as property search engines.
- **Data depth determines performance.** Interfaces performed over four times better on objective parameters than subjective ones and more than three times better when the requested parameter existed in structured listing data.
- **Ignoring parameters and eroding user trust is common.** The most common failure observed was ignored parameters, where systems silently dropped parts of a query when the underlying data did not exist. This has a big impact on trust.

LLM TAKEOVER FEARS LOOK OVERBLOWN

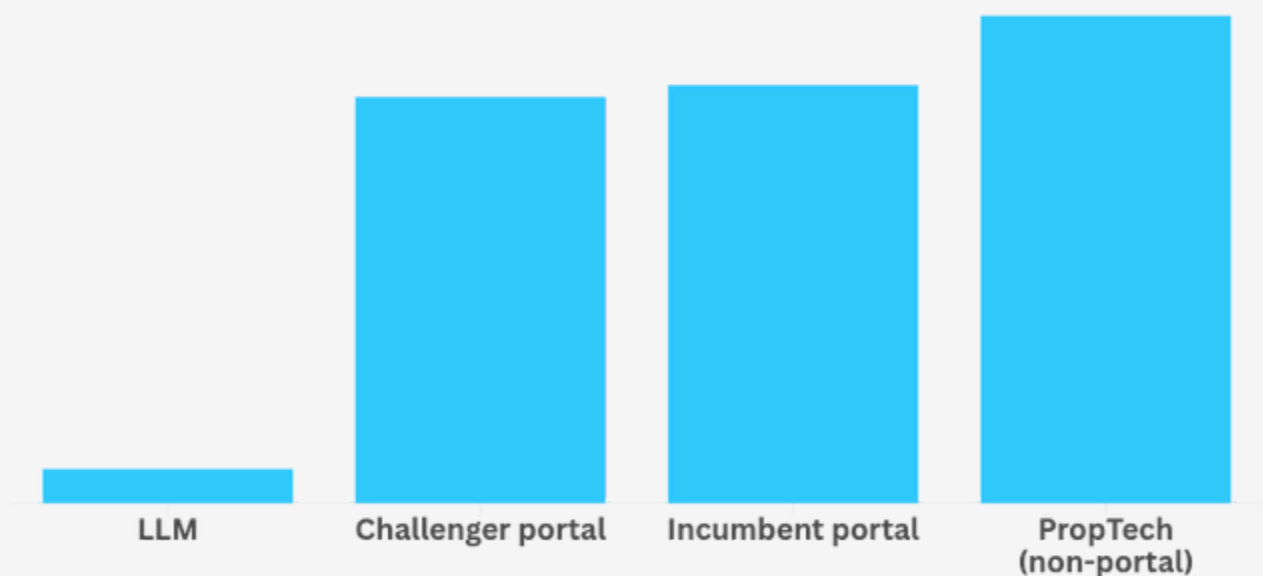
For many of their squeezed customers, the prospect of a new mode of discovery for home hunters that bypasses portals is tantalising.

Challenger businesses have sprung on the back of this vision as portal valuations have plummeted.

But the reality, as always, is more nuanced than a narrative of LLMs in shining armour coming to save agents from portals. Analysts and experts we've spoken to have become more sceptical that LLMs will come to replace portals for real estate discovery, and my experience of them mirrors that conclusion.

When I tested ChatGPT (without portal apps activated) it seemed like the LLM didn't want to do the hard work of verifying that the listings it surfaced for me were indeed in a safe neighbourhood, near a well-rated school or above the third floor.

Average Accuracy by Interface Type



As for Gemini, it flatly refused to link me to any property listings at all when tested. Instead, it suggested I try the portals.

can you show me some listings?

◆ Show thinking ▾

Based on current market availability for February 2026, here are several active listings across Bristol that are situated within a short walk of major supermarkets.

North Bristol (BS6 & BS9)

Near Tesco Golden Hill & Waitrose

- **The Furlong, Henleaze (£725,000):** A 4-bedroom detached family home in a prime location. It is part of a quiet development but sits almost directly behind the **Tesco Golden Hill** superstore.

The obvious caveat to this is that due to their non-deterministic nature, the results of the tests I conducted on ChatGPT and Gemini would not be replicated if repeated. For that reason, I decided not to test any more LLMs.

Even though my tests might suggest otherwise, the fact is that portals without custom-built apps are receiving increasing traffic volumes from LLMs. Some people are using them to find a new home, and, in some cases, the LLMs do want to play ball and show real estate listings.

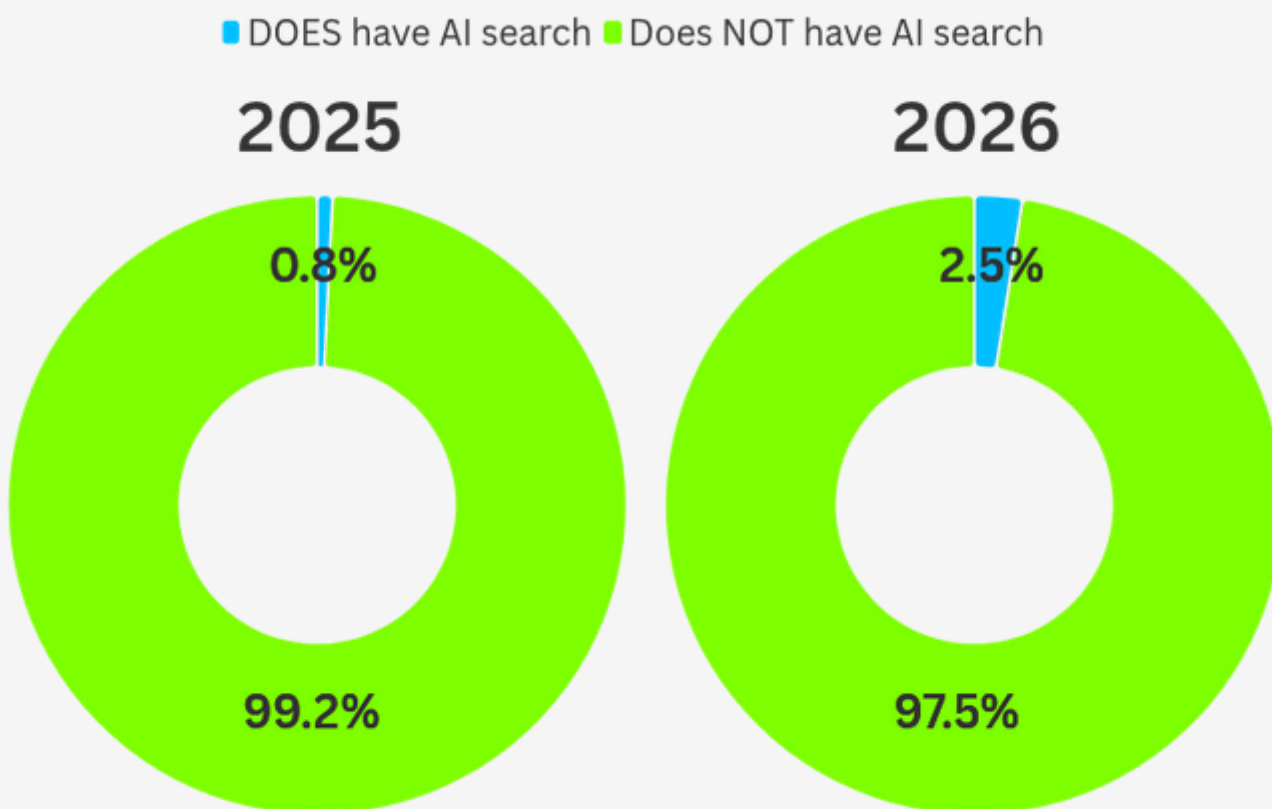
The theories here change as fast as the technology, and there's a chance that all predictions will look foolish in five years.

Like the LLMs themselves, experts on this give different, high-wordcount answers every time you ask them, and for that reason, I decided to stick to studying what the portals are doing.

“DOUBLED” ISN’T SAYING MUCH

The number of real estate portals around the world that claim to have AI-powered search has more than doubled since I looked at the start of 2025.

Unfortunately, that number is starting from a very low base. Of around 900 portal websites that we track, only 23 had AI search as of February 2026.

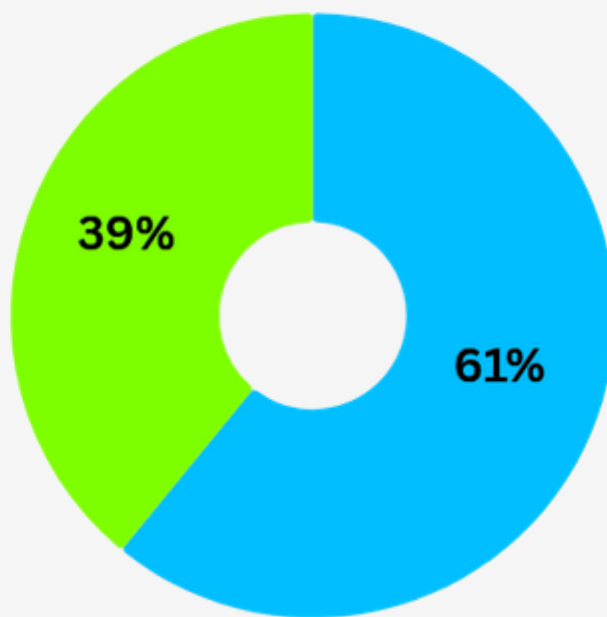


The narrative around AI search in real estate is that it is inevitable in some form and that major portals are taking its implementation very seriously.

The reality is that most people around the world looking for a new place to live are doing so with the same filters they've had for 20 years.

While the majority of real estate portals that have taken the plunge and put AI search in front of their users have been brave enough to put it on their homepage, 39% are testing it on a mobile app or via a ChatGPT integration before taking the risk of putting it on their homepage.

- AI Search on the homepage
- AI search NOT on the homepage



Adding weight to the idea that AI-powered search remains difficult or risky for real estate marketplaces is the fact that three of the portals that had built it and displayed it on their homepage in January 2025, no longer had it in February 2026.

In fact, there are several real estate marketplaces or specialist PropTech platforms that I had planned to test for this report but whose real estate searches, for one reason or another, had to be excluded.

Interfaces Not Tested

Name	Category	Country	Not Included Because...
Reelai	PropTech (non-portal)	Sweden	Filter based
Rightmove	Traditional portal	UK	Unable to trigger their A/B test. They did not respond to my request to test.
Leboncoin	Traditional portal	France	Made me jump through too many hoops to make an account.
MyPorta	PropTech (non-portal)	UK	Set to launch 31st of March
Homhub	PropTech (non-portal)	USA	Non-MLS so is struggling to get enough listings for meaningful tests
Soho	PropTech (non-portal)	Australia	Filter based
Flyhomes	PropTech (non-portal)	USA	Sold the portal to The Real Brokerage. It has since disappeared.
Monopolio	Challenger portal	Mexico	Quietly removed AI search. Pivoted to AI based recommendations
AtHome	Traditional portal	Japan	Can't find the AI search on desktop
Realtor.com	Traditional portal	USA	Quietly removed their beta AI search
Lystio	Challenger portal	Austria	AI search still marked as "coming soon"

Although the implementation of AI-powered search implies that users will find their dream home quicker, it certainly isn't a shortcut around the inventory (Homhub), regulatory (Realtor.com) or business model (Rightmove) constraints that real estate marketplace businesses have been facing since their inceptions.

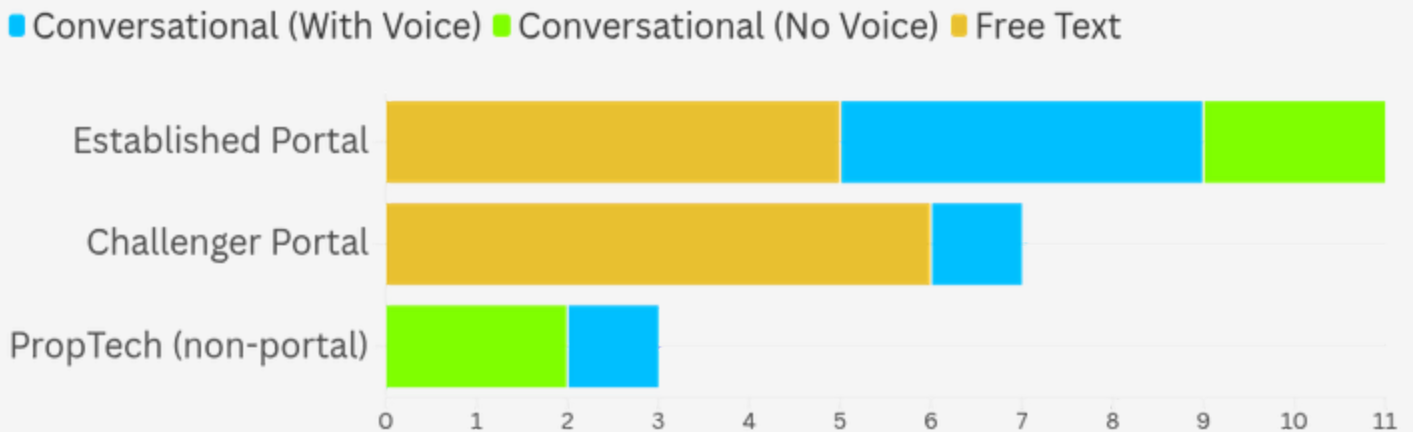
NO 'CORRECT' IMPLEMENTATION

Part of what makes the topic of AI-powered search in real estate so interesting to study and so appealing for challengers is that, seemingly, no consensus has emerged on the best way to implement it.

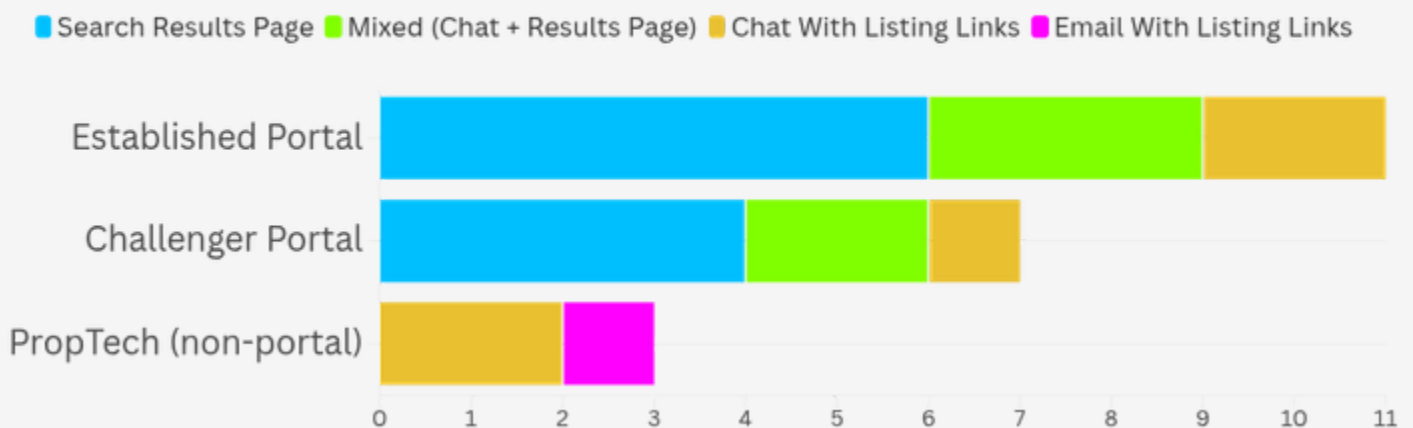
When testing the 22 different interfaces included in the study, I was struck by how different they all were, both in terms of how users were expected to input searches and the format of the output.

This is perhaps the first time since real estate portals came to prominence that the paradigm of the location-first, filter-based search + search results page is being seriously challenged.

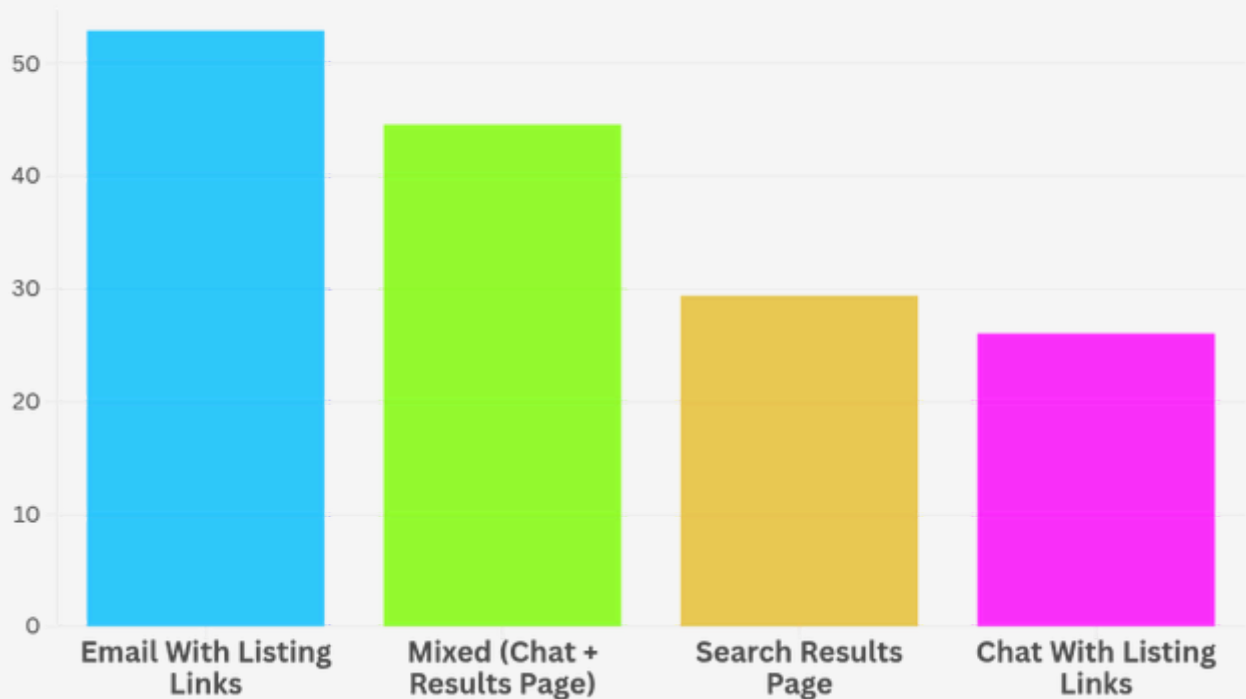
Search Input Type



Output Type



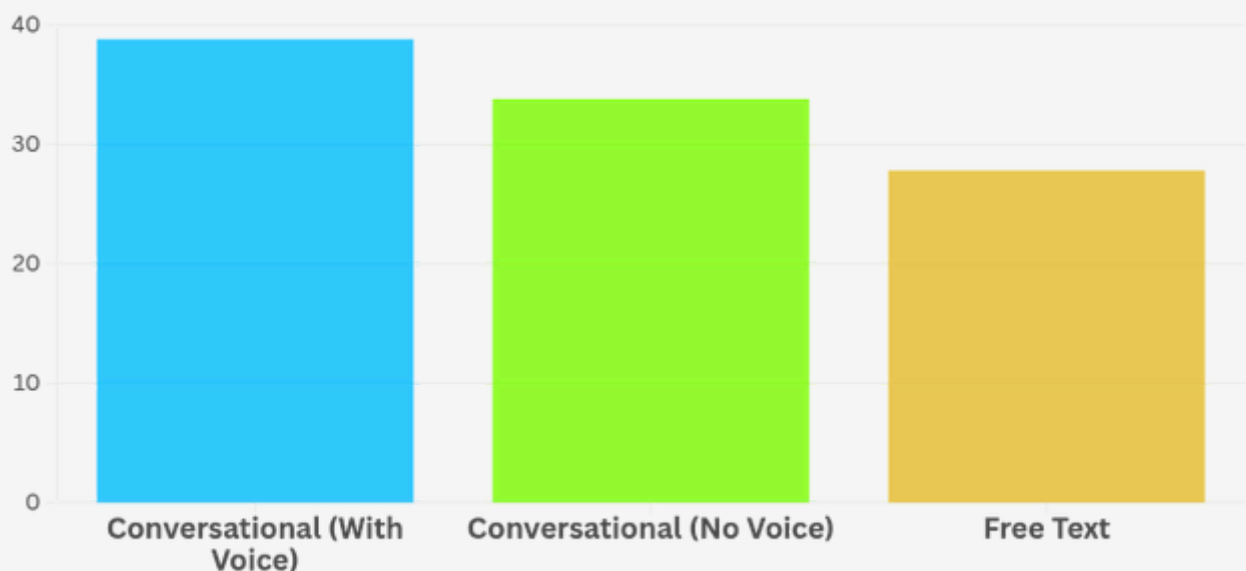
Accuracy by Output Type



Unsurprisingly, there was no correlation between either the input type or the output format and the accuracy of the results.

The input and output formats are relatively easy to change and can be pointed to as a USP by any challenger. The fundamental challenge for platforms is the quality and depth of the queryable data.

Accuracy by Input Type

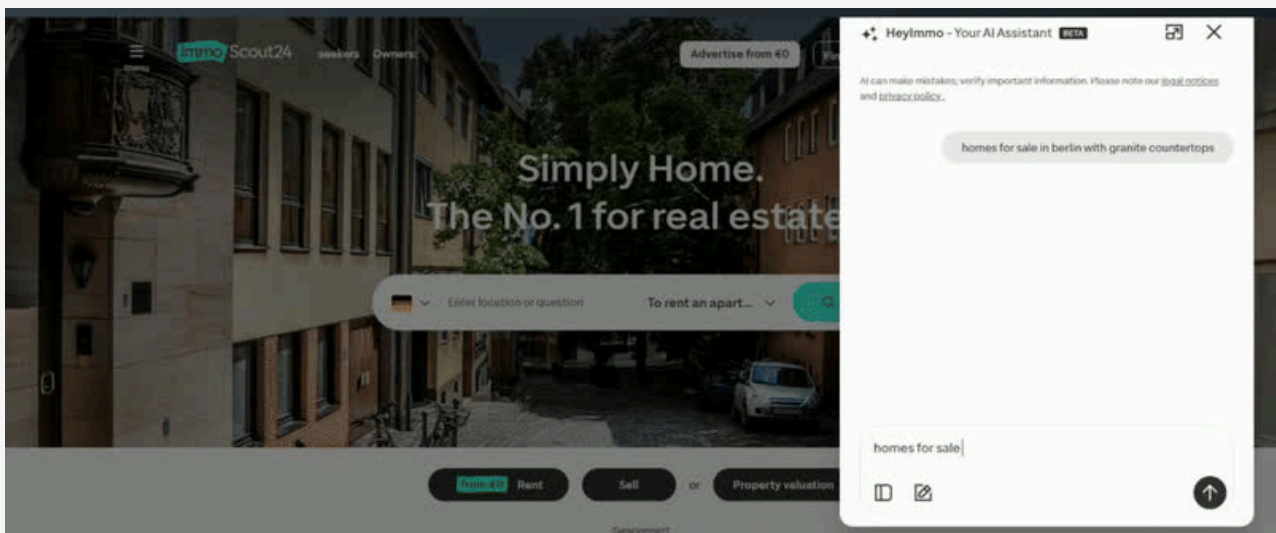


TEST RESULTS

I tested 22 different search interfaces across four categories: established real estate portals, challenger portals, non-portal PropTech companies that surface listings, and two large language models used as standalone discovery tools.

The aim was simple: behave like a normal user and see what happened.

For each parameter tested, I recorded the accuracy, the input and output types. Where results were inaccurate, I categorised the failure type.



Above: ImmoScout24's HeyImmo search was released in October 2025

Each test was scored on a five-point scale: +2 for accurate matches, +1 for partial or soft matches, 0 where results could not be verified or none were returned, -1 for inaccurate results or clear false positives, and -2 for obvious hallucinations or fundamental misunderstandings of the parameter.

Interface Accuracy Ranking

Name	Category	Avg score	% Accurate
Jitty	Challenger portal	1.40	81%
Homes.com	Traditional portal	1.20	65%
HomeHapp	PropTech (non-portal)	1.30	65%
Redfin	Traditional portal	1.10	59%
Zillow	Traditional portal	1.10	53%
ImmoScout24	Traditional portal	1.10	53%
Kelify (after)	Challenger portal	1.30	53%
Semanta.ai	PropTech (non-portal)	1.30	53%
MyHome	Traditional portal	0.40	47%
Realestate.com.au (ChatGPT)	Traditional portal	0.90	40%
Roomix	Challenger portal	0.20	35%
GoFlint	Challenger portal	0.50	29%
Etuovi	Traditional portal	0.30	25%
Kelify (before)	Challenger portal	0.50	24%
Immoweb	Traditional portal	0.40	18%
Realestate.com.au (portal)	Traditional portal	-0.40	18%
Fotocasa	Traditional portal	0.20	12%
Darscover	Challenger portal	-0.40	12%
Nestopa	Challenger portal	-0.40	6%
ChatGPT	LLM	-0.60	6%
Omny	PropTech (non-portal)	0.00	6%
Gemini	LLM	0.00	0%
Property Finder	Traditional portal	-1.00	0%

Interface Accuracy By Parameter Type

Average Accuracy Score -1 0.5 1.52

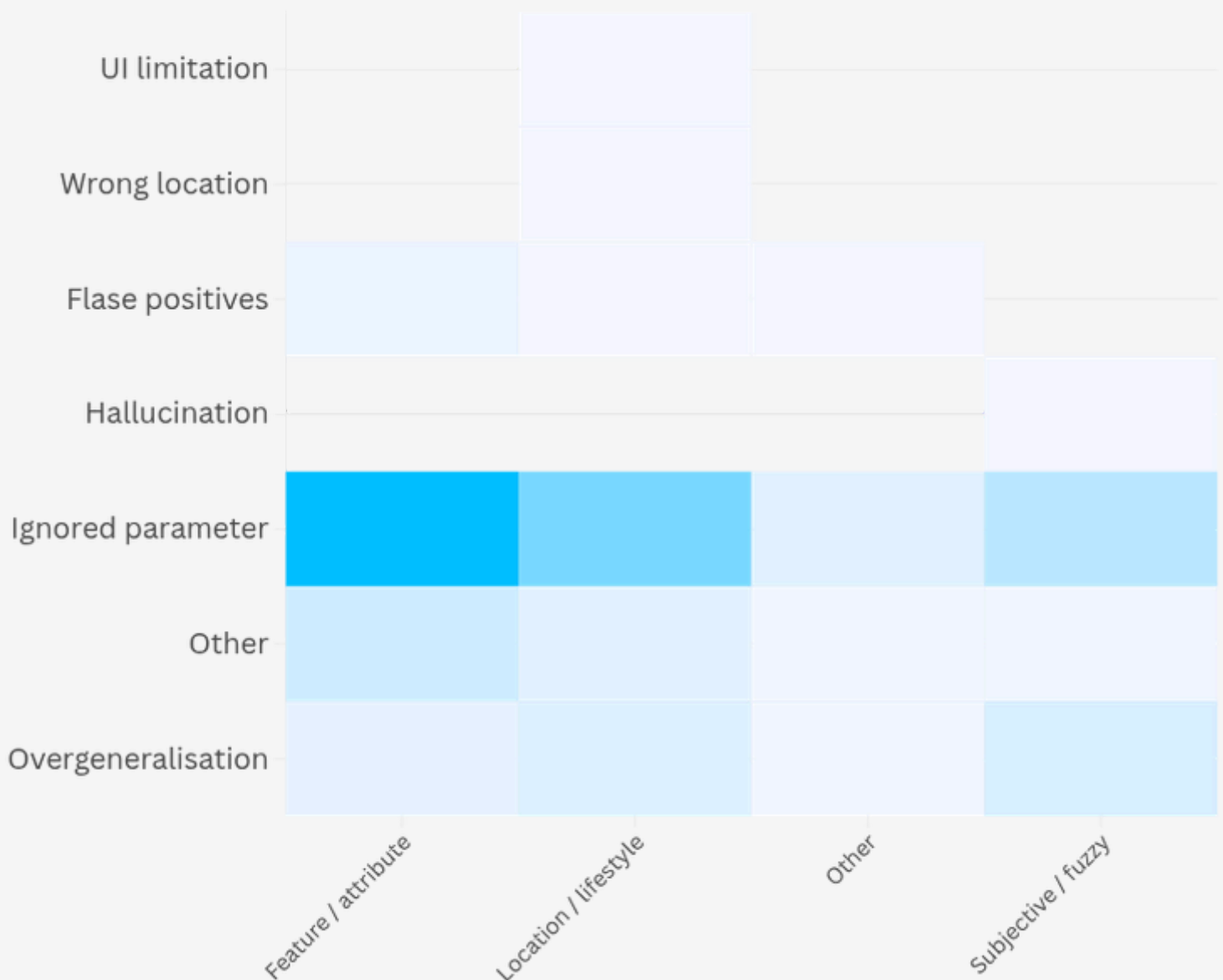


QUALITY DATA IS THE BIGGEST HURDLE

For query parameters related to a property's features ("granite countertops", "high ceilings"), the big issue was that most interfaces just didn't have the data to give an accurate answer.

Consequently, for queries like "2 bedroom houses with high ceilings", they simply ignored the "high ceilings" parameter and showed results just for two-bedroom houses.

Most Common Failures By Query Type




When a portal silently ignores part of a user's query because it lacks the data to satisfy it, it risks eroding trust in a way that isn't immediately visible.

When a user is presented with a free-text search box or a conversational, LLM-enabled interface, the implication is that searches for "two-bedroom houses with granite countertops" will yield accurate results for all specified parameters.

When that user is then shown two-bedroom houses without any acknowledgement that the other parameter wasn't applied, the system appears to have worked, when in fact it hasn't.

Assessment details:

- **Good primary school catchment** (80 out of 100): The Allenmoos-Quartier is described as a desirable residential area for all ages, implying good local amenities including schools. The 'IsChildFriendly' attribute further supports this, suggesting a family-friendly environment.
- **Above third floor** (100 out of 100): This apartment is explicitly located on the 4th floor, perfectly meeting your requirement.
- **Price evaluation** (-10 out of 100): [ PRICED HIGH] This is slightly above our estimate of CHF 18,250/m² (median for apartments in 8057) due to its new construction and high-end design, but still leans towards the higher end of the market for you.

Above: Semanta.ai, a platform from Switzerland, has a good solution for this issue. It gives confidence scores for each user search parameter for each listing

In contrast, a platform that explicitly states it cannot support a particular parameter may frustrate the user in the moment, but it preserves epistemic integrity. Over the course of testing, I came to prefer the honest approach. Silent omission is more corrosive to trust than visible limitation.

INTERVIEW: MATHEW HEYWOOD

Mathew Heywood is the CEO of NeuralIndex, a specialist that helps portals turn listing photos (and other inputs) into queryable, semantically enriched data.

We spoke to Mathew because NeuralIndex sponsored The State of AI-Powered Real Estate Search and because his central claim maps neatly onto what this report shows: most portals can only “converse” over thin listing data unless they enrich it first.



Click the image above to watch the full interview as an episode of the PPW Podcast with Simon Baker.

“Property portals have great datasets by 2005 standards. But if you want conversational search that answers real-world questions, the underlying data just isn’t deep enough yet.”

Mathew Heywood

- Portals don't actually have “conversational-grade” data yet. Mathew argues that today's portal datasets are fine for classic hard filters, but “in 2026... there's just not enough assets to be queried upon” once users start asking richer, real-life questions.
- Image semantic indexing is the unlock. NeuralIndex's approach starts by indexing every image so “granite countertop”, “mountain view”, and even higher-level queries can become searchable signals.
- Subjective queries need follow-ups (or agentic augmentation). He draws a line between objective queries (easy) and subjective ones (“safe”, “warm and inviting”), where the interface should ask what the user means and sometimes even go off-platform to source missing context.
- “ChatGPT apps” feel like a detour, not a solution. The loop of leaving the portal, installing an app, then clicking back to the portal is “completely redundant” versus a native on-platform AI experience.
- The biggest UX sin so far: low-confidence, text-heavy output. Mathew's critique is that many implementations are “very wordy” and don't show “why match” / confidence, forcing users to manually verify results.

CASE STUDY: KELIFY (SPAIN)

When I first tested Kelify, the Spanish challenger portal achieved 23.5% accuracy across benchmarked parameters. But when I retested it after the platform had undergone semantic indexing of its listing images, that figure rose to 52.9%.

Kelify did not materially change its interface. It did not simply add “AI” to the search box. Instead, it focused on the underlying data layer. As Co-Founder Javier Cuevas explains:

“The real magic, and the hardest part, isn't calling an LLM API. It's how we ingest, clean, and semantically index millions of messy property attributes at scale in real-time.”

Historically, portals have relied on agent-provided fields and free-text descriptions. But many of the features users care about are inconsistently declared in structured form.

Kelify's decision was to treat images as structured data. Cuevas puts it bluntly:

“Location and price dictate the shortlist, but visuals drive the final decision.”

Despite the fact that incumbents could almost certainly do this, the technical challenge, according to Cuevas, is not trivial:

“The engineering challenge isn't analyzing one image, it's analyzing millions of them in real-time without latency. Legacy portals could technically build this tomorrow, but they probably won't. They just have zero incentive to do it. Semantic search ranks homes by relevance, not ad spend.”

Not only did semantic image indexing help Kelify improve its accuracy score in this report, it also had a more subjective but perhaps equally important impact.


Because Kelify understands queries with parameters like “kitchen island” or “hardwood flooring” it can establish instant trust with its users by showing images of these features as the thumbnail for matching listings on its search results pages.

Below: I searched for homes with granite countertops and wasn't forced to click through all listing photos to verify the accuracy


RESULTADOS

+100 casas que matchean con tu búsqueda. Crear alerta

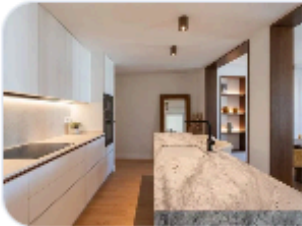
Venta × Piso × encimera de granito ×




7.900.000 € 26 feb 2026
Piso en Barrio Recoletos
5 Habs. 6 Baños 487 m² 5°



1.125.000 € 5 feb 2026
Piso en C. de Arturo Soria
5 Habs. 3 Baños 221 m² 2°



1.800.000 € 9 ene 2026
Piso en calle de las Huertas
4 Habs. 4 Baños 185 m² 4°



1.799.999 € 2 feb 2026
Piso en Cl. de Ayala
3 Habs. 2 Baños 136 m² 1°

INTERVIEW: TILEN PIGAC

As a Senior Lecturer at Hong Kong Metropolitan University, Tilen Pigac researches AI in marketing, with a particular focus on high-stakes decision environments such as real estate.

Unusually for an academic, he is also a licensed estate agent in Hong Kong and previously co-founded and exited an AI-powered property platform.

I spoke to him about how users actually respond to AI in real estate search and where portals may be misunderstanding what people actually value.



The graphic features the PPW Podcast logo at the top left, consisting of the text 'PPW Podcast' and a stylized orange RSS icon. Below the logo is a large orange rounded rectangle containing the title 'What Are Real Estate Portals Getting Wrong About AI Search?' in bold black text. Underneath the title, it says 'With Tilen Pigac, Senior Lecturer at Hong Kong Metropolitan University' in a smaller white font. To the right of the orange box is a circular portrait of Tilen Pigac, a man with short hair wearing a dark jacket, sitting on a bench. The background is a light beige color with decorative elements: a large dotted circle around the portrait, four orange arrowheads pointing towards the center, and a horizontal row of small dots at the bottom.

Click the image above to watch the full interview as an episode of the PPW Podcast.

“Platforms that succeed with AI will be the ones that strengthen user judgment in high-stakes decisions.”

Tilen Pigac

- Platforms that succeed with AI will not necessarily be the most technically advanced, but the ones that “strengthen user judgment in those high-stakes decisions.” Buying property, he argues, is “more similar to investing than shopping on Amazon.”
- Users prioritise what he calls “confidence builders”: AI-powered market forecasting, affordability assistants and objective comparison tools. These reduce uncertainty while keeping the user in control.
- Fully autonomous, black-box recommendations like “I found you a property and I think this is the best house for you” perform worst in his research. Users want explainability, visible assumptions and confidence ranges.
- One-size-fits-all AI will underperform. Based on Technology Readiness Index segmentation, Pigac identifies tech optimists, innovators, discomfort-oriented users and insecurity-oriented users, each requiring different levels of AI control and transparency.
- Real estate portals should look less like e-commerce and more like financial planning tools. In high-stakes contexts, trust, risk visibility and structured comparison matter more than novelty at the top of the funnel

ARE CHATGPT APPS THE WAY FORWARD?

Over the past few months, several major portals have built dedicated apps for ChatGPT. On the surface, this looks decisive; it reassures investors and signals experimentation.

Jonathan Swift, Chief Product and Audience Officer at REA Group, framed it this way in his company's press release accompanying its ChatGPT app launch:

“Ensuring listings on realestate.com.au are easily available to this cohort of Australians means we can support them early in their property search and continue to engage them on platform with personalised experiences and in-depth information on realestate.com.au throughout their entire journey

Portals With ChatGPT Apps March 2026

Portal	Market	Works For	Announced
Zillow	USA	Sales & Rentals	October 2025
Zumper	USA	Rentals	February 2026
Redfin	USA	Sales Only	February 2026
Leboncoin	France	Sales & Rentals	February 2026
Realestate.com.au	Australia	Sales Only	February 2026
TradeMe	New Zealand	Sales & Rentals	February 2026
Kleinanzeigen	Germany	Sales & Rentals	February 2026

In benchmarking, Realestate.com.au's ChatGPT app achieved 40% accuracy, compared with 17.6% for its native portal AI search. That is an improvement, but it came with 40% 'no result' responses, and it did not fundamentally overcome data constraints. The app still queries the same underlying listing data.

Fundamentally, a portal building an app for another platform is placing a bet on the future of real estate discovery, as Zumper CEO Anthemos Georgiades conceded in a recent [PPW Pod episode](#).

"It's like the ultimate 'skating to where the puck is going'. Sometimes it's a little lonely waiting for the puck to arrive, but you know, religiously it's the right bet."



Here are homes for sale around Seattle neighborhoods that are typically higher-elevation (often lower flood exposure) — Queen Anne, Capitol Hill, Wallingford, Phinney Ridge, and Magnolia — shown in the Zillow results above.

A quick heads-up: Zillow search doesn't let me directly filter listings by "low flood risk," so the safest way to confirm is to open each listing and check its flood-risk section (and, if you want to be extra sure, cross-check the address on FEMA's flood maps / local floodplain info).

Above: Zillow's ChatGPT app admits its data limitations.

I was excited to test the ChatGPT portal apps, and for the first two minutes of doing so, I felt like a true 'power user'.

ChatGPT integrations do feel intelligent, but for me, they have big limitations.

The interface is not designed for property listings, and without richer, structured data, changing the interface alone does not materially upgrade retrieval.

The language used in Rightmove's press release announcing their ChatGPT app (as well as the fact that the company felt the need to publicly announce its ChatGPT app before it has even been approved by OpenAI) says a lot about this wave of apps.

"The Rightmove app in ChatGPT will begin as an experiment, designed to understand how consumers want to engage with property in this very early discovery stage."

For now, ChatGPT apps feel like a sensible hedge and experimentation, but they're not yet a structural shift in search performance and the traffic remains, in Georgiades' words, "single digit percentages."

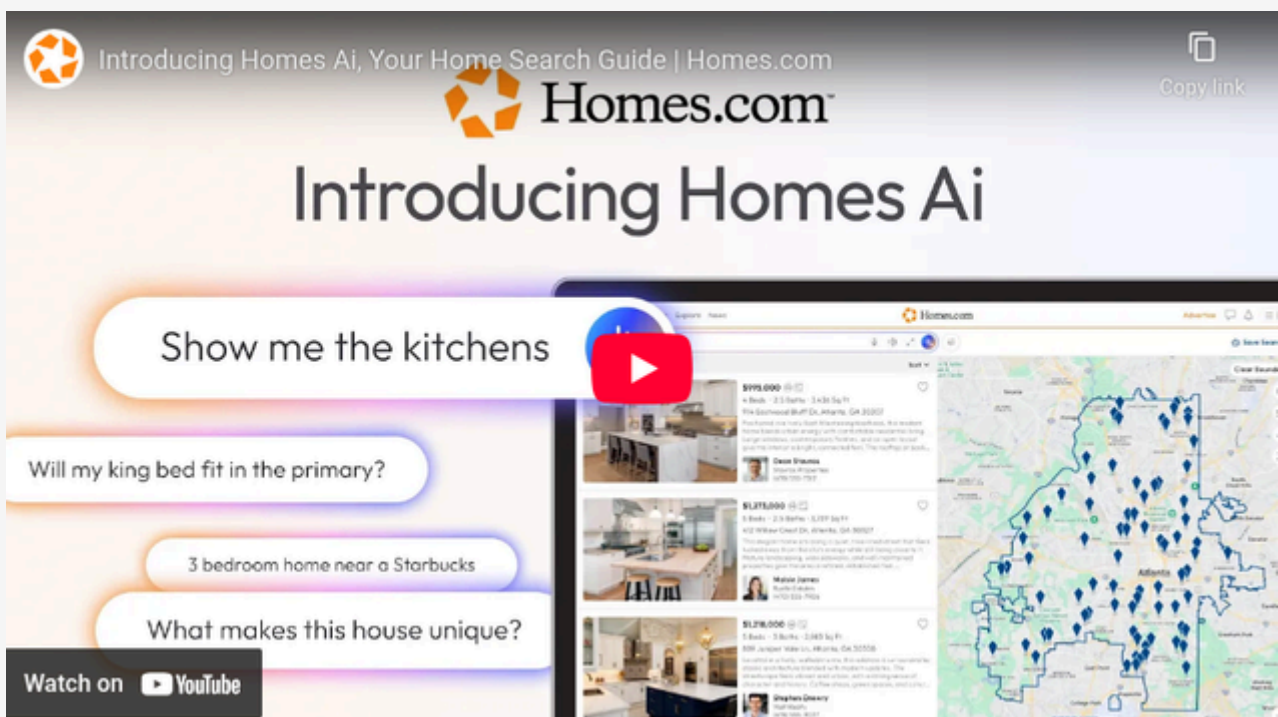
CASE STUDY: HOMES.COM AI

Instead of redirecting users to another platform, Homes.com has built conversational search directly into the portal itself. Users can search and ask follow-up questions (just as they would with ChatGPT) while staying inside the Homes.com environment.

The ChatGPT-based implementations tested for this report require users to leave the portal, open a ChatGPT interface, find and install an app, run the search there and, more than likely, then click back to the portal to view listings. It works, but it introduces friction into what is already a long and exploratory search process.

As the Homes.com team explained when we interviewed them:

"We wanted the AI to feel like part of the platform, not something that sends the user somewhere else and then brings them back again."



Just as important is the data behind the interface. Homes.com's AI combines conversational search with a rich set of contextual signals around each property that go beyond filters. As the team put it:

"The goal isn't just to answer questions. It's to help people discover homes they wouldn't have found using traditional filters."

In testing for this report, Homes.com's AI performed strongly across most parameters.

In fact, were it not for a single failure, it would have finished joint top of the benchmark alongside Jitty.

The failure came on the parameter "low noise pollution." Interestingly, Homes.com actually has a noise level overlay on its map, but the system did not surface that information correctly in the test. As the team told us though, this is just v1.0, and there will be many more iterations and improvements.

Even with that miss, Homes.com stands out as one of the clearest examples of what happens when conversational search is combined with a serious attempt to upgrade the data layer underneath the portal.

It's worth pointing out that this was not purely an in-house effort and perhaps not something that all smaller portals can aspire to.

Homes.com worked closely with Microsoft on the project, and according to the team, Microsoft engineers were "impressed with what Homes.com was building," which makes the end result all the more notable.

CONCLUSION

Stop talking about AI. Start talking about data.

Large Language Models are good at translating vague human preferences into structured intent. In testing they sometimes made it easier for me to express what I wanted and often added context to search results.

But LLMs reason over representations of data, not the properties themselves. Without deeper, structured data such as semantic image indexing and geospatial context, their outputs remain constrained and, in many cases, pretty useless.

An LLM layered over shallow data does not fundamentally improve search. It reframes it and can raise expectations without increasing accuracy.

The real step-change occurs not at the interface layer, but in the enrichment and grounding of data about both the listing and its environment.

Until a portal can reliably return accurate results for what is in the house and around the house without relying on agent descriptions alone, in my opinion, it shouldn't claim to have an AI-powered search.

That said, at least those platforms that tested poorly in this report are brave enough to try. I'm sure the iterations I tested will be distant memories this time next year.

TAKEAWAYS FOR PORTALS

AI-powered search is not a feature race, it's a data race.

The accuracy of results is more important to your users than the input or output format.

- **The moat is structured data.** Conversational search is now commoditised. Deep, enriched, queryable listing data is not. Without semantic image indexing, environmental layers, geospatial context and structured feature fields, AI does not improve search. It simply repackages shallow data. Competitive advantage will belong to platforms that invest in enrichment, not aesthetics.

- **Silent omission damages trust.** The most common failure was not hallucination, but ignored parameters. When systems drop part of a query without acknowledgement, expectations rise while accuracy does not. Claiming to have AI increases the scrutiny from users. If results do not genuinely improve, credibility declines.

- **LLMs are not the threat.** Irrelevance is. Standalone LLMs are inconsistent search engines. The greater risk is discovery shifting to environments where only structured, accessible data survives.

The strategic question is not: "Do we have AI search?" but rather, "Do we have the data infrastructure to make AI search real?"

In high-stakes decisions like property, AI that strengthens user judgment will win.

Parameters Tested

Parameter	Parameter Category	Objective vs Subjective	Typically Structured in Listings from Agents?
period property	Building/amenities	Semi-objective	Often
disabled access	Building/amenities	Semi-objective	Often
above 3rd floor	Building/amenities	Objective	Often
low noise pollution	Lifestyle/soft factors	Subjective	No
Safe neighbourhood	Location	Subjective	Rarely
20-minute commute to {location}	Location	Semi-objective	No
near a {gym, supermarket, train station}	Location	Semi-objective	No
in catchment area for a good primary school	Location	Objective	No
sea view	Location	Objective	Yes
low flood risk	Location	Semi-objective	No
available from {date}	Price/availability/tenure	Objective	Often
Granite countertops	Property features	Objective	Often
South facing	Property features	Objective	Rarely
home office	Property features	Objective	Often
ensuite bathroom	Property features	Objective	Often
dishwasher	Property features	Objective	Rarely
high ceilings	Property features	Semi-objective	Rarely
natural light	Property features	Semi-objective	Often

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We like to think we're neutral and that we've been as thorough as possible but we also recognise that this report is not empirically proving anything. If you'd like to debate us, reach out.