Landlord's Guide to Optimizing Listings Using AI

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Contents

Introduction

The rental market is evolving quickly, driven by changing renter expectations and digital innovation. Renters now demand more transparency in the rental process, which takes the form of faster communication and the ability to make decisions based on self-guided experiences online. To keep up, property managers are exploring new tools, including artificial intelligence (AI). The National Apartment Association conducted a survey and found that 85% of property managers claim to have a basic understanding of AI. However, only 32% reported using the technology. Property managers and landlords must adapt to this environment and think about more than just visibility. To succeed in today's market, landlords must focus on quality, efficiency, and competitive positioning.

This paper explores the vital role of optimized listings, the impact of visual content, the advantages of AI and automation tools, and how integrated platforms can help landlords convert interest into signed leases. Whether you are managing a single unit or a large portfolio, embracing these technologies can improve how you operate your business.

How is AI transforming rental listings?

Artificial Intelligence is part of the rapid development and reshaping of the rental property landscape. As AI carries out and simplifies property management tasks, it allows landlords to create better listings and streamline their operations. Market.us reports that the global AI in real estate market was worth $2.9 billion in 2023 and is projected to reach $41.5 billion by 2033, highlighting the growing influence of AI for property management. Integrating AI into rental management offers landlords an opportunity to increase visibility online by optimizing their listings in less time and effort.
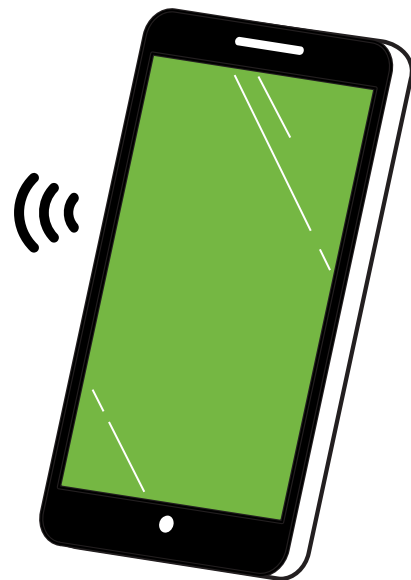
Why are optimized listings important?

Optimized rental listings do more than just increase visibility online; they help you attract better renters. These renters are typically better informed and more inclined to sign leases, saving landlords time. In today's digital rental market, optimized listings are those that align with renters' search behavior and Google's E-E-A-T quality guidelines.

What is E-E-A-T?

According to Google, their "automated systems are designed to use many different factors to rank great content. After identifying relevant content, Google's systems aim to prioritize those that seem most helpful. To do this, they identify factors that help determine which content demonstrates aspects of experience, expertise, authoritativeness, and trustworthiness, or E-E-A-T" (Google).

If you prioritize these factors when optimizing your content, your listing is more likely to be surfaced by Google to answer user inquiries. Even if you don't rank for specific searches, Google's AI, Gemini, is more likely to reference your listing in the AI Overview in certain circumstances. Therefore, optimization makes it easier for renters to find and engage with your listing.

What makes a listing optimized?

Optimized listings typically include the following:

- Unit-specific features
- Accurate and transparent pricing
- Photos (interior and exterior), videos, and 3D tours
- Renter reviews

Each of these components helps set clear expectations and minimize ambiguity.

Unit-specific features

Renters want to know the unit features match their needs before touring. Highlighting unit-specific features—such as stainless-steel appliances, hardwood floors, or walk-in closets—set your property apart, appeal directly to renter preferences, and narrow down the applicant pool.

CoStar Group's insights report shows that listings with detailed descriptions of the floor plan, layout, finishes, and unit-specific amenities drive a 45% increase in contact rates. This stat shows that transparency and specificity are important components in attracting qualified leads.

Transparent pricing

Accurate, upfront pricing is one of the most effective ways to build trust with potential renters. All-in pricing listings include utilities, fees, and deposits, which reduces confusion and minimizes drop-off during the application stage. Renters today expect transparency and are more likely to pursue properties that clearly communicate costs.

To learn more about providing fee data and ensuring transparency, refer to our article: How do I provide my fee data and ensure price transparency?

Quality media

High-quality media is one of the strongest drivers of renter engagement on listing platforms. Professional photos, 3D tours, and video walkthroughs allow prospects to explore a property virtually, often influencing whether they decide to tour in person. AI-powered editing tools can enhance lighting, declutter rooms, or generate virtual staging, ensuring that visuals present the property in its best possible light. Listings with strong media assets not only perform better in search rankings but also reduce the number of redundant renter questions.

Reviews

Renter reviews have become a critical factor in the decision-making process, much like product reviews in e-commerce. Positive testimonials build credibility and reassure prospective tenants that the property delivers on its promises. Even neutral or constructive reviews can strengthen trust if they are responded to promptly and professionally.

To learn more about increasing your number of reviews and improving your ratings, refer to our white paper: Landlord's Guide to Managing Your Online Reputation

So how can you do all of this yourself?

Now that you've learned why optimized listings are important, let's explore the steps you can take to optimize your own listings with AI step by step.

How can you optimize your listings using AI?

1. Create an account with Apartments.com

If you're a landlord looking for the perfect way to connect with renters, listing your property online is essential. Among the many platforms available, Apartments.com stands out as the top choice. Why? Apartments.com offers a wide range of tools, features, and benefits designed to help property owners attract the right tenants in the shortest amount of time. From a massive audience reach to user-friendly tools and detailed analytics, Apartments.com simplifies the rental process while setting you up for success!

Create your account

1. Navigate to Apartments.com.

2. Select Manage Rentals in the top navigation.

   The Rental Manager home page appears.

3. Enter your email into the field and select Get Started.

   A Sign Up page appears.

4. Enter your information and then select Create account.

   A verification pop-up appears.

5. Enter your one-time access code and select Verify.

   Your account is created.

Add your first listing

Now that you've created your account, it's time to use it and publish your first listing on Apartments.com!

1. Log in to your account and select the Menu dropdown button in the top navigation.

2. Select Properties & Listings and then select Properties.

   Your Properties page appears.

3. Select the Add a Property button at the top of the page.

   The Add your property page appears.

4. Select your property type and then enter the address of your property.

5. Select Add Your Property.

   The Create a Listing wizard begins.

6. Follow the prompts to create your listing.

> **Note**: Our AI-powered description generator takes the hassle out of writing and helps you create a compelling, attention-grabbing listing description in seconds! Watch this video to learn more.

   After completing the listing wizard, your listing is published to Apartments. com!

After you finish the listing wizard, your listing is published on Apartments.com, and you can begin optimizing it with AI!

2. Incorporate AI into keyword research

Specificity is essential for optimizing rental listings. According to Q2 research data from Apartments.com, 99% of renters consider it important to review specific unit-related information when searching for rental properties. Landlords who included unit-level details saw an increase in lead-to-tour and lead-to-lease conversion rates.

Landlords and property managers who are looking to create highly descriptive property listings can save time and effort by using AI to generate these descriptions. The first step toward drafting these descriptions is identifying keywords.

Identify keywords

Renters often begin their housing search with very specific terms, whether it's "pet-friendly apartments with balconies," "two-bedroom near public transit," or "studio with in-unit laundry." The exact words and phrases renters use matter, as rental marketplace algorithms surface listings that best match the search intent. Without the right keywords, even a beautiful property with competitive pricing can get buried under optimized listings.

AI tools solve this challenge by analyzing large volumes of renter search data to identify the most frequently used terms in a market. For example, an AI-driven keyword analysis might reveal that "dog-friendly" is searched twice as often as "pet-friendly" in a particular city, or that "home office space" has surged in popularity as more renters work remotely. Landlords can then update their listing language to align with these trends.

Dynamic keyword optimization goes beyond guessing what renters are searching for. AI can recommend precise phrases that match renter demand and even update these suggestions in real time as search patterns shift. A landlord in a coastal city, for instance, may see "beach access" rise during summer months, while "covered parking" gains traction in winter.

The goal isn't to overload listings with buzzwords, but to weave renter-relevant keywords naturally into descriptions, headers, and photo captions. This approach helps ensure listings are not only more visible in marketplace search results but also more appealing to renters comparing multiple options.

Best practices for AI-powered keyword optimization

- Use AI tools to generate a list of the top 10–20 renter search terms in your market.

- Integrate high-performing keywords into headlines, unit descriptions, and photo captions.

- Regularly refresh your listings to reflect seasonal or market-driven keyword shifts.

- Balance visibility with readability — keywords should feel natural, not forced.

By leveraging AI for smart keyword optimization, landlords can ensure their listings speak the same language as prospective renters. This alignment increases search visibility, boosts click-through rates, and ultimately drives higher-quality leads.

3. Draft better prompts

Artificial intelligence is a powerful creation tool when applied effectively. For a Large Language Model (LLM) to generate a strong description, users must be specific with their prompting. Here is an example of a prompt that could be used to generate a descriptive listing:

"Generate a rental listing for [Rental Property Name] located in [Neighborhood] in [City, State]. In this listing include the address, [Address, including Zip Code], and the following amenities to showcase the property:

[list amenities here]

Also include popular local landmarks within a [number-mile] radius, the public transportation offered within a [number-mile] radius, and the local popular businesses within a [number-mile] radius. Include the all-in pricing that is set at [$/per month] for [specific floor plan]. This unit currently has [# of available units] unit available. Generate the description in a block of text that is no longer than [# of sentences] sentences long and does not exceed a word count of [# of words] words."

For this example, we will use a hypothetical property called "The Peach" located in Atlanta, GA. Here is the prompt that will be relayed to the LLM:

"Generate a rental listing for The Peach located in Midtown in Atlanta, GA. In this listing include the address, 6021 Happiness Blvd, Atlanta, GA 30340, and the following amenities to showcase the property:

In-unit washer and dryer, air conditioning, community lounges, pool, fitness center, pet play area, and tennis court.

Also include popular local landmarks within a 10-mile radius, the public transportation offered within a 5-mile radius, and the local popular businesses within a 5-mile radius. Include the all-in pricing that is set at $1,800/month. This unit currently has 1 unit available. Generate the description in a block of text that is no longer than five sentences and does not exceed a word count of 300 words."

This was the generated output:

"Welcome to The Peach, an upscale rental opportunity located at 6021 Happiness Blvd, Atlanta, GA 30340, nestled in the vibrant Midtown district of Atlanta. This premium residence offers one spacious unit priced at $1,800/month and features an in-unit washer and dryer, air conditioning, and access to a host of resort-style amenities including community lounges, a sparkling pool, modern fitness center, tennis court, and a pet play area perfect for furry companions.

Just minutes away, residents can explore local favorites like Piedmont Park, the Fox Theatre, and the High Museum of Art, while also enjoying convenient access to MARTA public transit and several bus routes within 5 miles, ensuring a seamless city commute. The neighborhood is also home to top-rated restaurants such as South City Kitchen, The Vortex, and coffee havens like Dancing Goats Coffee Bar, with grocery options including Publix and Trader Joe's nearby. Discover comfort, convenience, and culture at The Peach—schedule your tour today before this rare Midtown gem is gone."

Reviewing the output after generating the description is essential to ensure that the information in the description is accurate, fair, and legally compliant. Text generated by AI may also appear overly automated or mechanical, which is off-putting to renters. Reviewing the generated text and adding a 'human touch' and personality will allow the listing to seem more personalized.

Using the previous output as an example, here is that same output, but edited for personality and tone:

"Welcome to The Peach! This rental property is located at 6021 Happiness Blvd, Atlanta, GA 30340 in the vibrant Midtown district of Atlanta. This premium residence offers one spacious unit priced at $1,800/month and features an in-unit washer and dryer, air conditioning, and access to upscale amenities including community lounges, a pool, modern fitness center, tennis court, and a pet play area.

Just minutes away, residents can explore local landmarks like Piedmont Park, the Fox Theatre, and the High Museum of Art, while also enjoying convenient access to MARTA public transit and several bus routes within 5 miles, ensuring a seamless commute through the city. The neighborhood is also home to local favorite restaurants such as South City Kitchen and The Vortex. Dancing Goats Coffee Bar is a local favorite, perfect for coffee lovers. Grocery options nearby include Publix and Trader Joe's. Discover comfort, convenience, and culture at The Peach and schedule your tour today!"

4. Integrate AI into your editing process

AI and AI-powered tools are excellent avenues to explore when it comes to editing photos and media. AI can be used in the editing process to:

- Enhance
- Remove elements
- Crop
- Touch-Up

Enhance

AI-powered photo enhancement tools can automatically adjust lighting, sharpen details, and improve color balance to ensure property photos look professional and appealing. High-quality visuals create stronger first impressions and can significantly increase engagement with a listing. Enhancements should focus on presenting the property in its best light without misrepresenting it, allowing renters to envision themselves in the space.

Remove elements

Advanced AI tools allow property managers to remove clutter, personal belongings, or distracting items from photos. For example, Matterport's Defurnish feature can remove furniture and items from a space, providing renters with a clean, neutral canvas for imagining themselves in the rental. Removing visual distractions makes listings more versatile and increases their appeal to a wider range of prospects.

Crop

Cropping images with AI ensures that the focus remains on the most desirable aspects of a unit or property. Automated cropping tools can highlight unique features—such as modern appliances, balcony views, or premium finishes—while minimizing empty or irrelevant background space. Well-cropped images guide the renter's eye toward value-driving details and create a more polished visual presentation.

Touch-up

Touch-up AI features help correct imperfections such as minor wall scuffs, uneven lighting, or lens distortions. While these subtle edits improve the overall look of photos, they must be used responsibly to avoid presenting a misrepresentation of the unit's condition. Transparent communication about the edits reinforces trust with renters, ensuring they know what to expect when touring the property in person.

Important: If AI is used throughout the photo-editing process, it is important to be transparent with potential renters. Renters should be informed via a disclaimer or caption about what is truly present in the photographed space versus what may have been digitally altered. Maintaining trust and reliability is a large part of what makes property owners and managers stand out from one another.

In conclusion

Today's rental market has moved beyond printed flyers, generic listings, and slow communication. The landscape values speed, personalization, and modern digital expectations. Renters have more choice and higher standards for how, and how quickly, they would like to make decisions. In short, renters demand clarity and control. Landlords and property managers who embrace this shift and use modern tools, data backed strategies, and AI are not only able to meet these expectations but exceed them.

The foundational shift in approach begins by identifying what today's renters want. The ability to browse detailed features, such as taking a 3D tour, in conjunction with transparency in availability, renter reviews, and pricing has changed the way renters look at the market. More renters are willing to rent without visiting a property in person. Landlords must adapt by providing more features that can lead to feelings of trust, efficiency, and responsiveness— qualities that are now at the center of rental decision-making.

These tools are not just enhancements; they are strategic necessities. For the landlords that are ready to embrace this new standard, the reward is clear: higher-quality leads and a competitive edge in a fast-moving market.

The future of the rental industry is intelligent, digital, and human. Landlords who thrive will be the ones who combine smart technology with data. The ability to effectively use these resources, alongside data and automation, in a way that elevates the human touch instead of replacing it is the advantage that will set landlords apart.

Your next great renter is already searching. But will your listing be the one that gets them to say yes?

Need more help optimizing your listing?

Apartments.com's Rental Manager suite has a vast array of tools to help you manage your rental property or apartment. Fill your vacancies fast, screen tenants, collect rent easily, and manage maintenance requests and expenses with our all-in-one property management software.

Create an account to get started!

Sources

- National Apartment Association (NAA). (2024). Tech and the Renter's Journey: Survey on AI and Automation in Property Management." NAA

- Market.us

- CoStar Group

- Apartments.com