

Domain names scam: "Department of Asian Domain Registration Service"

Recently, our attention has been repeatedly drawn to a letter received by a number of trade mark owners in which they are informed by the so-called "Department of Asian Domain Registration Service in China" that a company is allegedly seeking to register a domain name similar to their registered trade mark. The wording of the letter usually reads as follows:

Dear President,

We are the department of Asian Domain Registration Service in China. I have something to confirm with you. We formally received an application on September 14,2012 that a company which self-styled "example" were applying to register "example" as their Net Brand and some domain names through our firm.

Now we are handling this registration, and after our initial checking, we found the name were similar to your company's, so we need to check with you whether your company has authorized that company to register these names. If you authorized this, we will finish the registration at once. If you did not authorize, please let us know within 7 workdays, so that we will handle this issue better. Out of the time limit we will unconditionally finish the registration for "example". Looking forward to your prompt reply

This letter has no connection whatsoever with the activities of the Institute. As the registered trade mark owner, you are not obliged to register a domain of the same name. Based on several warnings appearing on the internet, this standard letter is an attempt to encourage trade mark owners to have their trade mark registered as a domain name (for a fee). In many cases, the company that allegedly wants to register the trade mark name does not even exist.

We recommend you exercise caution should you be the recipient of such a letter. Should you be interested in registering an Asian domain name, we recommend you go through official registration channels, for example, <http://www.wipo.int/amc/en/domains/gtld/asia/index.html> for .asia domains. At this link, it is also described how to proceed should a domain name potentially infringe your trade mark through a likelihood of confusion. You can find information on .cn domains at the link to CNNIC – the China Internet Network Information Center (<http://www1.cnnic.cn/index.htm>) - which is the leading organisation in China for allocating these domains and which also maintains a list of accredited registrars.