

2026 Will Be a Year in Which Artificial Intelligence Transforms the Face of Real Estate

Areia, that attractive blonde at right, is not a real person. She's the creation of a RELIANCEai, a real estate technology company. She speaks 70 languages and can be Asian, Black, Hispanic, or whatever we want if we "hire" her to be the 24/7 concierge on our website after she is "rolled out" in the coming year.

You can watch Areia come alive in her 1½-minute video sales pitch at www.relianceai.com. She was only announced this week, so it's too early for the company to demonstrate her at next month's CES in Las Vegas, but I suspect she will be a big hit at CES 2027. I spoke with her boss on Tuesday and hope to be one of the select few beta-testers when the company is ready for her soft-launch.

Areia is an acronym for *Autonomous Real Estate Intelligence Assistant*, and her introduction makes a lot of sense. Like my dear friend Siri, she knows everything and forgets nothing. She is schooled in Fair Housing and ethics as well as our MLS rules and regulations. And she is up-to-the-minute on 165 million real estate listings nationwide.

She learns your needs and wants and is able to identify listings which match them. She also knows when to connect you with me or another licensed agent, because she knows what only a licensed agent can do or say, and, of course, you need me to actually show you homes.

Best of all, Areia is tireless and will work with you any time of the day or night.

Here are some answers from the *Frequently Asked Questions* on the company's website:

Unlike chatbots, Areia is a *Synthetic Human*, a lifelike AI creation designed to understand context, empathy, and real estate-specific knowledge. Where chatbots give canned answers, Areia builds real connections.

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By JIM SMITH
Realtor®

Areia can be custom branded to reflect your company identity, from voice to style to presentation, so she feels like a natural extension of your brand.

She is the first intelligent, AI-powered Synthetic Human built for real estate. She goes beyond a logo or tagline by becoming your brand's human face and always-on ambassador, engaging consumers 24/7 and positioning your brokerage's technology as more personal, trusted, and future-forward.

Areia empowers agents by taking on repetitive tasks, like welcoming buyers and sellers on the agent's website, answering common real estate questions, and nurturing early-stage clients, so agents can focus on what matters most: relationships, negotiations, and closings.

Areia is programmed with Fair Housing and MLS safeguards, and all interactions are logged for accountability. Anything outside her scope is escalated to a licensed professional.

Although not mentioned on the company's website, I suspect that if a website visitor's primary language is not English, Areia could switch to one of her 69 other languages, such as Spanish.

Just this week, I had an interaction with

I'll Be Attending CES 2026

Formerly called the Consumer Electronics Show, CES is the largest annual trade show for consumer technology, and is held in Las Vegas every January.

In my role as a real estate columnist, I obtained media credentials to attend it next month. I'll get to attend the two media days that precede the public show, which runs Jan. 6-9. I'll be focusing, of course, on technology related to home innovations, plus the practice of real estate. I'll report on what I learn in my Jan. 10th column.

a very human-sounding AI voice. The call was with HP support. I was calling because I couldn't get my HP printer to connect to the WiFi in my new apartment. She gave me the choice of connecting with a human support person, but said there would be a fee, since my printer is out of warranty. I chose to have "her" help me, and not just because she didn't have a hard-to-understand accent and seemed empathetic.

In our 20-minute phone call she asked me questions and had me try different things and reacted intelligently to whatever I said, such as when I said I had accidentally hit the wrong button on the printer and when the printer displayed an error message. (It's a Smart Tank printer without a display screen, and it needed more ink.) She never disconnected me, but had asked my phone number in case she needed to call me back. She waited patiently, even when I was silent for 20 seconds or more, occasionally asking to make sure I



was still on the line.

She knew everything about the model of printer I have, not needing time to look it up or read a service manual.

The experience was so satisfying that I will never pass on the opportunity to work with an AI support bot like HP's when one's offered.

So I know the kind of experience that Areia will provide website visitors, should

my brokerage decide to invest in her. Frankly, I hesitated to make this the subject of my column, because I don't want our competitors to hire "her" first!

We have all had some anxiety about how artificial intelligence will change our lives personally, economically, and even politically. Areia reminds me in particular of "deep fakes" which can be used to scam us (pretending, for example, to be a relative in trouble) or to fool us into thinking a political leader we trusted said something reprehensible. I know this is happening.

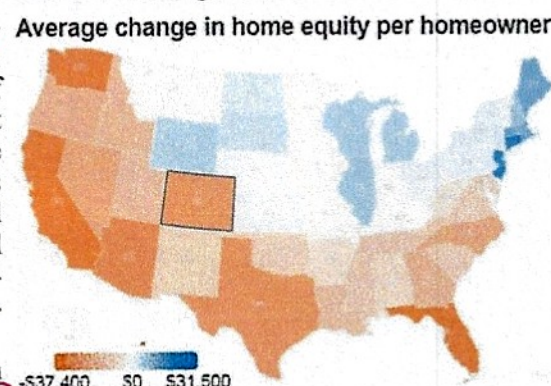
Areia, however, is a good use of AI.

The Real Estate Market Differs Widely Across the Nation

The map at right, produced by Co-tality (formerly CoreLogic), tells an interesting story. While we and most of the mountain west, all of the west coast and the south have been watching the real estate market stall and sold prices decline, New Jersey and New England in particular have continued to see sold prices climb. This has caused the average home equity to change accordingly.

The chart measures the change in equity from the 3rd Quarter of 2024 to the 3rd Quarter of 2025.

For Colorado, the average decline in home equity was \$25,800, according to the Co-tality report, ranking it close to the highest, which was Florida, with a decline in average home equity of \$37,400. Next worst was California with an average home equity loss of \$32,500, then Washington with a loss of \$32,200.



The gains in the northeast, however, did not outweigh those losses in Colorado and other states. The nationwide average was a loss of \$13,400 in home equity, reversing the gains seen in prior years.

From 2022 to 2023 there was an average gain of \$25,000 in home equity, and from 2023 to 2024 there was an average gain of \$4,900 in home equity.

New Price on Updated 2-Bed/2-Bath Lakewood Condo



Although the seller has only owned this unit at 331 Wright Street #304 for two years, she has done some major updates, including rebuilding the deck, installing a new furnace and A/C, replacing light fixtures, and more. Highlights include its rebuilt 5'x12' south-facing deck and the living room's vaulted ceiling, skylight and wood-burning fireplace set into a floor-to-ceiling stone wall. Visit www.GRElistings.com to view a narrated video walk-through, drone video and interactive tour. Then call me at 303-525-1851 or co-listing agent Kathy Jonke at 303-990-7428 to request a private showing.

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