

FACEBOOK - Alert for Trade Mark Owners

Posted on 12/06/2009

Facebook has announced that from 12.01am EDT Saturday 13 June in the United States, or 4pm Saturday 13 June in New Zealand, its users will be able to use personalised usernames, instead of randomly assigned numbers. While this will help users' friends and family to find them on the site, it will also enable them to choose names that belong to others.

These could include trade marks. It is a first come first served system. That means any individual could, for instance, register as "nike" or "hersheys". They could then proceed to use the name on the site in association with activities that brandowners may not appreciate.

Facebook has retained the right to remove any name for any reason, and also set up a system for the reporting of infringements. However, because the use may not constitute use in trade, or use as a trade mark, it may be difficult for trade mark owners who do not appreciate the use of their trade marks by users of Facebook, to stop that use if Facebook does not respond to requests to do so.

Trade mark owners who are concerned about this should consider registering their trade marks on Facebook to prevent undesirable use by others.

For further information visit the Facebook site or contact [Rosemary Wallis](#).