ICNY 18: Smart home tech is raising new questions during the home sale

What makes a home a smart home? Who gets to keep the smart lock after a house is sold? What if your real estate agent still has the password to your thermostat?

These are the questions real estate professionals are figuring out on the fly — and questions that are only becoming more relevant for agents and consumers.

Dale Carlton, an Arkansas broker and lawyer, led a small group at Inman Connect New York on Wednesday to consider the effects of smart home technology on real estate.

“The issue used to be, ‘Do the blinds and curtains stay or go?’” Carlton said. “Now, it’s what about the smart home tech?”

The agents and vendors in attendance had already started thinking about these ideas — they mentioned Nest, Savant, Lutron, Google Home and other technology their clients have had.

But the specific legal questions surrounding smart homes were, for many, new territory.

Get an edge with smart home tech in 2018

3 ways real estate agents can stay ahead of the smart home trend READ MORE

Creating boundaries around these issues is a matter of protecting both the agent and the client.

In some cases, sellers want to get back into their old home to retrieve a security system once they realize it contains more personal information than they thought.

Some agents have to decide whether to market a home as a smart home — and how much technology a house needs to earn the designation. Is an internet-connected thermostat and security system enough?

Carlton said he had a listing where the house ended up selling to his friend. He still had the password to the smart thermostat, so he played a joke and kept turning the thermostat up to 90 degrees. It was a prank, but the example is concerning for buyers and sellers who don't realize exactly who has access to their home's technology.

Agents already know that they and their clients are often being monitored during open houses.

The next step is deciding how to incorporate these concerns into the day-to-day.

Agents, sellers and buyers, for example, should come up with checklists of what smart home technology is going and staying before a deal closes. And agents who overhear open house attendees talking about how they're going to bid somewhere else if the price doesn't come down should remain skeptical that they're not trying to negotiate through the Amazon Echo.

Read all of our coverage from Inman Connect NY 2018***.***

Email Emma Hinchliffe

Source: click here