

June 2009

Register your Facebook URL- Before somebody else does!

On 9th June 2009, Facebook Inc., the highly popular social networking company based in the United States, publicly announced that beginning Saturday 13th June at 12:01am US EDT pre-existing Facebook account holders will be permitted to create personalised URLs to direct interested parties to their Facebook pages. Such URLs will assume the form of e.g. www.facebook.com/pizzahut and will be awarded on a first come first serve basis.

What is the risk to trade mark owners?

There is a risk that current Facebook users (both individual and corporate) will make unauthorised use of your trade mark as part of their personal URL to attract users to their page in an effort to misrepresent themselves or damage the reputation of your brand.

Trade mark owners should not face the same problem with Facebook-squatting as they have with cyber-squatting. Facebook has implemented a strict no-transfer policy which means that these URLs have no re-sale value, avoiding ransom demands for the return of one's own trade mark.

What action should be taken?

Trade mark owners should seriously consider creating their own personal URLs incorporating their key trade marks whether for use as a marketing tool or simply to pre-empt adoption of the name by an opportunistic third party.

If you already have a Facebook profile or public page simply register your URL or 'username' at facebook.com/username/.

If you do not currently have a Facebook profile or public page, you should register one at some point before 28th June 2009. As a new user you are not yet free to create a URL, but this opportunity will become available at 12:01am US EDT (05:01am BST) on 28th June 2009.

If somebody is infringing your rights?

In the event that a current user has already beaten you to it, Facebook has reserved IP owners the right to reclaim any 'username' which is an abuse of intellectual property rights. Procedures are in place.

Get in touch if you would like us to ensure your trade mark is protected!

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