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An Intellectual Property and Technology Law Update

06/11/09

Act Now to Protect Your Brand Name on Facebook.com

Facebook, Inc., the social networking website company responsible for Facebook.com, announced this week that beginning Saturday, June 13, at 12:01 a.m. U.S. EDT, Facebook users will be allowed to create personalized usernames for use on Facebook.

Without immediate action by brand owners, Facebook users can choose any term, including a third party's brand name, as their Facebook username.

Until now, most Facebook users have used their given names when registering for the site. According to the Facebook blog, "[t]he one place, though, where your identity wasn't reflected was in the Web address for your profile or the Facebook Pages you administer. The URL was just a randomly assigned number like 'id=592952074.'"

Beginning on June 13, 2009, Facebook users will be able to choose a username to direct others to their Facebook profile. The username will appear as a personalized URL for the user's Facebook page such as, "<http://www.facebook.com/johndoe>" or "<http://www.facebook.com/yourbrand>."

Although Facebook is encouraging its users to create usernames as close to their given names as possible, this development raises risks for brand owners. Facebook users may attempt to incorporate brand names into their personalized Facebook usernames and page URLs by choosing third-party brand names as their usernames.

Facebook has created an online procedure by which trademark owners can prevent their brand names from being registered as Facebook usernames. Trademark owners should fill out the form available at: <http://www.facebook.com/help.php>

The form is short and simple and should be completed for each brand name you wish to protect by Friday June 12, 2009.

[Click here](#) for additional information for brand owners from Facebook.

Please note that in the event you discover one of your brand names has been registered as a Facebook username on or after June 13, 2009, Facebook has reserved the right to remove or reclaim usernames for any reason, and trademark owners can report usernames that infringe intellectual property rights via Facebook's IP infringement form [here](#).

For more information, please contact the Intellectual Property and Technology Group at:

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