



Metropolitan Regional Information Systems, Inc

MRIS - ARIS Functional Review

*Executive Summary*

**WAV Group**  
**May 15, 2007**

**Submitted by:**  
**Mike Audet**  
**Office: 716-839-4628**  
**Cell: 716-984-9009**  
**[mike@wavgroup.com](mailto:mike@wavgroup.com)**  
**[www.wavgroup.com](http://www.wavgroup.com)**



## Executive Summary

WAV Group has been retained to provide a detailed review and report on MRIS MLS products and services as compared to the ARIS Internet MLS system. This review looked at the MRIS-MLS product offering in terms of strengths and weaknesses as compared to our review of the ARIS MLS system. The MRIS product offering is comprised of two core components, Matrix and Keystone and numerous integrated 3<sup>rd</sup> party products. Matrix is a product supplied by Tarasoft that provides MLS data searching, viewing and related capabilities. Keystone, a product developed internally by MRIS, is the listing management component of the system. While a detailed review has not been completed on anything other than the core MLS products we believe it is relevant to note all products or services included in the standard MLS fee for each user.

During this review we compared 496 specific tasks in 26 different categories relating to the MRIS and ARIS online systems. We did not review the distributed databases of either system. For this review we had direct access to each system in addition to data obtained through recent proposals submitted by both vendors.

This executive summary highlights the major functional strengths and weaknesses as well as our overall opinion. By no means is this intended to be a comprehensive list. The functions listed below appear to us to be significantly different so as to warrant recognition. The reader of this document can draw his/her own conclusions as to the relative importance of each function. Also, in our opinion, all other (unmentioned) functionality had sufficient similarities; therefore they were not called out.

Matrix is a very capable MLS and more robust system as compared to the ARIS system. System speed and overall performance of Matrix during our review was very good and certainly comparable to the ARIS system despite serving a much larger market area. The Matrix User Interface and System Navigation is straight forward and easy to understand and navigate. Our experience with the review of all other systems strongly suggests that minimal training on Matrix will be required to get agents using the system successfully. In addition to the ease of use, we believe there is extensive and well thought out user help provided, including on-line tutorials.

While each system had advantages and weaknesses, we feel the Matrix MLS system is a more mature and fully functional system than the ARIS MLS system. With the size of the existing Matrix user base we are also much more confident that it will continue to be enhanced and supported well into the future. Finally, it is our understanding that the Matrix release schedule for the next 7 months has already been determined and announced publicly thus providing all users with a good understanding of new/improved features and functionality. We are not aware of any such plans for ARIS.



## **MRIS Strengths include:**

### ***Mapping Search and Display***

Matrix currently has an easy to use basic mapping search tool where users can draw rectangular boxes to determine the search area. The Matrix display utilizes the Microsoft Virtual Earth system including the Birdseye 45° oblique view of the map. The display shows listings of all statuses with a popup of listing information and includes real time traffic reports, driving directions and the ability to email the map. The ARIS system did not offer a map search but only the ability to display listings on a map. This display was a link to Google, Mapquest and Yahoo maps and was only accessible from the Public Records summary.

***MRIS Note:*** During 2007 MRIS has a scheduled release which will include a Radius search option and a Polygonal search option in addition to the current Rectangle option. All three options will show distance of the area selected. The displays will be embedded within the Matrix system and include listing data, interactive maps and media (photos and virtual tours) on the same screen.

***Conclusion:*** The Matrix Map Search and Displays are more advanced to what is provided on the ARIS system. The improvements MRIS has scheduled for 2007, if instituted, will improve the Matrix mapping capabilities and increase the separation between these two products.

### ***Photo Management***

We found the MRIS Upshot user interface to be more intuitive and robust. Upshot also updated the photograph faster than the ARIS photo upload tool.

***MRIS Note:*** During 2007 MRIS has a scheduled product enhancement which will provide photo management for an increased number of free photographs. The product, however, is still in the concept and design phase.

***Conclusion:*** We considered MRIS Upshot to have a slight edge over the ARIS upload tool.

### ***Auto Search/Email***

The MRIS Matrix search/email and the ARIS system each have options that set them apart from the other. The email history section on Matrix has reporting which shows the history of auto emails sent, with date, time and links to the new matching listings and all the listings emailed to that client. It also shows when the client first opened the email and when they last opened the email. This functionality was completely absent from the ARIS system. The Matrix system also offers a more robust scheduler than the ARIS system.

***MRIS Note:*** During 2007 MRIS has a scheduled major upgrade in their Auto Email/



Customer Relationship Manager Feature. Enhancements, if instituted, it will include client feedback on auto emailed listings, a more robust scheduler and a more intuitive interface.

**Conclusion:** We considered Matrix to have deeper functionality than the ARIS product due to the lack of history in the ARIS product. If the enhancements MRIS has scheduled are instituted it should further improve the Auto Search/Email function.

### ***Parcel Mapping***

Matrix utilizes the First American product for parcel mapping which includes the ability to enlarge, annotate and show dimensions on the parcel. The parcel can be printed and/or emailed. Matrix includes the entire tax assessor map. ARIS links directly to a subsection of the parcel map on the MDAT site with very limited functionality.

**Conclusion:** The functionality included in the Matrix First American parcel mapping tool is more advanced than what is included in the ARIS MDAT site.

### ***Wireless Search***

Matrix can be searched on every web enabled device such as a cell phone or a PDA. It allows you to search by any number of search parameters including address, property type, number of bedrooms, number of bathrooms, and status, all real-time. Matrix Wireless displays up to 30 fields of key-listing data including original price, list price, square footage, remarks, and showing instructions in addition to a full-color exterior property photo. Listings can be emailed and agent contact information is accessible and interactive.

**Conclusion:** The availability of a wireless search feature is obviously advantage for the Matrix MLS system...

## **MRIS Weaknesses include:**

### ***Office and Agent Reports***

The reports currently in the Matrix system are basic. These are the reports the agents used in an earlier MLS system. MRIS needs to add Reports that we consider fairly standard on most MLS systems would include:

- Multiple Photo Reports
- Sales Report
- Agent Market Report
- Market Penetration Report
- Area Market Statistics



### ***Contacts/Prospects/CRM Capabilities***

Currently there is only basic contact functionality provided in the Matrix system.

There is a reasonable amount of information stored for each contact, and there is an audit trail that shows Saved Searches and Email History. This is a nice easy feature to use. Contacts in Matrix today are simply a list.

- We have been informed that enhanced CRM functionality will be added to Matrix in 2007 and we have had the opportunity to review the initial design specifications. If instituted, these capabilities will work hand in hand with the auto-email features and eclipse the functionality found in the ARIS system

### ***Auto Search/Email***

The ARIS system allows you to set up one Saved Search for multiple clients and attach multiple report types to that saved search; a feature missing from Matrix.

### ***Keystone***

The Keystone application's speed and efficiency were found to be in need of some improvement. Keystone features a "Processing" message, which slows the input process down.

***MRIS Note:*** During 2007 MRIS has a scheduled product enhancement, which will remove the processing delays from the Keystone product. MRIS has also added a localization capability to the Keystone application. That will permit Realtor® Boards to remove unneeded fields and to set preferences for which fields are mandatory and which are optional.

### ***CMA Presentation***

The CMA reports included in Matrix are well designed; however, the overall report was a step below the ARIS system. The ARIS CMA reports allow the users to create a complete CMA package with a cover sheet, company and agent bio, as well as a suggested pricing page. These reports also allow a certain amount of broker and agent branding. Logos and photos can be uploaded and incorporated into standard CMA templates.

Another weakness we noted with the Matrix CMA was the inability to modify comparable listings after the CMA is built. Given market changes users should have the ability to modify CMA comparables on the fly so reports built for the clients can be adjusted overtime to reflect current market properties.

***MRIS Note:*** During 2007 MRIS has a scheduled product enhancement which will utilize the formats of the Tarasoft Titan CMA reports within the Matrix product. They are also adding the ability to add broker and agent branding to Matrix for use on all print and email templates in addition to having the ability to modify comparable listings after the CMA is built.



## Overall Conclusions:

We found the Matrix system to be more mature, easier to use overall, more intuitive and generally more robust than the ARIS system though ARIS did offer some nice features such as their CMA module.

We have been informed a number of improvements are scheduled for the Matrix system, which if instituted, will increase the Matrix advantage. In fairness, we did not have the scheduled upgrade list for the ARIS system. For ARIS to match current Matrix functionality, however, would require significant functional changes as opposed to “design” changes.

Keystone, the listing management portion of the MRIS system, has also scheduled enhancements which if instituted will improve the general usability and substantially reduce the time it takes to enter a listing. The greatest improvements to speed and efficiency will occur when the Coastal Association removes what they consider unneeded fields and set preferences for which fields are mandatory and which are optional.

Another important consideration is the large user base being supported on the Matrix and Keystone systems. Given this user base we are confident that Matrix and Keystone will continue to be enhanced and supported many years into the future.

### *Other considerations:*

In addition to the base MLS functionality offered it is also important to take into consideration any additional software or products provided as part of the overall MLS offering. Use of 3rd party, best of breed products, is becoming the norm and to the average agent these products or services are perceived as a part of the MLS system.

1. The following products are provided at no charge to all MRIS Customers:
  - a. Internet access with up to 3 email accounts and 200 Mb of storage
  - b. SettlementXpress- a fully functional financial application.
  - c. Homesdatabase.com- a comprehensive public portal for finding homes in the MRIS areas.
2. Over 100 additional tools that interface with MRIS via a RETS interface are made available to agents and/or Brokers, for a fee. The top four products agents currently subscribed to are:
  - a. MRIS Lingo- Multilingual web sites which translate listings for 13 languages.
  - b. ActiveAgent and ActiveAgent Professional- Homesdatabase.com connected with the Real Estate professionals’ business model.
  - c. Contract Form Auto-fill- MRIS customers can easily and electronically populate contract forms directly with listing content using both AutoRealty™ and ZipForms™.
  - d. Relay Transaction Management- 24/7 online access allows agents, buyers, sellers and every party involved in the transaction an online location to monitor transaction progress.



**Note:** We do not have a list of any 3<sup>rd</sup> party products supplied with the ARIS MLS system that would be included as part of their base MLS fee. If these are available they should be considered as part of the overall MLS product offering.