Chapter 11

Interacting with the Internet

§ 11:1 Internet Basics for Trademark Owners
  § 11:1.1 Internet Addresses and Domain Names
  § 11:1.2 The Internet As a Tool for Advertisers and Tricksters
    [A] Metatags, Keywords, Sponsored Link Ads, Pop-Up Ads
    [B] Linking and Phishing
  § 11:1.3 Types of Websites That Raise Trademark Issues
§ 11:2 What Is Trademark “Use in Commerce” on the Internet?
  § 11:2.1 Rescuecom v. Google: Purchase and Sale of Key Words Is Actionable “Use in Commerce”
    [B] Rescuecom’s Comments on Google’s Arguments
§ 11:3 Likely Confusion on the Internet
  § 11:3.1 The Likely Confusion Factors
  § 11:3.2 The Battles over Keyword Confusion
  § 11:3.3 Initial Interest Confusion
§ 11:4 Applying Dilution Principles to Internet Disputes
§ 11:5 Domain Name Issues
  § 11:5.1 Acquiring Domain Names
  § 11:5.2 Domain Names As Trademarks
  § 11:5.3 Domain Names and Likely Confusion
    [A] Intuitive Domain Names
    [B] Postdomain Paths
  § 11:5.4 Domain Names and Likely Dilution

(Kane, Rel. #3, 9/10) 11–1
As the commercial importance of the Internet escalates, its impact on the world of trademarks also escalates. This chapter addresses (1) trademark issues raised by the Internet, for example, cybersquatting and other domain name disputes, use of competitors’ trademarks as search engine keywords and in “sponsored links,” and First Amendment concerns; and (2) use of the Internet as a source for information and evidence. But first, some basics.

§ 11:1 Internet Basics for Trademark Owners

- The Internet refers to a global network of computers linked together by communications lines.
The World Wide Web refers to the collection of hyperlinked documents (a.k.a. websites) that have been posted on the Internet by companies, individuals, governments, etc.

Websites or web pages. Once your computer is linked to the Internet, you have access to files, called websites or webpages, posted on the Internet from anywhere in the world.

Hypertext markup language (HTML) refers to the computer code used to construct web pages.

§ 11:1.1 Internet Addresses and Domain Names

IPA (Internet protocol address) is the unique number that is assigned to each website and that identifies the website’s location within the Internet. For example, IPA 140.147.248.209 corresponds to www.congress.gov.

DNS (domain name system) provides a way of referring to websites by easy-to-remember names rather than numbers.

ICANN, or Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, oversees the domain name system. It is a nonprofit, private corporation formed in 1998. ICANN’s purpose is to assign the numbers used as Internet protocol addresses to the regional registries, delegate responsibility for registering names, develop procedures to resolve disputes over the registration of domain names, and regulate technical aspects of the Internet. See http://www.icann.org.

URLs (uniform resource locators) are addresses used to locate information (and post information for others to see) on this network. A typical URL to a website home page would read something like this:

http://www.mcdonalds.com

Also, each web page that makes up a website has its own URL, consisting of the domain name plus a post-domain path. The post-domain path often is made up of words describing the page’s contents. For example:


is the URL for the page telling you how to open your own McDonald’s franchise.
• **Domain name** is the named address portion of the URL that represents the IPA (Internet protocol address). Domain names comprise at least two levels.

• **Top-level domain** identifies the general nature or location of a domain.

  • **Generic top-level domains** (gTLDs) originally included:
    • .com for commercial;
    • .gov for government;
    • .edu for educational institution;
    • .org for organization; and
    • .net for Internet-related organizations.

  • Seven new gTLDs were added in 2001 and 2002, including:
    • .info for any use; and
    • .biz intended for businesses.

  • Six new **sponsored gTLDs** (.asia, .cat, .jobs, .mobi, .tel, and .travel) were added in 2003. A sponsored gTLD is a specialized TLD that has a sponsor representing a relatively narrow community that is most affected by the gTLD, and additional policies apply, such as further qualifications for domain name owners within the gTLD.¹

• **Country code top level domains** (ccTLDs) are two letters and signify location. For example:
  
  • .us means United States; and
  • .uk means United Kingdom.

---

¹ Information on existing and proposed new generic top level domains may be found at http://www.icann.org/tlds. ICANN has proposed introducing an unlimited number of new gTLDs. Anyone with $185,000 to spare can try to acquire the rights to administer their own gTLD, as in <yournamehere>. Concerned IP owners and IP rights groups who fear that numerous gTLDs will spawn additional infringements are working to add provisions to ICANN’s process to address their concerns.
• **Second-level domain names** (the “mcdonalds” in mcdonalds.com) refer to the specific organization or person the web page represents. Second-level domain names can be important source-identifiers and are often comprised of traditional word trademarks.

• **Cybersquatting** or **cyberpiracy** refers to the bad-faith practice of registering as a domain name (or as part of a domain name) a trademark that belongs to someone else.

• **Domain name tasting** occurs when a domain name registrant tests the popularity of a domain name during the five-day “grace period” at the beginning of the registration. If the name is withdrawn during this five-day period, the registrar must refund the cost. Tasting is a way for a registrant to try out the domain name for free and to keep it only if it seems likely to generate money.

• **Domain kiting** occurs when the owner continually deletes and re-registers a domain name during the five-day grace period, with the goal of having the domain registered without ever actually paying for it.

§ 11:1.2 *The Internet As a Tool for Advertisers and Tricksters*

[A] **Metatags, Keywords, Sponsored Link Ads, Pop-Up Ads**

In the brick and mortar world, advertisers use billboards, magazine and newspaper ads, television ads, trade show booths, flyers, and the like in an attempt to reach their intended audience. The Internet can direct an advertiser’s message to potential purchasers and get them to visit the advertiser’s website by a number of means that may precipitate a trademark dispute:

• **Metatags** are a type of HTML code that permit a website creator to embed descriptors or keywords describing the site’s content. The descriptors or keywords are not visible on the website, but, at least in the past, were used by search engines for indexing purposes and thus influenced whether
or not, and where on the results page, the website would appear in response to a search engine query.\(^1\)

- **Keywords** can mean the terms used by website creators in metatags or the significant terms entered by a consumer in a search engine query. Internet search engines like Google and Yahoo have programs that allow advertisers to arrange to have their ads appear on the search results page when a user enters certain keywords. These keywords may include generic terms as well as trademarks (both the advertiser’s own trademarks and trademarks of the advertiser’s competitors).

- **Banner ads** or sponsored link ads are web page advertising spaces that provide links to other websites. A company can contract for a banner ad or sponsored link ad to appear on a search engine results page in response to search requests for keywords.

- **Pop-up ads** are ads that “pop up” in a separate window, blocking a portion of the user’s screen. Some pop-up ads are generated by software loaded onto computers during free downloads (often unbeknownst to the user). The software is designed to trigger ads pertinent to the user’s interests, based on the website visited or search term entered by the user. The result is that the user may visit a website selling one brand of sneakers only to be greeted with a pop-up for sneakers on a competing site.

### [B] Linking and Phishing

- **Linking** is simply providing a hyperlink or link from one site to another’s site and can be innocuous. However, trademark confusion may occur when websites include a link to a trademark owner’s site.\(^2\)

---

1. Search engines such as Google now rely on more sophisticated search algorithms rather than metatags.
2. Audi AG v. D’Amato, 469 F.3d 534 (6th Cir. 2006) (defendant’s audisport.com website consisting primarily of hyperlinks to Champion Audi goods and services enjoined; argument that website was non-commercial rejected); cf. Ticketmaster Corp. v. Tickets.com, Inc., 2000 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 12987 (C.D. Cal. 2000), aff’d, 248 F.3d 173 (9th Cir. 2001) (linking not enjoined when “customer is unlikely to be misled”).
• Phishing involves the use of fake email addresses, often disguised to appear as though the email is coming from a legitimate bank or business, to try to get consumers to provide financial information.³

 § 11:1.3 Types of Websites That Raise Trademark Issues

Competitor’s Sites: A competitor’s website can raise trademark issues in the same manner as a competitor’s traditional advertising: infringement, false advertising, comparative advertising, nominative use, fair use, etc., all come into play. The Internet also provides new tools that raise infringement issues: using competing trademarks in metatags, purchasing competing trademarks as keywords to generate sponsored link advertising, arranging for pop-up ads to appear when a competitor’s site is accessed, and so on.

User Generated Content and Commerce Sites: “User generated content” or UGC means simply that the content on a website is not supplied by the website owner but is “generated” by the website users, who upload the content themselves. YouTube is a prime example. These sites typically prohibit users from posting or selling merchandise that infringes third-party intellectual property rights (such as copyright, trademark, trade dress, and right of publicity). Most sites will promptly take down allegedly infringing content upon complaint by a trademark owner.

Social Networking Sites: Sites like Facebook and MySpace provide platforms for users to upload photos and text and information about themselves or their businesses and connect with other users. Twitter users send “tweets” (similar to email alerts), 140 characters in length, to tell their “followers” what they are doing. While the sites may be “social,” many businesses also use the sites to connect with their customers and promote their products. Trademark disputes can arise when the user name or the user profile includes a trademark or falsely suggests an affiliation with the trademark owner. Social network user names may appear in trademark search reports and you can expect to see more issues arise with user names in the future.

Auction Sites: eBay and other auction sites provide platforms for anyone with a computer to sell almost anything. Sometimes what is being sold is legitimate, such as second-hand genuine

³. See http://www.icann.org/en/general/glossary.htm#P.
goods. Sometimes the products are counterfeit or otherwise infringing. In *Tiffany v. eBay*, Tiffany asserted that more than 70% of the 136 TIFFANY products on eBay purchased by Tiffany investigators were counterfeit.\(^4\)

**User-generated Commerce Sites:** CafePress.com and ImageKind.com are two examples of websites that sell user-customized products. These sites will produce and then provide a venue for selling items such as t-shirts, bags, mugs, bumper stickers, etc., with content (such as text, images) submitted by its users.\(^5\)

**Virtual Worlds:** Virtual worlds provide platforms where users interact with each other through avatars. Second Life, a well-known virtual world, boasts millions of users worldwide and claims that a good percentage of them spend money there. Second Life also allows its users to keep the intellectual property rights in their creations. Some trademark owners have sued Second Life and others to stop the sale of virtual products.\(^6\)

§ 11:2 What Is Trademark “Use in Commerce” on the Internet?

§ 11:2.1 Rescuecom v. Google: *Purchase and Sale of Key Words Is Actionable “Use in Commerce”*

For some years, district courts in the Second Circuit took the position that the purchase and sale of trademarks as search engine keywords was not a “use in commerce” actionable under the Lanham Act.\(^7\) The rationale was that defendant did not display plaintiff’s trademark on goods or advertisements. Rather, defendant’s use was internal and not visible to the public.

---

4. See discussion of *Tiffany v. eBay* case in section 8:4.1.
5. See Smith v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., 537 F. Supp. 2d 1302 (N.D. Ga. 2008) (Smith offered Wal-Qaeda and Wal-ocaust t-shirts, mugs, and bumper stickers featuring Wal-Mart colors, font, and smiley face on CafePress.com; use qualified as editorial or artistic parody protected by First Amendment; court commented that dilution applies only when alleged infringer acts substantially out of economic motivation and t-shirts are a traditionally expressive medium).
6. See, e.g., cases referred to and collected in the VirtuallyBlind.com blog.
7. See, e.g., Rescuecom v. Google, Inc., 456 F. Supp. 2d 393, 403 (N.D.N.Y. 2006) (no use in commerce absent allegation that defendant places plaintiff’s trademark on goods, containers, displays, or advertisements, or that its internal use is visible to the public).
These district court decisions relied on the Second Circuit’s 2005 opinion in 1-800 Contacts v. WhenU.com. That case dealt with pop-up ads and held that because the trademark could not be seen or accessed by the general public, there was no “use in commerce.”

The Second Circuit position that defendant’s use of plaintiff’s mark must be visible to online users was out of synch with the emerging view outside the Second Circuit.

In 2009, the Second Circuit did an about-face. In Rescuecom v. Google, the court of appeals reversed the district court and held that the sale or purchase of trademarks as Internet search engine keywords was an actionable “use in commerce.” The Second Circuit criticized the “internal use” rationale and the reading of its earlier 1-800 Contacts decision by the court below and other district courts within the Circuit.

In Europe, this “internal use” rationale prevailed at the European Court of Justice. However, the search engine could be liable if it failed to remove an ad after obtaining knowledge of its unlawful nature.


To begin with, Rescuecom explained that the Google search engine responds in two ways when a user enters a search item. First, Google provides a list of links to relevant websites, with relevancy being determined by Google’s logarithmic system. Second, Google displays third-party advertisements. Through Google’s AdWords program, advertisers pay Google for their ads to appear in response to searches for particular terms (keywords). These keywords can be generic terms like “computer repair” or

---

8. 1-800 Contacts v. WhenU.com, 414 F.3d 400 (2d Cir. 2005).
9. See e.g., Boston Duck Tours, LP v. Super Duck Tours, LLC, 527 F. Supp. 2d 205 (D. Mass. 2007) (defendant’s purchase of plaintiff’s mark BOSTON DUCK TOURS, as keyword triggering sponsored link, is “use” in commerce in accord with “the emerging view outside the Second Circuit”), aff’d on other grounds, 531 F.3d (1st Cir. 2008); N. Am. Med. Found. v. Axion Worldwide, Inc., 522 F.3d 1211 (11th Cir. 2008) (rejecting the Second Circuit’s view in 1-800 Contacts that there is no use in commerce unless the mark is visible to online users; preliminary injunction against defendant’s metatag use of plaintiff’s marks affirmed).
trademarks like RESCUECOM. Google’s KeyWord Suggestion Tool is used to suggest relevant keywords, including trademarks, to advertisers. The advertisements appear as links on the search results page, either at the top of the search results or along the right side of the page, under the heading “Sponsored Links.”

[B] Rescuecom’s Comments on Google’s Arguments

The Internal Use Rationale: Rescuecom noted that Google’s use was not always internal. Indeed, Google suggested and marketed trademarks as keywords.

The Product Placement Rationale: Rescuecom also rejected Google’s argument that its use was analogous to in-store placement of competing, generic brand items next to well-known brand name products. The court noted that only “benign” product placement that does not intend to deceive or confuse customers escapes liability.12

The Second Circuit summarized Rescuecom’s allegations of likely confusion, but expressed no view on the merits of Rescuecom’s claim. The court vacated the judgment below and remanded the case for further proceedings.13 The case has been settled.

§ 11:3 Likely Confusion on the Internet

§ 11:3.1 The Likely Confusion Factors

The standard factors long used to analyze likely confusion in trademark infringement cases typically include: the strength of plaintiff’s mark; the similarity between the marks; evidence of actual confusion; similarities in the products, their retail outlets, and advertising media; the quality of defendant’s products; defendant’s intent in adopting the mark; and the buyer’s sophistication.14

Some Internet decisions have emphasized the similarity of the marks, the relatedness of the goods or services, and the simultaneous use of the Internet as a marketing channel.15 In denying summary

11. Rescuecom Corp., 562 F.3d at 126.
12. Id. at 130.
13. Id. at 131.
14. See section 8:1.3 for detailed discussion of likely confusion factors.
judgment, 800-JR Cigar found that evidence of confusion, initial interest confusion, and defendant’s intent weighed in plaintiff’s favor.\textsuperscript{16} Edina Realty found material issues of fact as to defendant’s intent, the degree of purchaser care, and actual confusion.\textsuperscript{17}

\section*{§ 11.3.2 \textit{The Battles over Keyword Confusion}}

Many keyword battles, like Rescuecom’s suit against Google, are settled before a court has determined the issue of likely confusion (see section 11:2.1). One court suggested, in denying a motion to dismiss, that additional likely confusion factors might be applied in a keyword context.\textsuperscript{17.1} Some courts seem unwilling to recognize that perhaps not all consumers are as computer-savvy as the judge or the law clerks may be. Another theme is that courts do not want to be seen as interfering with web-surfing methods perceived to be pro-consumer choice.

The few available decisions on the merits of the confusion issue are inconsistent, to say the least. Some trademark owners have had success proving claims against their competitors’ keyword ads.\textsuperscript{17.2}

\textsuperscript{17} Edina Realty, Inc. v. MLSonline.com, 80 U.S.P.Q.2d 1039 (D. Minn. 2006).
\textsuperscript{17.1} Hearts On Fire Co., LLC v. Blue Nile, Inc., 603 F. Supp. 2d 274 (D. Mass. 2009) (likelihood of confusion will ultimately turn on what the consumer saw on the screen and reasonably believed, given the context, which includes (1) the overall mechanics of web browsing and Internet navigation, in which a consumer can easily reverse course; (2) the mechanics of the specific consumer search at issue; (3) the content of the search results webpage that was displayed, including the content of the sponsored link itself; (4) downstream content on the defendant’s linked website likely to compound any confusion; (5) the web savvy and sophistication of the plaintiff’s potential customers; (6) the specific context of a consumer who has deliberately searched for trademarked diamonds only to find a sponsored link to a diamond retailer; and, in light of the foregoing factors, (7) the duration of any resulting confusion).

(Kane, Rel. #3, 9/10) 11–11
Others have not. Still others, like Rescuecom, decided not to pursue claims against the individual advertisers. Rather, they brought suit directly against Google, as the entity responsible for offering the trademark for sale as a keyword and for providing the forum in which the sponsored-link ads generated by the keywords appear.

Two decisions on the merits of claims against Google have issued from the Eastern District of Virginia: GEICO v. Google and Rosetta Stone v. Google.

The GEICO court, after a full trial, relied on survey evidence to find likely confusion where GEICO appeared in the headings or text of the sponsored links but not where the GEICO name was absent from the sponsored links.18

Five years later, in Rosetta Stone, Judge Lee granted Google’s motion to dismiss all of Rosetta Stone’s claims just a few days before trial. In an opinion that followed some months later, the court held that no reasonable trier of fact could find

(1) direct infringement (which required a finding of likelihood of confusion);

(2) contributory infringement;

(3) vicarious liability; or

(4) trademark dilution under the Lanham Act.

The court also found that Google’s use of the ROSETTA STONE marks to identify relevant information in response to search

17.3. See Fair Isaac Corp. v. Experian Info. Solutions Inc., 2009 WL 4263699 (D. Minn. Nov. 25, 2009) (confirming jury verdict for defendant; the only evidence adduced at trial in support of the assertion that the keyword advertising was likely to cause confusion—the opinion testimony of Fair Isaac’s expert James Berger—lacked credibility).

18. GEICO v. Google, Inc. 77 U.S.P.Q.2d 1841 (E.D. Va. 2005). Note that at least one other court recognized that the absence of the trademark in the sponsored-link ad itself does not always eliminate the potential for confusion. See Morningware, Inc. v. Hearthware Home Prods., 673 F. Supp. 2d 630 (N.D. Ill. 2009) (confusion claim survives motion to dismiss where MORNINGWARE mark purchased as keyword by competitor NuWave who ran the following sponsored link ad: “The Real NuWave ® Oven Pro-Why Buy an Imitation? 90 Day Gty”).
queries was protected under the doctrine of functionality as a noninfringing use.19

The bottom line was that the court saw nothing wrong with Google’s making money from its sale of trademark keywords. On the contrary, the court considered Google’s actions procompetitive: Keywords served an essential indexing function; that is, their use allowed relevant information in Google’s database to be rapidly located in response to search queries.20

Here is a brief summary of the court’s analysis, along with other authority pertinent to the court’s findings:

**Functionality:** The court supported its finding that Google’s keyword use was protected by the doctrine of functionality with citations to a number of cases, including the Supreme Court TrafFix decision.20.1 However, the court did not cite the Ninth Circuit Playboy v. Netscape case. Netscape held the functionality defense “irrelevant” as applied to trademarks keyed to banner ads, stating:

> Because we are not dealing with defendants’ wish to trademark their computer program, but with PEI’s ability to protect the trademarks it already uses to identify its products, the doctrine of functional use does not help defendants here.20.2

---


20. As Judge Lee put it, keywords “serve an advertising function that benefits consumers who expend the time and energy to locate particular information, goods, or services, and to compare prices.” If Google were deprived of the use of the Rosetta Stone marks, “consumers would lose the ability to rapidly locate potentially relevant websites that provide genuine Rosetta Stone products at competitive prices.” Rosetta Stone, 2010 WL 3063152, at *12.

20.1. TrafFix Devices Inc. v. Marketing Displays Inc., 532 U.S. 23 (2001) (a product feature is functional “if it is essential to the use or purpose of the article or if it affects the cost or quality of the article”). The functionality doctrine is typically applied to the configuration of a product or its trade dress. See section 3:2 for discussion of functionality.

20.2. Playboy Enters., Inc. v. Netscape Commc’ns Corp., 354 F.3d 1020, 1031 (9th Cir. 2004) (reversing district court’s grant of summary judgment and observing that weighing admissible evidence at the summary judgment stage is improper).
Confusion: The Rosetta Stone court addressed only the three likely confusion factors that were in dispute: (1) Google’s intent; (2) actual confusion; and (3) consumer sophistication.\textsuperscript{20.3}

As to intent, the court found that the fact that Google profited from its keyword sales did not equate with intent to cause confusion.\textsuperscript{20.4}

As to actual confusion, the court dismissed the Rosetta Stone evidence as “de minimis.” The court stated that none of Rosetta Stone’s witnesses were confused about the source of their purchases but only as to whether what they purchased was genuine or counterfeit.\textsuperscript{20.5} The court disregarded Rosetta Stone’s survey showing that respondents believed a given link was endorsed by Rosetta Stone as “unreliable” because endorsement “is not the same as confusion as to the source or origin of the products.”\textsuperscript{20.6}

The Ninth Circuit in Playboy v. Netscape pointed to a similar type of survey as generating a material issue of fact as to actual confusion. The survey showed a significant number of Internet users would think that Playboy sponsored or was associated with defendant’s adult content banner ads. The Ninth Circuit stated that, because actual confusion is at the heart of the likelihood confusion analysis, the survey report “alone probably suffices to reverse the grant of summary judgment.”\textsuperscript{20.7}

As to customer sophistication, the Rosetta Stone court noted the product’s cost ($259 to $579) and found that the highly educated web users comprising the Rosetta Stone target market would have no problem distinguishing between sponsored links and organic results displayed on Google’s search result page.\textsuperscript{20.8}

Contributory Infringement, Vicarious Liability: The court found no contributory infringement, in part because the Google Query Suggestion Tool, which encouraged advertisers to bid on

\textsuperscript{20.3} Rosetta Stone, 2010 WL 3063152, at *7–*11.
\textsuperscript{20.4} Id. at *8.
\textsuperscript{20.5} Id. at *10.
\textsuperscript{20.6} Id. at *11. For an example of a case finding that consumer belief as to endorsement is evidence of likely confusion, see Scott Fetzer Co. v. House of Vacuums Inc., 381 F.3d 477, 484 (5th Cir. 2004) (“The critical question is whether the advertisement suggests affiliation or endorsement.”).
\textsuperscript{20.7} Playboy Enters., Inc., 354 F.3d at 1027.
\textsuperscript{20.8} Rosetta Stone, 2010 WL 3063152, at *11.
keywords that resulted in higher click-through rates, was good business practice.\textsuperscript{20.9} There was no vicarious liability in part because Rosetta Stone did not show that Google controls the appearance and content of the sponsored link.\textsuperscript{21}

**Dilution:** In finding no trademark dilution by blurring, the court pointed to the fact that Rosetta Stone’s brand awareness increased during the period that Google was selling the keyword triggered ads.\textsuperscript{21.1}

**Looking Ahead:** We can expect the Fourth Circuit to address a number of the district court’s findings on appeal. And regardless of the outcome of *Rosetta Stone*, we can expect courts around the country to continue grappling with the issues raised by the advertising and sale of trademark keywords.

In the meantime, Google has moved ahead to liberalize its AdWords trademark policy in Europe so that it now accords more closely to the policy it is following in the United States.

\section*{§ 11:3.3 Initial Interest Confusion}

Initial interest confusion occurs in the Internet context where a consumer is attracted to defendant’s website by defendant’s use of plaintiff’s trademark. A computer user need not purchase anything from defendant’s website or even believe that the website is sponsored by plaintiff. It is enough that the user’s attention and interest were diverted from plaintiff’s website to defendant’s. Defendant has capitalized on the goodwill associated with plaintiff’s name and may have diverted business from plaintiff.\textsuperscript{22} The

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20.9} *Id.* at *14.
\item \textsuperscript{21} *Id.* at *15–*16.
\item \textsuperscript{21.1} *Id.* at *16–*17.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Brookfield Commc’ns, Inc. v. W. Coast Entm’t Corp., 174 F.3d 1036, 1062 (9th Cir. 1999). See also T-data, Inc. v. Aircraft Tech. Publishers, 411 F. Supp. 2d 901, 907, 911–12 (S.D. Ohio 2006) (use of ATP’s mark to pull consumers to T-data’s website and products it features is infringement, even if the consumers later realize the confusion); PACCAR, Inc. v. TeleScan Techs., LLC, 319 F.3d 243, 253 (6th Cir. 2003) (initial interest confusion not dispelled by disclaimer on defendant’s main web page; disclaimer only seen after consumer has been diverted to defendant’s site and comes too late to resolve any “initial interest confusion”).
\end{itemize}
Seventh Circuit in the Promatek case pointed out that “[w]hat is important is not the duration of the confusion, it is the misappropriation of Promatek’s good will.”

Courts have found initial interest confusion where:

- defendant has used plaintiff’s trademark in defendant’s domain name;
- defendant has embedded plaintiff’s trademark as a metatag in its website;
- defendant has used plaintiff’s trademark as a keyword to trigger banner ads.

Keep in mind that not all courts have looked favorably upon the concept of initial interest confusion. The Fourth Circuit rejected the doctrine in the context of gripe sites where plaintiff’s mark is not used for financial gain. One California district court ruled that initial interest confusion was not actionable, but the Ninth Circuit in dicta indicated that there was a valid basis for finding

---

23. Promatek Indus., Ltd. v. Equitrac Corp., 300 F.3d 808, 812–13 (7th Cir. 2002). See also Australian Gold, Inc. v. Hatfield, 436 F.3d 1228, 1239 (10th Cir. 2006) (use of plaintiffs’ marks in metatags “used the goodwill associated with Plaintiffs’ trademarks in such a way that consumers might be lured to the lotions from Plaintiffs’ competitors; disclaimers do not prevent confusion since they do not tie particular trademarks to particular mark owners”).
24. PACCAR, Inc. v. TeleScan Techs., L.L.C., 319 F.3d 243, 253 (6th Cir. 2003) (defendant’s use of plaintiff’s registered marks in numerous domain name combinations enjoined).
25. Horphag Research Ltd. v. Pellegrini, 337 F.3d 1036 (9th Cir. 2003) (defendants’ repeated use of plaintiff’s mark and variants thereof in metatags was unreasonably pervasive and suggests that plaintiff sponsors or is associated with defendants’ websites and products); see also Edina Realty, Inc. v. TheMLSonline.com, 2006 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 13775 (D. Minn. 2006) (recognizing doctrine of initial interest confusion where defendant used plaintiff’s marks in “hidden links and text [which] operate like metatags” but denying summary judgment on infringement because genuine issue existed as to confusion).
26. See Playboy Enters., Inc. v. Netscape Commc’ns Corp., 354 F.3d 1020, 1025–26 (9th Cir. 2004) (“[T]he Internet user will have reached the [defendant’s] site because of defendant’s use of [plaintiff’s] mark.”).
initial interest confusion.\textsuperscript{28} You can also expect some courts to find that Internet users have become more discriminating and therefore less likely to be confused.\textsuperscript{29}

\section*{§ 11:4 Applying Dilution Principles to Internet Disputes}

In today's Internet-centric environment, it is not surprising that many cases involve plaintiff's and/or defendant's promotion and sale of products online. In evaluating likely dilution where products are sold over the Internet, the standard dilution analysis applies. In an action brought under federal law, plaintiff must show that its mark is famous to the general consuming public and that defendant is blurring or tarnishing plaintiff's mark.\textsuperscript{30} Elements of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{28} Perfumebay.com Inc. v. eBay Inc., 506 F.3d 1165 (9th Cir. 2007); see also Storus Corp. v. Aroa Mktg. Inc., 2008 WL 449835 (N.D. Cal. Feb. 15, 2008) (summary judgment for plaintiff where defendant purchased plaintiff's SMART MONEY CLIP mark as a keyword and used it in sponsored link ad that generated 1300 clicks; such "diversion" constitutes the "initial interest confusion" prohibited by the Lanham Act). But see JG Wentworth, SSC Ltd. P'ship v. Settlement Funding LLC, 2007 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 288 (E.D. Pa. 2007) (where ads did not use plaintiff's marks that were used as keywords to generate the ads, potential consumers have no opportunity to confuse defendant's services, goods, advertisements, links, or website with those of plaintiff; initial interest confusion does not apply).
  \item \textsuperscript{29} Instant Media Inc. v. Microsoft Corp., 2007 WL 2318948 (N.D. Cal. Aug. 13, 2007) ("While it may have been plausible in 2000 to suggest that consumers could not easily discriminate between content-delivery programs such as the IM [high definition video] player or iTunes on the one hand and instant messaging programs such as [Windows Live Messenger] or [AOL's Instant Messenger] on the other, in 2007, where iPods and instant messaging are household concepts, this Court cannot say that, as a matter of law, 'it is irrelevant whether the parties' Internet related services are different.'") (Microsoft's 'i'm' for instant messaging found not confusingly similar to Instant Media's 'IM' for high-definition video players in preliminary injunction proceeding).
  \item \textsuperscript{30} See, e.g., Visa Int'l Serv. Ass'n v. JSL Corp., No. 08-15206, 2010 WL 2559003 (9th Cir. June 28, 2010) (affirming district court's grant of summary judgment enjoining defendant's use of EVISA, finding an added "e" is commonly used to denote the online version of a business such that EVISA weakens the ability of the VISA mark to identify Visa's services, because Internet users who enter the domain name evisa.com are brought to defendant's language services website instead of plaintiff's site). See section 9:6.6 for further discussion of EVISA case. For a discussion of the elements of proof in a dilution action under the TDRA, see section 9:6.
\end{itemize}
proof are different for a dilution action brought under state law. You should check the statute in the jurisdiction where you plan to sue.31

Defenses to dilution, notably fair use, are raised in the Internet context perhaps with even more frequency than in standard trademark dilution actions.

Courts seem particularly receptive to defendants’ use of the Internet to communicate information, criticism, and commentary about plaintiffs’ products, or to poke fun at plaintiffs and their trademarks. The Internet has helped to bring about a resurgence of the First Amendment as the protector of defendants’ right to speak their mind on just about anything.

The Mattel v. Walking Mountain case is an example of the First Amendment at work. The defendant, an artist, took a series of photographs depicting the American icon Barbie Doll, in the nude, being attacked by vintage kitchen appliances. Defendant’s photos, labeled “Food Chain Barbie” were displayed on defendant’s website and offered in art galleries. Some of the poses—for example, a nude Barbie, upside down, legs spread apart under the beaters of a mixer—were sexually suggestive. But all was fair use under the First Amendment. The “Food Chain Barbie” series qualified as an artistic/editorial parody designed to criticize Mattel’s Barbie and the values for which she stands.35

For further discussion of fair use and a collection of decisions showing how the courts have ruled in various cases, see section 11:7.2 infra; see also section 9.6:12[C] supra. These cases illustrate how different courts have drawn the line between legitimate fair use of plaintiff’s trademark and uses that impair the distinctive quality of plaintiff’s famous mark and trade on plaintiff’s reputation and good will.

31. For a discussion of dilution as it evolved under state law, see section 9:2. See also Appendix 17 for list of state dilution statutes.

32.–34. [Reserved.]

35. Mattel, Inc. v. Walking Mountain Prods., 353 F.3d 792, 812 (9th Cir. 2003).
§ 11:5 Domain Name Issues

§ 11:5.1 Acquiring Domain Names

Domain names are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis to people and organizations that are developing websites. If a search shows that no one else has registered the exact domain name, the new domain name is permitted. Trademark searches are not conducted.

For example, each of the following—

mcdonalds.com
macdonalds.com
mcdonald.com

—could be allocated to different organizations or people. The trademark owner’s remedy lies in making a deal with the domain name owner, or commencing dispute resolution or court proceedings.

A second-level domain name could be registered under different top-level domains by different entities as well. For example:

columbia.edu (the university)
columbia.com (the sporting goods company)

And the same second-level domain name could be registered by different entities under different top-level country domains.

§ 11:5.2 Domain Names As Trademarks

Once a domain name is acquired, the owner may also try to register the domain name as a trademark in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

However, to qualify for trademark registration, the domain name must be used as a trademark to indicate source and cannot merely be used to indicate the domain name address used to reach the website offering the company’s services. For example, Amazon.com is a registered trademark—it is used prominently in advertising and on the website to indicate the source is the Internet bookseller and not merely to indicate the company’s address on the Internet. Consult the PTO home page (http://www.uspto.gov) for the most recent policies on registration of domain names as trademarks.
§ 11:5.3 Domain Names and Likely Confusion

Like other cases dealing with trademark infringement, similarity of the domain name to plaintiff’s mark and the similarity of the parties’ goods are important factors in assessing likely confusion.

For example, the court found defendant’s “moviebuff.com” domain name for a movie fact database likely to cause confusion with plaintiff’s MOVIEBUFF mark for a movie information database and software.36 The domain name differed from plaintiff’s MOVIEBUFF mark only by the “.com” suffix, and the goods were similar.

On the other hand, the court found defendant’s domain name “nextbigstar.com” for a web retailer of video tapes and supplier of celebrity information not likely to cause confusion with plaintiff’s domain name “bigstar.com” for a talent-search company. The court found “next” in defendant’s name enough to distinguish it from plaintiff’s and deemed it unlikely that a reasonably informed potential customer looking to buy a video at “bigstar.com” who has mistakenly navigated to “nextbigstar.com” would be confused.37

[A] Intuitive Domain Names

In assessing domain name confusion, courts will also take into account that Web users hunting for a particular company or product may try to guess the domain name based on that company’s name or trademark.

In the Washington Speakers case, the court referred to the heightened potential for confusion when a company uses an “intuitive” domain name similar to the name of a competitor. Consumers looking for Washington Speakers Bureau might drop the last word and try “www.washingspeakers.com” or “washington-speakers.com.”38

Even domain names that lack entire parts of a company’s name might be similar to the company’s name because the second user prefers a shorter domain name.

36. Brookfield Commc’ns, Inc. v. W. Coast Entm’t Corp., 174 F.3d 1036 (9th Cir. 1999).
Following the early cases dealing with domain name infringements, most domain name disputes have been brought under ICANN’s Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy or the Anticybersquatting Consumer Protection Act.39

[B] Postdomain Paths

What about use of another’s trademark as part of the postdomain path? The Sixth Circuit held that postdomain paths do not typically signify source but instead show “how the website’s data is organized within the host computer’s files.”40 Thus, there was no likelihood of confusion when defendant used plaintiff’s mark LAPTRAVELER in the following URL:

http://www.a2zsolutions.com/desks/floor/laptraveler/dkfl-lt.htm

However, the court suggested that plaintiff might be able to establish likelihood of confusion if defendant was reselling plaintiff’s products on its site.

§ 11:5.4 Domai

Use of a well-known trademark in a domain name may constitute dilution under federal or state dilution law.41 Plaintiffs who sought to halt defendants’ similar domain name use under a dilution theory initially met with considerable success.42 However, as the volume of Internet-related litigation grew, so did judicial wariness of dilution claims directed to noncompetitive uses. This wariness was especially acute where plaintiff’s mark was a word in the English language. Because of the Internet’s role as a means of communication, courts were reluctant to bestow monopoly rights on trademarks composed of ordinary English words. The owners of English-language word marks (for example, CLUE for board

---

39. See sections 11:6 and 11:7, infra, for decisions under the UDRP and the ACPA.
40. Interactive Prods. Corp. v. a2z Mobile Office Solutions, Inc., 326 F.3d 687, 691 (6th Cir. 2003). See section 11:1.1, supra, for definition of postdomain path.
41. See chapter 9, “The Evolution of Dilution,” for a complete discussion of dilution law.
42. See Panavision Int’l L.P. v. Toeppen, 945 F. Supp. 1296 (C.D. Cal. 1996), aff’d, 141 F.3d 1316 (9th Cir. 1998).
games) were not able to prevent identical uses in different fields (for example, CLUE for a computer consulting business).\footnote{Hasbro, Inc. v. Clue Computing, Inc., 66 F. Supp. 2d 117 (D. Mass. 1999), aff’d, 232 F.3d 1 (1st Cir. 2000).}

The owner of a famous, fanciful mark should be sure to distinguish his position from those cases dealing with trademarks that are ordinary English words.

Like domain name cases raising confusion issues, domain name cases raising dilution issues are now mostly dealt with under the UDRP or the ACPA, as discussed below.

\section*{§ 11:6 Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP)}

\subsection*{§ 11:6.1 Nature of UDRP Proceedings}

ICANN’s Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) provides an administrative proceeding for trademark owners to challenge domain names registered in bad faith by others. The proceeding is applicable to many TLDs, including .com and .net.\footnote{See www.icann.org for similar procedures available for other TLDs, including ccTLDs.} The UDRP is meant to enable trademark owners to resolve domain name disputes without having to go to court. Questions of trademark invalidity are not within the purview of any UDRP proceeding.\footnote{Sound Unseen Ltd. v. Vanderhorst, 77 U.S.P.Q.2d 1585 (WIPO Aug. 18, 2005).}

\subsection*{§ 11:6.2 UDRP Procedures}

First, the trademark owner must file a complaint in hard copy and electronically with a dispute resolution service provider approved by ICANN. The complainant can select either a one-member or a three-member panel to hear the dispute and must pay a fee based on the size of the panel.\footnote{See details at www.icann.org.}
The trademark owner must prove three things:

- the domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the complainant has rights;\(^{46}\)
- the domain name holder has no rights or legitimate interest in respect of the domain name;\(^{47}\) and
- the domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.\(^{48}\)

One advantage of the UDRP proceeding is that there is no issue of personal jurisdiction with respect to many of the most commonly used top-level domains, for example, .com. Anyone who has registered a domain name with an accredited ICANN registrar is subject to the dispute resolution proceedings, no matter where the registrant is located.

§ 11:6.3 Remedies Under the UDRP

Remedies that dispute resolution panels may impose include:

- transferring the domain name to the trademark owner;\(^ {49}\)
- leaving the domain name in the hands of respondent;\(^ {50}\) or
- canceling the domain name altogether.\(^ {51}\)

---

47. Telstra Corp. Ltd. v. Nuclear Marshmallows, Case No. D2000-0003 (WIPO Feb. 18, 2000) (complainant’s TELSTRA mark “appears to be an invented word, and as such is not one traders would legitimately choose unless seeking to create an impression of an association with the Complainant”).
§ 11:6.4  Sample UDRP Decisions

Sample dispute resolution decisions on bad faith include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPLAINANT’S TRADEMARK</th>
<th>RESPONDENT’S DOMAIN NAME</th>
<th>HOLDING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION</td>
<td>worldwrestling federation.com</td>
<td>Respondent registered and tried to sell domain name in bad faith.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEIMAN MARCUS</td>
<td>neimansmarcus.com</td>
<td>Respondent registered domain name in bad faith; domain name similar to trademark53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOLIDAY INN</td>
<td>cheap-holiday-inn-hotels-accomodation.com</td>
<td>Respondent’s use permitted; domain name accurately described business54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNORENOMORE</td>
<td>snorenomore.net</td>
<td>Insufficient evidence to establish common law rights/bad faith.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

§ 11:6.5  Appeals to the Courts

While UDRP dispute resolution is expedited (the decision must be rendered within fourteen days of the panel’s appointment),

---

there is no appeal process. However, a party disappointed with the result may bring an action in court.

It is clear that UDRP proceedings are not binding on courts. Indeed, a de novo standard of review is applied. This means that a trademark owner who loses under the UDRP could bring an ACPA or other Lanham Act action against the domain name registrant. And a special Lanham Act provision entitles registrants who are unhappy with the UDRP result to seek a declaratory judgment that the domain name use is not unlawful under the Lanham Act.

§ 11:7 Anticybersquatting Consumer Protection Act (ACPA)

The Anticybersquatting Consumer Protection Act (ACPA) “was Congress’ response to an onslaught of e-savvy entrepreneurs who amassed domain names incorporating protected trademarks for their own exploitation via sale or use.” The ACPA provides for federal court action even where the domain name owner has made

---


57. A party should be able to use a national court “to seek a de novo review of a dispute that has been the subject of the administrative procedure.” WIPO Final Report, at 150 (iv), quoted in Parisi v. Netlearing, Inc., 139 F. Supp. 2d 745, 752 (E.D. Va. 2001).


no use in commerce. Thus, the ACPA applies where defendant registers, traffics in, or uses the domain name. The Act also requires proof that:

- there was a bad-faith intent to profit from the mark;
- the mark is distinctive or famous at the time of registration of the domain name; and
- the domain name is identical or confusingly similar to (in the case of a famous mark, it may alternatively be proved dilutive of) the mark.

§ 11:7.1 Bad Faith Requirement

The ACPA lists nine factors to guide judges in determining whether there has been bad faith. However, the list is not exhaustive. In the Sporty’s Farm case, the Second Circuit found bad faith based in part on:

- the registration of “sportys.com for the primary purpose of keeping Sportsman’s from using that domain name”;
- the creation of the Christmas tree farm dubbed Sporty’s Farm after suit was filed; and

---

61. See, e.g., BroadBridge Media, L.L.C. v. Hypercd.com, 106 F. Supp. 2d 505, 512 (S.D.N.Y. 2000) (ACPA enacted for case like this one in which cybersquatter’s “proposed use of the domain name which is nearly identical to plaintiff’s trademark is certain to engender a presumptively meritorious yet expensive trademark action against him”); see also Bosley Med. Inst., Inc. v. Kremer, 403 F.3d 672, 679–81 (9th Cir. 2005) (disgruntled patient’s use of medical institute’s registered trademark in domain name for website critical of institute is not actionable under the Lanham Act; use is not a “use in commerce” but is actionable under the ACPA, which contains no commercial use requirement).


62. 15 U.S.C. § 1125(d)(1)(A). The ACPA applies where the domain name was reregistered after the statute’s enactment even if the name was created before the enactment. Schmidheiny v. Weber, 319 F.3d 581 (3d Cir. 2003).

• the incredible explanation that the name Sporty’s was derived from a dog named Spotty.64

Other courts have found bad faith where defendants registered domain names similar to well-known trademarks and used these names to exact some payment or other advantage because of the similarity to plaintiff’s mark.65

Keep in mind that proof of bad faith under the ACPA does not require the heightened showing of clear and convincing evidence that some fraud cases do. The Fourth Circuit held that in light of the ACPA bad faith factors, a preponderance of evidence is the proper standard.66

The mere knowledge that the domain name is someone else’s trademark is not enough.67 If there is no bad faith, the plaintiff must rely on general likelihood of confusion or dilution law.68

65. See Porsche Cars N. Am., Inc. v. Spencer, 55 U.S.P.Q.2d 1026 (E.D. Cal. 2000) (extensive discussion and weighing of bad-faith factors; preliminary relief granted against defendant’s registration of “Porsche source.com”); Virtual Works, Inc. v. Volkswagen of Am., Inc., 238 F.3d 264, 269 (4th Cir. 2001) (registration of “vw.net” found in bad faith in part because Volkswagen was the only entity with intellectual property rights in the initials “VW” and defendant contemplated selling the name to plaintiff; summary judgment granted); Harrods Ltd. v. Sixty Internet Domain Names, 157 F. Supp. 2d 658, 680 (E.D. Va. 2001) (although “both parties have a legitimate right to use the same famous HARRODS mark in different parts of the world,” the balance of bad faith factors favored plaintiff), aff’d, 302 F.3d 214 (4th Cir. 2002); A1 Mortgage Corp. v. A1 Mortgage & Fin. Servs. LLC, 82 U.S.P.Q.2d 1440 (W.D. Pa. 2006) (reasonable attorneys’ fees and $50,000 in statutory damages awarded for bad faith including violation of agreement settling lawsuit); Atlas Copco AB v. atascopcoiran.com, 533 F. Supp. 2d 610 (E.D. Va. 2008) (“phishing” activities, i.e., sending email fraudulently posing as trustworthy entity to acquire sensitive financial information, constitute bad faith intent to profit under ACPA).
68. See Lucas Nursery & Landscaping, Inc. v. Grosse, 359 F.3d 806, 811 (6th Cir. 2004) (no bad faith where defendant registered lucasnursery.com or website “informing fellow consumers about the practices of a landscaping company that she believed had performed inferior work on her yard”); Nissan Motor Co. v. Nissan Computer Corp., 61
Expect to see some interesting arguments from domain name registrants. In *Lands’ End Inc. v. Remy*, defendants registered a series of domain names comprising misspellings of plaintiff’s “landsend.com” domain name (for example, landsende.com).

Defendants participated in plaintiff’s website referral affiliate program, and then redirected to plaintiff’s website Internet users who mistakenly entered the misspelled domains. If these users made a purchase, defendants received 5% of plaintiff’s profits on the sales under the affiliate program. Defendants actually sought summary judgment under the ACPA, arguing that because their actions directed traffic to plaintiff’s website, rather than away from it, they benefited plaintiff and were not cybersquatting. The court found this line of reasoning “specious at best.”

§ 11:7.2 Confusion and Dilution Under the ACPA

To obtain relief under the ACPA, plaintiff must show that defendant’s domain name is (1) identical or confusingly similar to a distinctive trademark or (2) identical, confusingly similar to, or dilutive of a famous trademark.

A number of courts have held that the “confusingly similar” standard under the ACPA is more limited than the “likelihood of confusion” standard used to determine traditional trademark infringement.

In considering the issue of similarity, differences in capitalization and punctuation may be irrelevant because capital letters and

---

apostrophes cannot be used in domain names. The fact that confusion could be resolved by visiting the website is also irrelevant under the ACPA.

§ 11:7.3 Safe Harbor Defense

The “safe harbor” defense under the ACPA provides that “bad faith intent . . . shall not be found in any case in which the court determines that the person believed and had reasonable grounds to believe that the use of the domain name was a fair use or otherwise lawful.” “Reasonable grounds to believe” focuses on the objective reasonableness of the conduct. Thinking a use to be lawful is not “reasonable grounds to believe” under the ACPA.

§ 11:7.4 In Rem Actions

The ACPA gives courts in rem jurisdiction over domain name registrations where in personam jurisdiction over the registrant cannot be obtained or the registrant cannot be located after diligent efforts. In these cases, an in rem action can be brought in jurisdictions where the domain name registry is located or where the court has sufficient information to determine the authority over

71. Sporty’s Farm, 202 F.3d at 497–98 (domain name “sportys.com” indistinguishable from the trademark “Sporty’s”) (citing Brookfield Commsns, Inc. v. W. Coast Entmt Corp., 174 F.3d 1036, 1055 (9th Cir. 1999)).

72. Coca-Cola Co. v. Purdy, 382 F.3d 774, 783 (8th Cir. 2004).


the domain name. This is important because it can be difficult to get personal jurisdiction over a domain name holder or website operator.

In Caesars World, the court held the in rem jurisdiction provision of the ACPA constitutional. Because the res, the domain name, is itself the thing at issue and not merely a device to get the defendant, there need be no minimum contacts to establish in personam jurisdiction. Even if the Constitution requires minimum contacts, the registration of the domain name with NSI, located in Virginia, supplies them.

In Harrods, the Fourth Circuit held that the ACPA in rem provision is not limited to bad-faith registration claims under section 1125(d)(1) but “also authorizes in rem actions for certain federal infringement and dilution claims.” Another Fourth Circuit decision held that the general federal in rem jurisdiction provision, 28 U.S.C. § 1655, does not provide in rem jurisdiction over dilution claims.

Nevertheless, in personam jurisdiction is preferred. For example, a plaintiff who filed suit only eight days after notifying defendant of plaintiff's intent to proceed with an in rem action did not satisfy the requirements of the ACPA.

---


77. See section 11:9, infra, “Personal Jurisdiction.”


79. Id. at 504 (citing Shaffer v. Heitner, 433 U.S. 186 (1977)).

80. Harrods Ltd. v. Sixty Internet Domain Names, 302 F.3d 214, 228 (4th Cir. 2002).

81. Porsche Cars N. Am., Inc. v. Porsche.net, 302 F.3d 248 (4th Cir. 2002) (noting that dismissal of plaintiff’s in rem dilution claims was not inconsistent with Harrods). Porsche further held that the situation giving rise to in rem jurisdiction need not persist throughout the case.

§ 11:7.5 Remedies

The ACPA provides for injunctive relief such as court-ordered cancellation or transfer of a domain name, and for monetary relief that can include (1) defendant’s profits, (2) any damages sustained by plaintiff, (3) costs of the action, (4) statutory damages of between $1,000 and $100,000 per domain name in lieu of actual damages/profits, and (5) attorneys’ fees where defendant’s conduct meets the exceptional case requirement of 15 U.S.C. § 1117(a).83

Fees have been awarded against defendants with a history of domain name cybersquatting, including in an in rem case.84 Because statutory damages are awarded to punish cybersquatters and deter future violations, they are not duplicative of actual damages awarded for related infringement or unfair competition claims.85 Statutory awards have ranged from the minimum amount upwards, based on the need for deterrence and the extent of defendant’s bad faith.85.1

Injunctions are available even for domain names that were registered before November 29, 1999, the date of the ACPA’s enactment, because injunctions provide prospective relief.86 The ACPA also applies where the domain name originally registered

83. 15 U.S.C. §§ 1116 (a); 1117 (a) and (d); and 1125(d)(1)(C) and (d)(3); DaimlerChrysler v. Net, Inc., 388 F.3d 201, 208 (6th Cir. 2004) (injunction broader than ACPA claim proper to protect plaintiff’s reputation and goodwill).
86. Sporty’s Farm, 202 F.3d at 500; Shields v. Zuccarini, 89 F. Supp. 2d 634 (E.D. Pa. 2000), aff’d, 254 F.3d 476 (3d Cir. 2001). See also Porsche
before the ACPA’s effective date was reregistered with a new domain name registrar after the ACPA took effect.\textsuperscript{87}

\section*{§ 11:8 Internet Infringement Defenses}

\subsection*{§ 11:8.1 Descriptive and Nominative Fair Use}

The descriptive fair use doctrine provides a defense to a term charged with being an infringement where the term is used otherwise than as a mark and is used fairly and in good faith solely to describe defendant’s goods.\textsuperscript{88} For example, in \textit{Sunmark, Inc. v. Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc.},\textsuperscript{89} Ocean Spray’s use of “sweet,” “tart,” and “sweet-tart” in TV commercials and other promotional material to describe the taste of its Ocean Spray cranberry juice was a fair descriptive use of plaintiff’s SWEETARTS mark for candies.

Defendants’ efforts to justify the use of plaintiffs’ marks in defendants’ metatags as a fair use have been rejected where the marks are not used in a descriptive sense. For example, the \textit{Tdata} court stated that defendant’s use “is not in a good faith, descriptive sense, but is in a bad faith, bait-and-switch, create-initial-interest-confusion sense.”\textsuperscript{90} On the other hand, a fair use claim was successful where plaintiff’s mark was used in a metatag in gripe sites.\textsuperscript{91}

\begin{flushleft}
\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Schmidheiny v. Weber, 319 F.3d 581 (3d Cir. 2003).
\item Sunmark, Inc. v. Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc., 64 F.3d 1055, 1058 (7th Cir. 1995).
\item Bihari v. Gross, 119 F. Supp. 2d 309 (S.D.N.Y. 2000) (descriptive use and good-faith elements of fair use defense satisfied when mark as metatag served to index site created by interior decorator’s disgruntled former client); Career Agents Network v. careeragentsnetwork.biz, No. 09-CV-12269-DT, 2010 WL 743053 (E.D. Mich. Feb. 26, 2010) (use of domain name careeragentsnetwork.biz for gripe site was not commercially misleading; plaintiff cannot “invoke the Lanham Act to protect itself from unwanted critical commentary even if comment harms plaintiff’s business”; website did not mention defendant’s business as alternative to plaintiff; summary judgment granted).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
\end{flushleft}
Another type of fair use is nominative fair use. A nominative use is a use of plaintiff’s mark to refer to plaintiff. In New Kids on the Block, for example, defendant newspapers’ use of the NEW KIDS trademark to refer to the News Kids rock-and-roll band in a poll and newspaper articles was permissible.  

On the other hand, Edina Realty rejected a nominative fair use defense where defendant used plaintiff’s mark as an Internet search term in sponsored links and in hidden metatags. A qualification for nominative fair use is that defendant takes only so much of plaintiff’s mark as necessary to identify plaintiff’s product. The court noted that defendant could have promoted his website just as effectively without using plaintiff’s mark. Other search terms, for example, Twin Cities real estate, were available.

§ 11:8.2 Commentary, Criticism, Parody, and Noncommercial Fair Use

Also protected from liability under the rubric of fair use are commentary, criticism, and parody under the First Amendment right to free speech.

There is increasing judicial receptivity to First Amendment claims with respect to subject matter on the Internet. In the Bally Total Fitness case, the defendant’s website at www.compupix.com prominently displayed “Bally Sucks” in a logo style used by plaintiff’s health club. The website content was devoted to criticizing plaintiff’s services. The court considered the use to be a form of noncommercial expression protected by the First Amendment. The court observed that while it is illegal to use the trademark of another to attract customers, the First Amendment protects use of a trademark as parody, satire, or a way to express one’s opinions of a company.

There is a distinction between use of a trademark to express opinions in website content versus use in a domain name. A number of decisions reject the First Amendment defense because domain names are source identifiers and any communicative message can be conveyed in the website content using a noninfringing domain name.\(^\text{95}\) The Second Circuit rejected a fair use claim in the *TCPIP* case, noting that use of a mark as a domain name was not mere descriptive use but instead constituted use as a trademark.\(^\text{96}\) A fair use claim was also rejected where plaintiff’s famous mark CHANEL was used in the domain names chanelstore.com and chanelfashion.com to entice Internet users to respondent’s retail fashion industry database.\(^\text{97}\) Some courts advocate a multi-step First Amendment analysis, including the domain name itself, the way the name is used, faith under the Anticybersquatting Consumer Protection Act). See note 82, supra, for a different view in later *Lucentsucks* decision. See also Horphag Research Ltd. v. Pellegrini, 328 F.3d 1108, 1112 (9th Cir. 2007) (no nominative use where defendant’s use of plaintiff’s mark and variants thereof in metatags was unreasonably pervasive and suggested that plaintiff sponsored or was associated with defendant’s websites and products).

95. See, e.g., Planned Parenthood Fed’n of Am., Inc. v. Bucci, 42 U.S.P.Q.2d 1430, 1440 (S.D.N.Y. 1997), aff’d, 152 F.3d 920 (2d Cir.), cert. denied, 525 U.S. 834 (1998) (defendant’s usage was to identify source rather than part of communicative message); People for Ethical Treatment of Animals v. Doughney, 263 F.3d 359, 366–67 (4th Cir. 2001) (domain name using plaintiff’s mark when viewed apart from website did not convey a constitutionally protected parody message); Coca-Cola Co. v. Purdy, 382 F.3d 774, 787–88 (8th Cir. 2004) (First Amendment does not protect defendant’s use of plaintiff’s marks as domain names, e.g., “mycoca-cola.com,” to draw Internet users to an antiabortion activist site where use is likely to create confusion as to source or sponsorship); HER, Inc. v. RE/MAX First Choice LLC, 468 F. Supp. 2d 964 (S.D. Ohio 2007) (no First Amendment protection for competitor’s gripe site that engages in commercially misleading use of plaintiff’s marks).

96. *TCPIP* Holding Co. v. Haar Commc’ns, Inc., 244 F.3d 88, 103–04 (2d Cir. 2001) (nondescriptive use obviated need for good-faith analysis; preliminary injunction affirmed).

97. Chanel, Inc. v. Estco Tech. Group, WIPO D2000-0413 (Sept. 18, 2000) (“Respondent’s database at ‘DesignerGlobe.com’ can talk about ‘Chanel’ stores and ‘Chanel’ products. In contrast, it would not be fair use for Respondent to use Complainant’s trademark outside a shop or office to entice customers in to use its database. The same logic applies in cyberspace.”).
the motivation of the website author, and the contents of the website.98

§ 11:9 Personal Jurisdiction

Websites are accessible from nearly anywhere on the planet, but accessibility does not equal physical presence. The question is: Does operation of a website by an out-of-state owner result in sufficient contacts with the forum state to create a basis for personal jurisdiction consistent with due process?

The general trend seems to be to focus on the defendant’s purposeful availment of the forum. This may be demonstrated where defendant makes sales, solicits business, offers services, or otherwise responds to Internet users in the forum state. Jurisdiction may be found even where products or services are not offered but the defendant tries to sell the domain name to the trademark owner.99 Jurisdiction has been denied where defendant operates merely a passive website.

Many courts have used the Zippo “sliding scale” analysis to determine whether the website is sufficiently interactive for jurisdictional purposes. Under the sliding scale, “the likelihood that personal jurisdiction can be constitutionally exercised is directly proportionate to the nature and quality of commercial activity that an entity conducts over the Internet.”100

98. Name.Space, Inc. v. Network Solutions, Inc., 202 F.3d 573, 586 (2d Cir. 2000) (citing Planned Parenthood Fed’n of Am., Inc.); OBH, Inc. v. Spotlight Magazine, Inc., 86 F. Supp. 2d 176, 197 (W.D.N.Y. 2000); Lucent Techs., Inc. v. Johnson, 56 U.S.P.Q.2d 1637, 1640 (C.D. Cal. 2000) (denying motion to dismiss brought by “lucentucks.com” domain name owner and suggesting that Name.Space analysis should be applied to all “sucks” domain names); but see Taubman Co. v. Webfeats, 319 F.3d 770 (6th Cir. 2003) (use of plaintiff’s trademark with sucks.com suffix as domain name for critical commentary website is protected by First Amendment; use in domain name is no different from shouting from rooftops).

99. Panavision Int’l L.P. v. Toeppen, 945 F. Supp. 1296 (C.D. Cal. 1996), aff’d, 141 F.3d 1316 (9th Cir. 1998) (personal jurisdiction exists where defendant tries to sell domain name to trademark owner; injury occurs in place where trademark owner located); see also Internmatic Corp. v. Toeppen, 947 F. Supp. 1227 (N.D. Ill. 1996).

The Fourth Circuit has introduced a modified Zippo test, concluding that personal jurisdiction exists where an entity

(1) directs electronic activity into the State, (2) with the manifest intent of engaging in business or other interactions within the State, and (3) that actively creates, in a person within the State, a potential cause of action cognizable in the State’s courts.101

Below are some sample cases finding personal jurisdiction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEFENDANT’S ACTIVITY</th>
<th>CITATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania defendant provided Michigan customers passwords to access website, posted data that referred to Michigan.</td>
<td>Neogen Corp. v. Neo Gen Screening, Inc., 282 F.3d 883 (6th Cir. 2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado corporation subject to jurisdiction in Texas based on website offering products for sale, prompting users to provide e-mail address, and providing registrants with a welcome kit displaying allegedly offending trademarks.</td>
<td>Powerhouse Productions, Inc. v. Widgery, 564 F. Supp. 2d 672 (E.D. Tex. 2008)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here are some cases finding no personal jurisdiction:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEFENDANT’S ACTIVITY</th>
<th>CITATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website intended to provide information on Indiana and Illinois boxers was accessible worldwide; no basis to conclude that defendants expressly aimed their activity at Pennsylvania knowing that harm was likely to be caused there.</td>
<td>Remnick v. Manfredy, 238 F.3d 248 (3d Cir. 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website that can be accessed in Maryland and that used Maryland web hosting company did not subject Illinois organization to personal jurisdiction in Maryland.</td>
<td>Carefirst of Md., Inc. v. Carefirst Pregnancy Ctrs., Inc., 334 F.3d 390, 401 (4th Cir. 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two sales to defendant owner’s aunt and one sale to plaintiff’s employee’s spouse in Wisconsin does not show purposeful availment.</td>
<td>Trek Bicycle Corp. v. Trek Winery, LLC, 93 U.S.P.Q.2d 2002 (W.D. Wis. 2010)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

§ 11:10  Scope of Relief: When Is the World Wide Web Too Wide?

The Internet’s global reach poses special problems when it comes to the scope of relief. Typically, trademark rights are territorial, and there may be situations where similar marks are owned by different parties in different jurisdictions. How do courts regulate the use of those marks on the Internet? An injunction that requires blocking access to a site or removal of infringing marks may be too broad when the infringer can legitimately use the mark in some geographic areas.

The Sixth Circuit acknowledged the difficulty of fashioning relief in Internet cases where “a senior user holds a federal registration subject to limited concurrent rights of a junior user.”

(Kane, Rel. #3, 9/10) 11–37
The court stated that “permitting some form of internet use seems necessary; otherwise, if two parties have concurrent rights to the same mark in distinct geographical areas, neither party would ever be allowed any use of the internet.”

In *Jeri-Jo*, Italian defendants were not required to de-list their homepage address “www.energie.it” from Internet search engines even though defendants’ ENERGIE mark was found to infringe plaintiff’s ENERGIE mark in the United States. The court noted that “defendants may legitimately advertise their mark over much of the rest of the globe” and “[p]laintiffs did observe at oral argument that [perfect relief] is not possible, the Internet being what it is.”

Another Italian defendant who made sexually explicit images available through its site established in Italy was found in contempt of a New York court order enjoining use of PLAYMEN on English language publications or related products sold or distributed in the United States. The court permitted continued operation of the website but prohibited the site “from accepting subscriptions from customers living in the United States.”

As Internet trademark jurisprudence continues to develop, expect more cases to consider the complex issues involving scope of relief on the World Wide Web.

§ 11:11 Where Does Responsibility for Infringement Lie?

In many cases, the website owner just provides a platform for others to post content. When the content posted is infringing, who is responsible? The actual poster of the content is sometimes difficult if not impossible to locate and may not be subject to jurisdiction in a convenient venue.

One point is clear: absent bad faith, responsibility does not lie with the domain name registrar. The ACPA provides:

---

105. *Id.* at 1040.
A domain name registrar, a domain name registry, or other domain name registration authority shall not be liable for damages under this section for the registration or maintenance of a domain name for another absent a showing of bad faith intent to profit from such registration or maintenance of the domain name. 106

However, where the service provider itself has acted in bad faith, an action may lie. For example, Microsoft and Verizon have brought actions on the grounds that the registrar registered the domain names for itself, taking steps to mask that it was the true registrant. Other actions have also alleged abusive domain name tasting and domain name kiting by registrars. 107

Also, keep in mind that many service providers will remove infringing content upon notice by a trademark owner. Check the terms of service for the site at issue. 108

Like service providers, other companies who count counterfeiters and domain name cybersquatters among their customers may find themselves on the receiving end of a lawsuit. 108.1

---

108.1. See, e.g., Gucci Am., Inc. v. Frontline Processing Corp., No. 1:09-cv-06925-HB (S.D.N.Y. June 23, 2010) (plaintiff alleged facts sufficient to infer that company that assisted counterfeiting site in setting up its credit card transactions intentionally induced trademark infringement and that bank and credit card processing company exerted sufficient control over the infringing transactions and knowingly provided services to a counterfeiter; motion to dismiss denied); Vulcan Golf, LLC v. Google, Inc., No. 07-C-3371 (N.D. Ill. June 9, 2010) (Google possibly liable under the ACPA as “licensee” of domain name registrant where Google supplied placeholder sites with advertising links that, if clicked, provided revenue to Google and the cybersquatter contracts provided that Google was licensed to use the domains; summary judgment denied).
§ 11:12  The Internet As a Source of Information and Evidence

The Internet is a limitless resource for information useful to trademark practitioners. Information that once was obtained through an investigator's discreet anonymous phone calls or a visit to a company's premises is now literally at the attorney's fingertips. A quick search may reveal whether the product of interest is available for sale, the company's location, and the complete product line and history. Chances are that you can order the potentially infringing product over the Internet. However, the Internet is frequently just the first step. In many situations, you will still want to check out the retail marketplace and hire an investigator to visit the premises.

The Internet not only provides useful background information, but may also provide evidence to support your case in court. When confronted with the issue of admissibility of material printed off the Internet, practitioners should consider these points:

• If the evidence is offered for the truth of statements contained in the Internet printout, there is likely to be a hearsay problem.

• If the evidence is offered to show the existence of a company name or trademark as it appears on the Internet, a judge may request the parties to stipulate to the admissibility of this material—or it may come through the testimony of the downloader.

• The Internet home page of your adversary may contain information that can be used against him, for example, statements contrary to the assertions he is making in court. Be sure to alert your clients that what they say on the Internet (including social media sites like Facebook) may be used against them. 108.2

108.2. Early case law establishes that at least some private communications on social networks are akin to email and protected from certain disclosures under the Stored Communications Act. See Crispin v. Audigier, No. CV 09-09509 MMM (JEMx) (C.D. Cal. May 26, 2010). However, keep in mind that even private social media postings and emails are likely to be discoverable if relevant to a dispute, perhaps subject to a protective order.
• Where there are claims that the mark is generic or descriptive and therefore weak, the Internet, like the Nexis database of newspaper and magazine articles, may demonstrate descriptive uses. However, frequent presence of a term on the Internet does not necessarily indicate weakness, for example, where a well-known mark is the target of cybersquatters.  

• If defendant wants to demonstrate the weakness of plaintiff’s mark as a result of third-party use, remember: appearance on the Internet does not necessarily equate with commercial use. Of course, the Internet is a good starting point to determine what uses should be further investigated and documented, for example, by purchase of products in the marketplace or photographs of retail premises.

§ 11:13 Conclusion

Like much of technology, the Internet has pluses and minuses for the practitioner. You are able to obtain information much more quickly and easily, but so can your opponent. From the trademark owner’s point of view, damage caused by exposure of infringing uses on the Internet can be far more immediate and wide reaching than exposure at the local retail level. The Anticybersquatting Consumer Protection Act and the UDRP are important steps in the effort to protect trademarks on the Internet. However, the flood of Internet litigation, like the flood of Internet information, is not likely to recede soon.

109. Beware that Trademark Office examiners may look up applicant on the Internet and use applicant’s Internet description of its product to support a rejection, for example, based on descriptiveness. See In re Promo Ink, 78 U.S.P.Q.2d 1301, 1304 (T.T.A.B. 2006) (descriptiveness rejection supported by Internet ads showing use of “Party at a Discount” in promotional information featuring discount coupons for parties).