

PUBLICATION

Prevent Trademark Abuse on Facebook.com

June 12, 2009

Starting 12:01 a.m. EDT Saturday, Facebook will begin allowing users to select personalized usernames on a first come, first served basis. Trademark owners should be aware of the steps they can take to prevent trademarks from being reserved by potential trademark infringers and cybersquatters.

Facebook believes custom usernames will make it easier for people to find and connect with each other online. However, allowing usernames on a first come, first served basis could result in abuse.

To prevent trademarks from being registered in usernames, trademark owners can notify Facebook of their registered trademarks by submitting a form, available [here](#). Baker Donelson attorneys are available to assist in this process and recommend that trademark owners submit this form before username selection begins.

Facebook usernames will be reflected in the web addresses of users' personal profiles. Profile pages are currently located at web addresses composed of random numbers, such as www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=123456789. However, after a user selects a username, his or her profiles will be located www.facebook.com/username.

It does not appear that the Facebook form can be used to prevent users from registering usernames that incorporate unregistered marks or variations of registered marks. However, should a trademark be used in any of these ways, Baker Donelson attorneys are able to assist trademark owners through other methods.

For more information or assistance, please contact your Baker Donelson attorney or any of the following attorneys in Baker Donelson's Intellectual Property Group.