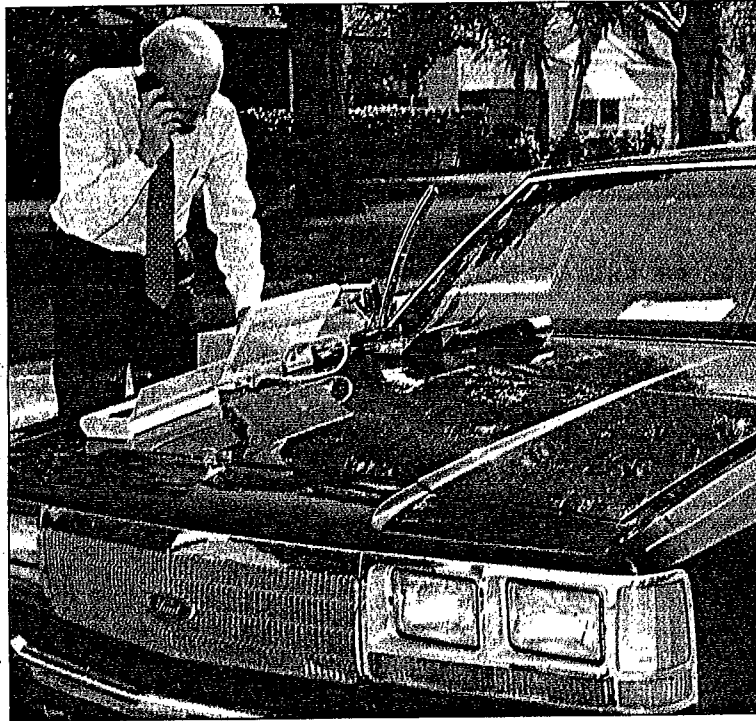# Of Bytes

Computer Programs Designed for Realty Firms Speed Agents' Work, Expand Client Access to Listings and Mortgage Information

By CHRISTINE ZIAYA-ZEIGER
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Ten thousand index cards. That's what Sylmar realtor Rich Weiler would be dealing with today had he not gotten a computer a year and a half ago.

Instead of using index cards, his company, Realty Professionals, now keeps track of clients by using sophisticated software that sorts clients into various categories such as those interested in purchasing property in a specific geographic area, those interested in purchasing property in three months, six months, a year, those interested in commercial property and so on.

By categorizing clients and keeping detailed information on them, Weiler can now refer to his data base and match appropriate clients with available properties more quickly and easily.

Like a growing number of realtors, Weiler has turned to computerization to help run his company more efficiently and more profitably.

"The computer helps me keep in contact with all my clients," Weiler says. To do this, he uses a customized version of "Real Quick" in conjunction with "Q & A." He can then program his computer to remind him when it's time to telephone clients. Or, his computer can assist him with written correspondence. For example, it easily generates form letters that keep clients up to date on their escrows.

Overall, Weiler says, his computer has made it easier for him to handle more clients and, in turn, do more business.

Although computers are not new to the real estate industry—for more than a decade, agents have had access to computerized versions of the Multiple Listing Service (MLS)—in recent years there has been a substantial increase in the number of real estate professionals who use computers.

According to a 1990 nationwide survey conducted by the National Assn. of Realtors (NAR), 78% of real estate firms use computers. In comparison, firms with computer capability amounted to only 44% in 1983, 55% in 1984, 59% in 1985 and 65% in 1986. Locally, of the 1,200 realty offices that are members of the San Fernando Valley Board of Realtors, 85% of those offices are now using computers in some capacity. (The SFV board has 8,500 individual members.)

Among Los Angeles' largest

and Brokers
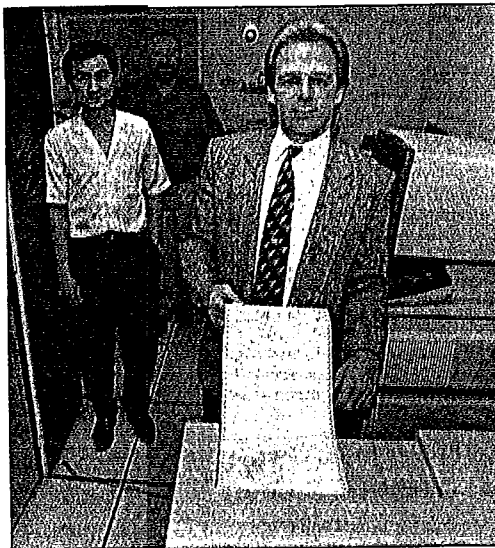
JOEL P. LUGAVERE / Los Angeles Times
Steve Owen, top, sets up office on car hood while Roger Hance, standing with programmers, checks printout.

J. ALBERT DIAZ / Los Angeles Times
Laura Daley, marketing director of Prudential California Realty, works at computer with agent Andrea Tzadik.