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[Apple Tee's Off its New Social Networking With Ping](#)

Posted on September 15, 2010 by [Susan Perera](#)

Well, it appears that yesterday's guest blogger, Andrew Miller, and I are on the same wavelength as I also prepared some thoughts on the new iTunes Ping social networking platform. I guess such is the case in the world of social media where current events can be discussed ad nauseam in a matter of minutes.

Apple's current hot topic is the release of iTunes 10 which encompassed multiple trademark surprises. The most noticeable change can be seen on your desktop if you have upgraded your iTunes software.

You may have noticed the iTunes logo has changed from:

To:



If you didn't watch the lengthy [keynote](#) presentation, Steve Jobs announced that the decision to ditch the old CD logo was made due to the fact that iTunes sales are on pace to surpass CD sales within the next year. Already, there has been quite a bit of criticism regarding the new logo, discussed in depth in [Clinton Duncan's post at Brand New](#).

The second trademark surprise was the addition of iTunes new social networking platform, which has been named Ping. Surely it was only a matter of time before Apple tried to take a bite out of the social network market but – Ping?



Is anyone else surprised with the name choice? Ping is a well-known computer function for testing a connection between two computers.

And, even if you're not a computer whiz you may be familiar with "ping" from Blackberry Messenger, which has a "ping" function that notifies the recipient of a message.

Thus, Ping for connecting and sending messages to your friends via a social networking tool is not all that original.

What is even more interesting is that Apple entered into a license agreement with the well-known PING golf equipment brand to use the mark. What do golf clubs have to do with music oriented social networking you might ask? Well, Karsten Manufacturing (the owner of the registered PING mark for golf equipment) actually applied for numerous PING marks in connection with computer and online services just months ago. Take a look at a few of the applied for marks [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). Thus, Apple's social networking venture might have created a potential risk of confusion with Karsten's use of PING in connection with the applied-for marks.

Andrew's earlier post aptly identifies the benefits that Karsten will receive out of the license agreement, namely, possible financial gain and association with a bleeding-edge technology company.

But, why did Apple pay for a license to use Ping, a snappy, but far from original mark? Apple could have easily chosen a mark that fit within its i-family of marks or, following in the footsteps of its world famous Apple mark, it could have chosen something arbitrary and new, either of these choices would have launched the new concept without the need for a license agreement.

Maybe this decision is not all that surprising for Apple. As you might remember, Dan opined on a similar [trademark clearance issue with iPad](#) earlier this year. What are your thoughts on the new Ping social media adventure?

