

Condos come into the computer age

- ▶ New apps make buying a condo a much more hands-on and interactive experience
- ▶ Innovative website offers one-stop shopping for prospective home buyers



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In the advanced world of iPhone apps, the Internet and personal computers, the real estate industry is due to take a leap forward with two new applications that are changing the way people purchase condos.

3D Condo Explorer, a recent startup pioneered by I.T. practitioner Alexander Neshmonin, is a mash up with the popular Google Earth mapping software.

It allows you to design and customize a condo unit before it's built, right from the comfort of your own living room.

Many people have difficulty visualizing a condo from a set of floor plans. By visiting 3dcondox.com, you can take a virtual reality walkthrough of your new home.

The fully immersive view "allows you to customize your unit to your own particular tastes," says

marketing manager, David Pascos.

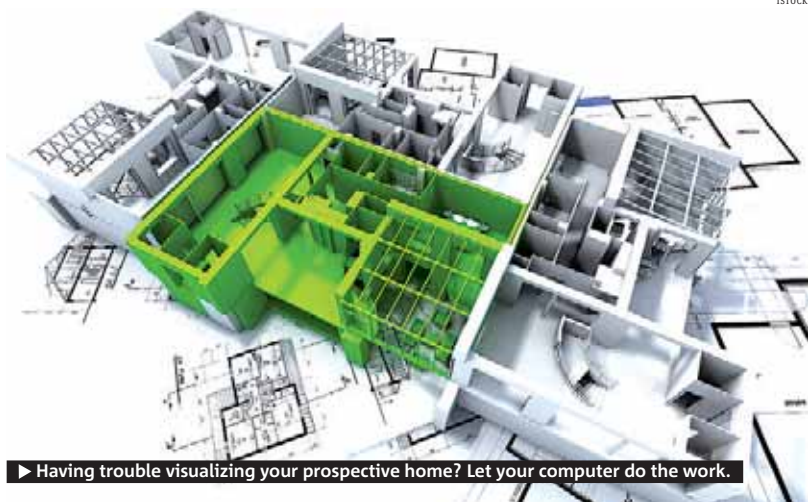
You can instantly see how the changes affect the cost of your unit in real time. "As soon as you change the cabinetry, it shows in your price how you've just changed the cost of your unit," explains Pascos.

Ever wondered what your furniture would look like in 450 sq. ft? "I don't want to cheat," says Neshmonin. "I always use the camera with a lens with the focus of your eyes. You see exactly how it feels."

Another interesting development is the recently released version of the TheRedPin.com website, which, according to co-founder Rokham Fard, is Canada's first completely online real estate brokerage.

Fard and his team aim to provide a complete end-to-end experience for new condo buyers.

"What we wanted to do



▶ Having trouble visualizing your prospective home? Let your computer do the work.

with TheRedPin was bring everything under one umbrella, and provide all the information that people can get at the sales office on the site," says Fard.

"We provide a lot more information simply because we want to be a resource for the condo buyers, such as all the details of the floor plans, all the details of the finishes, and amenities that they provide."

With their own team of real estate agents on staff, there are several advantages to dealing with TheRedPin that other brokerages don't offer.

TheRedPin maintains solid relationships with the builders and attends VIP events on behalf of clients.

Buyers needn't travel all over town to different sales

"The buyers used to get the short end of the stick and be at the end of the line, and the prices have gone up and the selection of units has reduced."

**ROKHAM FARD, CO-FOUNDER OF
THEREDPIN**

offices because the brokerage sends you the complete sales packages at no charge.

"That means you get ahead of everybody without having to leave the house," says Fard.

Another advantage is the TheRedPin rebate.

You receive a one per cent cashback incentive at the time of closing when you purchase a condo through TheRedPin realty.

Fard says that because of all the closing costs, "peo-

Creative startup

▶ TheRedPin startup is the only Canadian company that made it to the finals of Inman's Most Innovative Real Estate Startup.

ple always get surprised and a little bitter because they didn't know about it."

The rebate sweetens the pot a little, "and one per cent in real estate is actually a significant amount of money."

DUNCAN MCALLISTER



▶ Rokham Fard co-founded TheRedPin, which he says is Canada's first completely online real estate brokerage.


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