



Why Search Engines Hate Your Property Photos

By Susan Saldibar

How is it that we can believe “a picture is worth a thousand words” and yet pay so little attention to the images and videos we place before prospects? In the case of senior living, images and videos are often the only means by which the family of a prospective resident can evaluate and form an opinion about your community. And, if they are not tagged and categorized properly, the search engines won’t even recognize them!

In short, your pictures are worth more than a thousand words. They have the power to motivate a prospective resident to schedule a tour, and the power to totally turn off a prospective resident. So, with that in mind, you’ll be happy to see what [RealPage](#) is doing with their new PropertyPhotos Digital Asset Management (DAM) application. It was rolled out last month and, as a marketer, I find it pretty impressive. I spoke recently with Sheena Pabari, VP of Content Services for RealPage® (a Senior Housing Forum partner), who gave me a brief rundown on what this much-needed application does.

Here are some things I think are pretty cool:

- **Super easy to use.** The goal, Sheena tells me, was to move away from heavy implementations. This is a true stand-alone, self-service app.
- **Lets you do a “Digital HealthCheck™”.** So you can go in right now and let the app scan all your photos and score them. It assesses things like color balance, clarity, etc. This is important for preserving brand integrity. It also shows you the domains where your images appear. This ensures you have your desired breadth of online visibility and that no one is re-marketing your community without your consent. Furthermore, it looks at watermarks and copyrights and lets you know if you have any potential legal issues with your images.

- **Easy access to your content.** One single, central location for all property photos and videos. As Sheena says, “No more sending out random links to lots of images. It removes the ‘I meant to use this image, not that image’ confusion.”
- **Uses AI and machine learning to automatically tag your photos for the search engines.** This is super cool. So, in addition to noting an interior versus exterior photo, it can recognize it as a “fitness” photo or a “dining” photo. Now the Google search engines will pick it up as such.
- **Easy to order online.** It gives clients the ability to order content online. Need to augment your existing images? Just add content into the basket, play with it, and see how it totals up (think Amazon.com; you can remove something if it gets too expensive). Also helps you check against what you already have and organizes it. So you can remove things you don’t really need.
- **Photographers on call.** They even have a network of professional photographers across the country to take high-quality images of all your properties and ensure that they have a consistent look and feel across locations.

I asked Sheena to share with me some of the thought processes behind the creation and development of the PropertyPhoto program. “Of course, driving occupancy is the top challenge in senior housing right now. So we focused our efforts on how images and videos could give prospects what they need to make a decision to personally tour the community.” That’s important, especially since many adult children are living far apart from their parents. Pictures and videos become more important than ever to get a feel for where mom or dad might live. “People really need to get a feel for the lifestyle at the community,” Sheena says. “As an example, they’re looking for more than just a floor plan. They want to see the dining areas, common areas and they want to see it in 3D, where they can really imagine being there physically,” she explains.

Having easy access to content was also something that came up in early discussions with users. “Properties get purchased by new operators and change hands,” says Sheena. “The rights to images go with the original owner. So the new owners may not have legal approval to use the content. And you need digital images to drive occupancy as quickly as possible. Using our geo-tagging you can input the address and see all the approved content available,” she added. Very cool. And time saving.

I asked Sheena to share a few tips for communities that are ready to re-evaluate their images and videos and how they are using them. How can you get started?

1. First, try the [Digital HealthCheck](#). Upload your photos. Look at quality scores. PropertyPhotos will tell you where your gaps are.
2. Once you have identified your gaps, think about what you need to do to fill them. More videos, more photos? Put them into the shopping cart. Add and remove items as desired. RealPage offers packages that allow you to get into this without breaking the bank.
3. Check out the ready-made images and videos of your area RealPage has available. Check out their points-of-interest photos, lifestyle photos, etc. The content you purchase will be automatically tagged to your community.

Once you get started (you have to give the search engines time to recognize your tags) you should begin seeing results in the form of better quality images and videos, higher page rankings, and greater interest from prospects to take a tour. But I’m just skimming the surface here, there is much more to this. In fact, RealPage has created an eBook full of best practices for image management, which you can [download here](#).



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