



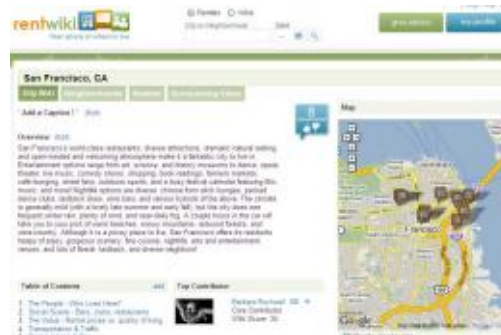
January 19, 2009

Check Out the Neighbors Before You Move In

Homebuyers have many online tools to choose from to do their research, be it ZipRealty, Redfin, Trulia, Movoto or Zillow.

There are fewer choices for renters, but a new website hopes to plug that gap.

RentWiki.com might best be described as Craigslist meets Facebook in that it provides potential renters with listings, as well as peer information about neighborhoods from people who already live there.



RentWiki: a new online resource for renters.

Property managers are offered free listings for their rental units. And those looking for rentals can glean insights from existing residents on aspects of neighborhoods such as the social scene, the type of people who live there, its pet friendliness and public transit options -- down to what the weather is like or which deli does the best sandwiches.

Users can in effect interact with potential neighbors before they commit to moving.

Because the site only launched a few days ago, its content is pretty sparse at the moment. There is limited information on San Francisco and none on Berkeley, for instance. Like all social networking sites that rely on contributed content, it will take time for its usefulness to kick in.

Meantime it's interesting to hear what RentWiki feels is the underlying question that drives its product: "RentWiki.com" the company says, "is the first apartment and rental internet listing service to employ social media elements that help renters answer their ultimate question: Do people like me live here?"

I guess fundamentally we all just want to live next door to "people like us".



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