



Intellectual Property Practice Group Law Alert

A Corporate Department Publication

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This Intellectual Property Practice Group Law Alert is intended to provide general information for clients or interested individuals and should not be relied upon as legal advice. Please consult an attorney for specific advice regarding your particular situation.

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Act Now To Protect Your Company's Trademarks on Facebook

FACEBOOK ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF USERNAME PERSONALIZATION AND BRANDING PROCEDURES

Facebook announced that beginning **Saturday, June 13, 2009 at 12:01 a.m. EDT** existing users, including individuals and businesses, will be able to create personalized usernames for their Facebook pages (facebook.com/yourcompanyname). The personalized usernames will operate as an Internet address (www.facebook.com/yourcompanyname) for direct access to the account holder's Facebook profile. Previously, individual user profiles and corporate pages were located at a Web address consisting of the URL Facebook.com and a lengthy profile identification number. If you were not an existing user as of June 9th, you will be eligible to register usernames beginning June 28th.

Mark owners concerned about taking steps to prevent their marks from being registered as usernames by others can request that Facebook not register certain trademarks as usernames. Facebook's "Preventing the Registration of a Username" form can be completed at any time, before or after June 13th. Facebook also has a procedure to report infringing content on Facebook — including the infringing use of marks in personalized usernames. Facebook has not elaborated on how more nuanced mark-rights issues, such as disputes between legitimate owners of the same mark used with different products or services, will be addressed.

These new personalized usernames will allow businesses to more directly and easily promote their corporate or brand presence on Facebook with a short URL. If you or your company have an interest in protecting against the unauthorized use of your marks on this social networking site, or in establishing a presence on Facebook, you should review your options with respect to filing a registration prevention form or creating a personalized username.

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