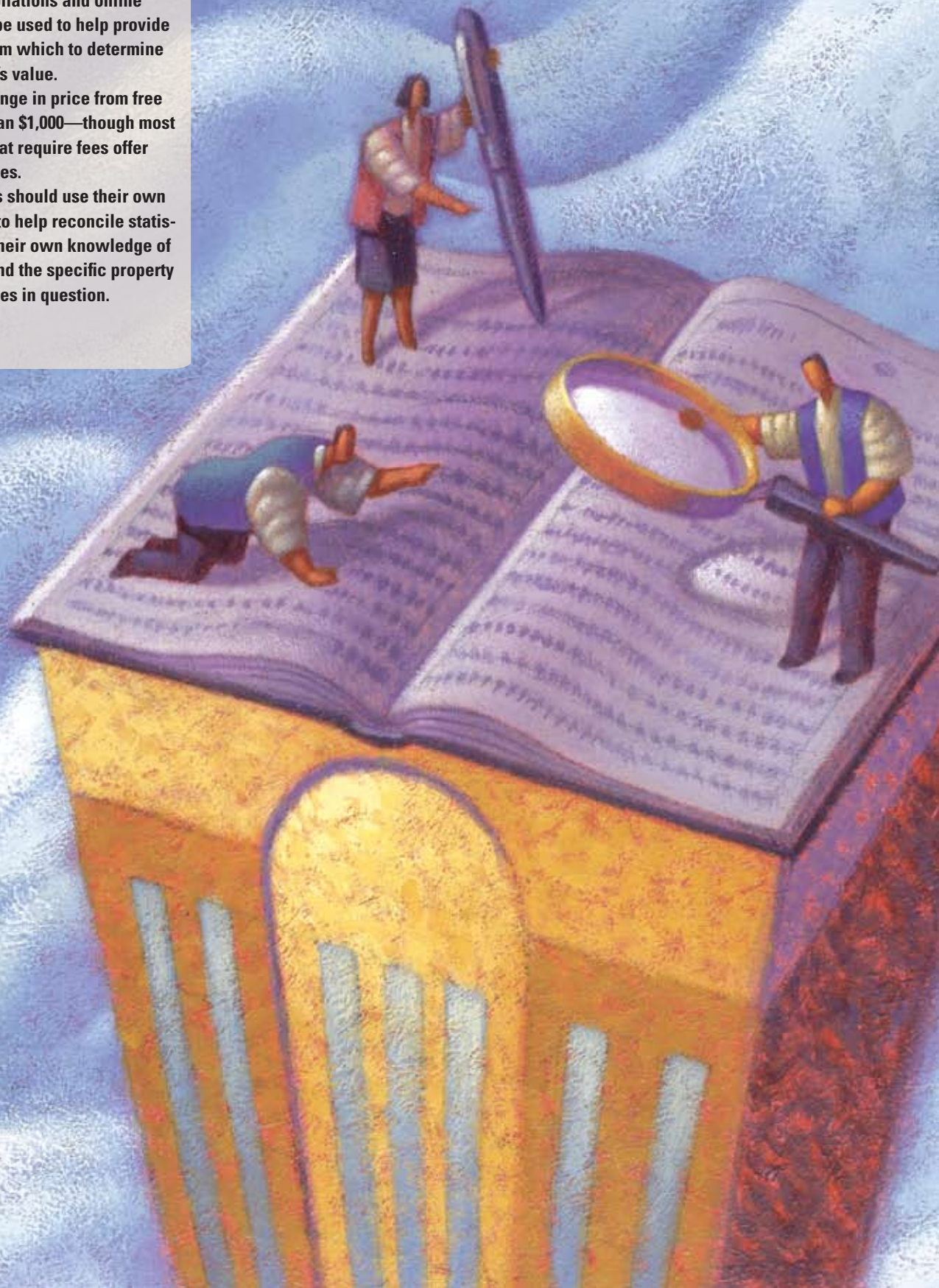


Bottom Line

- Data compilations and online tools can be used to help provide a basis from which to determine a property's value.
- Surveys range in price from free to more than \$1,000—though most of those that require fees offer free samples.
- Appraisers should use their own expertise to help reconcile statistics with their own knowledge of the area and the specific property or properties in question.



The Big Dig for Data

From raw figures to research compilations to exhaustive databases, statistical information sources for appraisers abound

By Phil Britt

When it comes to gathering and using statistical information in their work, appraisers have more choices than ever before. Data about comparable properties and local and national economic conditions are more numerous than ever before, due heavily to the advent of the Internet.

Many data sources are accessible at no cost, while others, which tend to be much more in-depth, can run well over \$1,000—although many data providers that require fees offer free samples. Appraisers and others who work with appraisers rely on many of the sources listed here to help them evaluate specific properties. However, as Craig Smith, MAI, SRA, of Integra Realty Resources, Sarasota, Fla., and others contacted for this article point out, these data resources should be seen as helping to provide a basis from which to estimate a property's value, but that appraisers need to reconcile such statistics with their own knowledge of the area and the specific property or properties in question.

This collection of resources is not meant to be an exhaustive list, nor does the Appraisal Institute endorse any of them. If you use or provide a valuable resource for appraisers that is not listed here, let the editors know about it. E-mail Adam Webster, managing editor, at awebster@appraisalinstitute.org.

REPORTS

S&P/Case-Shiller Metro Area Home Price Indices

What it does: Even though every property is different, there are some trends that tend to affect all neighborhoods in a metro area. If home prices in Boston are falling, for example, this source will provide the appraiser with raw data regarding housing prices in Boston and its suburbs. The index provides details about housing stock, average values and aggregate values. From this information, the appraiser can see some trends regarding housing on a metropolitan area, including mortgage pricing, housing activity and dollar value and housing affordability. The index shows these trends via the “repeat sales method” of index calculation, which uses data on properties that have sold at least twice, in order to capture “the true appreciated value of each specific sale,” according to Standard & Poors.

Where to get it: www2.standardandpoors.com/spf/pdf/index/SPCS_MetroArea_HomePrices_Methodology.pdf

Why/how an appraiser would use it: To get information on house pricing trends in a given metropolitan area.

Cost: Free

National Association of Realtors – existing home sales/prices

What it does: The monthly report provides sales totals and sales prices of existing homes by region (Northeast, Midwest, South and West). Existing-home sales, which include single-family, townhomes, condominiums and co-ops, are based on transaction closings. This differs from the U.S. Census Bureau’s series on new single-family home sales, which are based on contracts or the acceptance of a deposit. According to the NAR, the Realtor data is based on a much larger sample – nearly 40 percent of multiple listing service data each month – and typically is not subject to large prior-month revisions that tend to be a weakness of Census Bureau data.

Where to get it: [www.realtor.org/research.nsf/files/EHSreport.XLS/\\$file/EHSreport.XLS](http://www.realtor.org/research.nsf/files/EHSreport.XLS/$file/EHSreport.XLS)

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ONLINE TOOLS, DATABASES

CoStar COMPS Professional

What it does: The product provides independently researched and verified sales comparables by more than a thousand researchers. Users can get information on more than one million sales comparables, some of which are reported as early as the day of the sale for properties marketed with CoStar. The application provides a variety of valuation details, from sales status (sold, for sale or under contract) and aerial views to the original deeds and demographics.

Where to get it:

www.costar.com

Why/how an appraiser

would use it: To collect basic property information, enabling the appraiser to spend time analyzing information rather than collecting it.

Cost: \$100 to \$400 per month for a single-user subscription, depending on the market tier and the type of COMPS data provided.

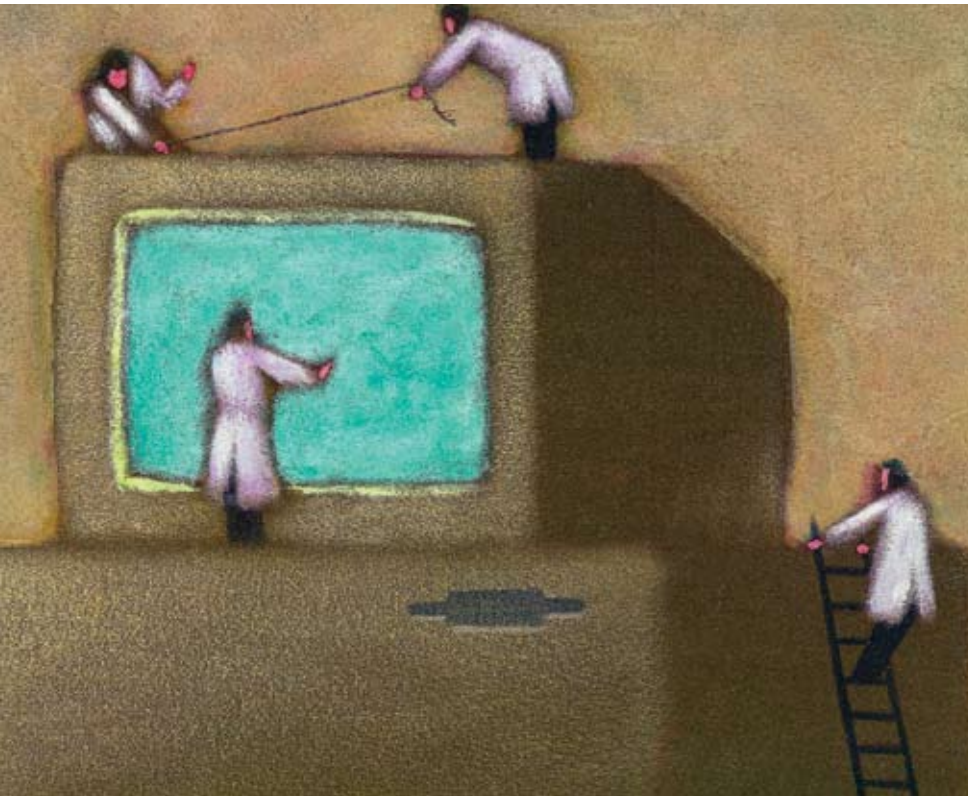
DataQuick – PrimeraSource

What it does: The real property database provides multi-sourced and verified data in order to produce current and accurate records for home sales. Users can select from more than 100 data elements and over 250 output variables to selectively target audiences. Property value information is based on DataQuick’s industry automated valuation model to provide a current market value on every property in the database.

Where to get it:

www.dataquick.com/primerasource.asp

Cost: Property reports run from 50 cents to \$5 each, with the exception of AVMFinder, which is \$17. Suite pricing is also available. Charges for “prospect” reports are based on the number of leads.



Real Quest

What it does: The online property information search engine provides information on more than 141 million properties, including estimated property values, market trends and nearby sales. Users can customize searches using over 70 attributes and can download up to 25,000 records in multiple formats. Users can export comparable data information into other third-party URAR software programs. The search engine provides links to mortgage records, deeds and other documents. Property detail reports provide key property characteristics, as well as current and prior sales information.

Where to get it: www.realquest.com/jsp/rq.jsp?action=switch&page=main

Why/how an appraiser would use it: To gain property-specific information as well as comparative information on surrounding property.

Cost: Reports run from 50 cents to \$25 each, depending on type of report. Monthly commitment of \$299.95 includes discounted reports.

Real Capital Analytics

What it does: The online search engine provides commercial property transactions by property types and subtypes, as well as information on current investment trends and statistics, plus specific deals in a variety of different views. Monthly and quarterly PDFs are also available. Graphs and statistical data provide information on volume, pricing and cap rate averages. Cap rate information includes only the deals with known cap rates (including how they were derived), plus recent refinancings with underwritten appraisal cap rates. Included here are occupancy, year built, as well as size and price. Appraisers can also search for the names of the top property buyers. The company will debut its global data in 2008.

Where to get it: www.rcanalytics.com

Why/how an appraiser would use it: Provides pricing trends and general benchmarking to aid in property valuation.

Cost: Annual subscription costs vary depending on number of property types

subscribed to and the number of users per company subscribing.

LoopNet

What it does: The commercial real estate listing service contains more than \$440 billion of property available for sale and 3.4 billion square feet of property available for lease. LoopNet covers all commercial real estate property categories including commercial land, office space, industrial, multifamily (apartments) and retail. Users can browse commercial properties for sale or lease by state, market or category. There are also links for various member services and commercial real estate news.

Where to get it: www.loopnet.com

Why/how an appraiser would use it: To obtain commercial property sales information and stay abreast of commercial real estate news.

Cost: Membership is free.

eNeighborhoods PowerSuite

What it does: Primarily designed for real estate agents, the suite provides ready-to-print neighborhood reports, comparative market analyses, buyer tours, flyers and maps/aerial views for any neighborhood in the U.S. After the promotional period, each of the services is offered individually or as part of a discounted, bundled package. Each of the products within the suite has a heavy emphasis on marketing the user to potential clients, particularly consumers. The comparative analyses and maps/aerial views offer comparative pricing information to show a property's value in context with others in the neighborhood.

Where to get it: www.eneighborhoods.com

Why/how an appraiser would use it: Helps provide neighborhood pricing information.

Cost: Free for the first 60 days; reports available for \$19.95 or as a bundled package for \$49.95 thereafter.

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Why/how an appraiser would use it: To get a very broad idea of housing sales and price trends.
Cost: Free

PricewaterhouseCoopers – Korpacz Real Estate Investor Survey; Emerging Trends in Real Estate 2007

What it does: The quarterly survey provides details on capitalization and discount rates, cash flow assumptions, and actual criteria of active investors, as well as property market information. Each report includes current, prior-quarter, and year-ago rates, cash flow assumptions, and other criteria used to analyze real estate investments in various sectors (e.g., office, retail, etc.); survey results with discussion and analysis vis-a-vis prior quarters. The reports offer more than 40 tables, including yield comparisons, dividend comparisons, etc. New in 2007 is information on forecast periods and growth rates and market characteristics, as well as trends in real estate investment and valuation.

Where to get it:
www.pwcreval.com/survey/home.asp

Why/how an appraiser would use it: Provides detailed information on real estate investment markets; helps provide current and long-range perspectives of buyers' strategies to help appraisers value investment properties.

Cost: \$350 for one year; \$600 for two years. Multiple user licensing also available. Survey subscribers get free issue of the annual *Emerging Trends* report.

Hanley-Wood Market Intelligence

What it does: Appraisers can get free national economic information on housing supply, demand and markets from the Hanley-Wood Web site as well as subscribe to free newsletters that provide analysis on the latest economic and housing market statistical releases, new project notifications and product alerts. For fees ranging from \$10 to \$1,600, appraisers can get reports on everything from specific projects to comprehensive economic conditions in specific markets. Samples of each type of report are available via Web site links. Free information provides general market trends such as permits, what's being sold, housing starts, GDP, employment, etc.

Where to get it:

www.hwmarketintelligence.com and
www.meyersgroup.com/homebuilding/homebuilding.asp

Why/how an appraiser would use it: Free reports provide broad information; for-fee reports provide more detailed information with a narrower focus.

Cost: Free to \$1,600, depending on report(s) chosen.

Property & Portfolio Research Reports

What it does: The independent real estate research and portfolio strategy firm provides research reports on real estate cycles and their implications for investment strategy. The reports, by major metropolitan market and property type, provide information on vacancy rates, demand, supply and rent changes for market and submarkets. PPR Tier II reports provide quarterly forecasts of real estate performance, construction activity and sales transactions for 46 markets and four property types. Free downloadable samples are available.

Where to get it: www.pprinfo.com

Why/how an appraiser would use it: Market trend information helps to value investment property.

Cost: Most in \$250 to \$500 range, some are a little more; risk analysis reports are \$2,500.

Torto Wheaton Research Market Reports

What it does: The quarterly reports present historical, current, and forecasted market performance. The reports include economic and real estate fundamentals information and history and forecasts for absorption, vacancy, availability, completions and rents along with written analysis of the data presented. Custom downloads are also available. Torto Wheaton Research is an independent research firm owned by CB Richard Ellis, which provides the transactional knowledge and local market expertise for the reports.

Where to get it: www.twr.com

Why/how an appraiser would use it: Helps show the strength and

GOVERNMENT DATA

Office of Federal Housing Enterprise & Oversight – House Price Calculator

What it does: The house price calculator uses various government sources to project what a given house purchased at a point in time would cost in current dollars if it appreciated at the average appreciation rate of all homes in the area. The appraiser can use the application to calculate value based on statewide or MSA appreciation. This data is used by other reports; however, the calculator uses broad area averages that don't take into account the differences within each MSA.

Where to get it: www.ofheo.gov

Why/how an appraiser would use it: To get broad area-wide (or state-wide) information on housing appreciation from a given calendar quarter to the current quarter.

Cost: Free



weaknesses of property types in certain markets.

Cost: \$395 to \$495

CBRE Global Reports

What it does: Although it partners with Torto Wheaton, CB Richard Ellis provides its own reports as well, which are available on a local basis for many cities around the globe as well as for regions such as the Americas, Asia Pacific and Europe/Middle East/Africa. The report data, from proprietary and purchased data, provide a review of current economic conditions, vacancy, availability, absorption, average asking lease rates and construction levels for the specified market area. The Web site also provides commercial listings powered by LoopNet.

Where to get it: www.cbre.com

Why/how an appraiser would use it: To determine economic activity and commercial property supply and demand in a specified city.

Cost: Free

Real Estate Research Corp. reports and Data Center

What it does: The RERC Data Center offers electronic access to several multi-capability levels of current and historical RERC data, quick access to economic data, and querying and charting

capabilities. The reports offer independent investment criteria for 10 property types in the institutional and regional markets, as well as for 48 major metropolitan markets.

Where to get it: www.rerc.com

Why/how an appraiser would use it: The reports include information on relevant data for the economy, equity markets and similar data.

Cost: DataCenter is \$275 and up, depending on the level of research; reports are \$125 and up, with discounts for annual subscriptions.

Reis Services

What it does: Reis provides coverage of 80 U.S. metropolitan areas and more than 2,300 submarkets for the office, apartment, retail and industrial sectors. The reports provide information on construction activity and comparables, rent and sales information. Trend reports provide detailed economic movement. Analytical reports are also available.

Where to get it: www.reis.com

Why/how an appraiser would use it: To get a feel for commercial property trends in a specific city or neighborhood.

Cost: \$150 to \$695 for individual reports; package deals available for those needing large numbers of reports or unlimited access to reports.

Marcus & Millichap Group

What it does: More than 200 research reports are available, customized by property type and local market. The reports include information regarding employment, construction, vacancy rates and rents as well as the economy, demographics and submarket information. A brief overview of capital markets from a national perspective is also part of each local report. Property listings are available by type (office, apartment, hotel/motel, etc.). Users can narrow down listings by county, state and ZIP code.

Where to get it:

www.marcusmillichap.com

Why/how an appraiser would use it: To get economic and listing information affecting commercial properties in specific MSAs.

Cost: Free

Grubb & Ellis Market Trends

What it does: Reports cover real estate market conditions in North America, providing information on vacancy and absorption rates, rent comparisons, sales prices, new construction, economic background analysis and more. *Metro Trends* quarterly reports provide data analysis of local markets. These two- to six-page reports include analytical commentary and detailed tables displaying data by submarket. *Metro Trends* cover every major market in North America and are available approximately three weeks after the end of each quarter. The Web site also includes company commercial property listings.

Where to get it:

www.grubb-ellis.com

Why/how an appraiser would use it: To get detailed economic data on markets and submarkets on a quarterly basis.

Cost: Free

Colliers International Market Reports

What it does: The quarterly reports provide information on economic developments as well as commercial property activity by sector for individual market areas. In addition to information and graphs

about construction, rental rates, vacancies and net absorption rates for the focus city (e.g., Phoenix), the reports also provide some similar details for submarkets along with some information about a few select properties.

Where to get it: www.colliers.com

Why/how an appraiser would use it: To help evaluate commercial properties in specific areas.

Cost: Free

Hospitality Valuation Software, HVS Transaction Surveys

What it does: The software provides spreadsheet information on market analysis and valuation, based on room nights as well as the fixed and variable income and expense forecasts process, which in turn is the basis for the hotel valuation model. The surveys provide information on sales that have occurred in the United States during a specified time period. The sale listing includes hotel name, location, month of sale, sales price, and buyer and/or seller information.

Where to get it:

www.hvs.com/bookstore

Why/how an appraiser would use it: To help value hospitality properties.

Cost: \$75 for software; various hospitality sales transaction reports are available for \$400 and up; HVS U.S. Market Area Overview is \$495.

Hotel & Leisure Advisors

What it does: The company provides various reports available on hotels, waterparks and other leisure properties. The reports range from management contract trends to property rankings. Some of the downloadable items written by Hotel & Leisure Advisors executives have appeared as articles in print publications.

Where to get it:

www.hladvisors.com

Why/how an appraiser would use it: Can help provide a basis for evaluating leisure property.

Cost: Free

PHIL BRITT is a Chicago-area based writer who has written about appraisal and financial services issues for national publications including *Valuation Insights & Perspectives*, *Community Banker*, *Microbanker*, *Banking Strategies*, *Real Estate Portfolio* and other financial services publications. He also formerly held an Illinois real estate salesperson's license.

OTHER

MapInfo AnySite

What it does: The company provides location-based information of help to appraisers. There are several different products available for specific uses. The AnySite application is designed specifically to provide analysts and marketers insight into their location, customer and market research – from the desktop to the enterprise. Users can connect, retrieve, report and map any information from this proprietary database to analyze trade area data.

Where to get it: www.mapinfo.com/location/integration

Why/how an appraiser would use it: To map properties in relation to surroundings.

Cost: \$995-\$2,495. Free Trial available.

BankRate.com

What it does: The online portal provides news, tips and advice to compare mortgage rates, home equity loans, CDs, car loans, credit cards and money market accounts. Local mortgage rates and various rate calculators are also available.

Where to get it: BankRate.com

Why/how an appraiser would use it: To get national economic and mortgage rate information as well as local mortgage rates.

Cost: Free

