



[ ONLINE COMMUNITIES ]

## New Ways to Connect Builders, Homeowners

By Susan Bady, Senior Editor, Design

Looking for a better way to establish an online community with your customers? The Web now has options catering to builders, including LifeAt, a virtual communication platform, or iAccess, a Web portal that allows builders to upload warranty documents and communicate directly with homeowners via customized Web sites.

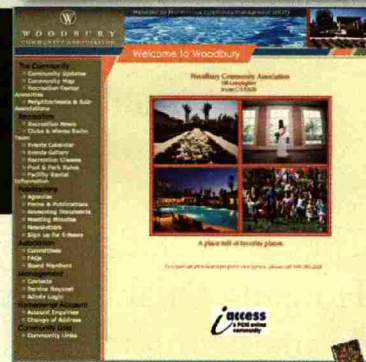
The key difference: LifeAt allows residents

to talk to each other; iAccess doesn't. That's probably because LifeAt was originally designed for apartment and condominium buildings in big cities where residents were looking for ways to connect. But LifeAt CEO Matthew Goldstein believes his business model can be applied to any

residential community (visit [www.lifeat.com](http://www.lifeat.com)). "We've started to expand into the suburbs, and it's working as well there as it is in the high-rises," says Goldstein.

The iAccess portal was developed by Professional Community Management of California, one of the nation's largest managers of homeowner associations ([www.pcminternet.com/iaccess](http://www.pcminternet.com/iaccess)). "The cost-effective way to communicate with homeowners is through iAccess," says Donny Disbro, PCM's vice president of new business and marketing.

THE LIFEAT WEB SITE (top) allows residents to communicate with their neighbors. Using iAccess (right), each community can set up an exclusive site that quickly delivers vital information to homeowners.



### At a Glance

LifeAt	iAccess
Sites created for 460 properties in 12 states and three countries (60% condol/40% rental)	Sites created for 150 communities in Southern California (all for-sale housing)
Each site is custom-designed	Each site is custom-designed
Private and password-protected except for certain listings that target prospective residents	Private and password-protected except for some sections that target prospective buyers
Cost: \$1 per unit per month; first three months free (no sign-up fee)	Cost: \$100 per community per month for hosting and maintenance
Message board for resident-to-resident chats; they can also post personal profiles and photos of themselves	No homeowner-to-homeowner interaction
No video capability	Can stream video for property tours
Property managers can post announcements and updates about maintenance work and vacancies	Builders, developers and HOAs can upload warranty manuals and post announcements about maintenance work, board meetings, events, etc.
Primary benefits to residents: social networking; ratings and reviews of neighborhood businesses and services; free classified ad postings; ability to communicate with property manager about repairs	Primary benefits to residents: notification of meetings, events, maintenance work and community guidelines; documentation of maintenance and service requests

### BUT WAIT — THERE'S MORE

DEVELOPERS, property owners and investors around the world can now make deals and raise capital through an online business social network, [www.gpdlink.com](http://www.gpdlink.com). Global Property Database launched the GPDLink service, which is free. Members can also use the online deal-making exchange and connection systems of the sister site, [www.gpddeal.com](http://www.gpddeal.com).

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