

MEDIA MENTION

David Weslow Comments on Potential Fraud Abuse for New Top-Level Domains

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David Weslow, a partner in Wiley Rein's Intellectual Property Practice, was interviewed by *The Washington Post* after news of several bids for control of Internet web addresses became public. According to the *Post*, one of the most aggressive, but little known bidders is an investment group known as Donuts, Inc. which has paid \$57 million to apply for 307 new domain names. This bid has prompted concern among industry groups and Internet watchdogs that believe the new domains will be open to potential fraud, due to claims that the company has links to those with a history of Internet abuse, such as spamming and cybersquatting.

Law enforcement authorities in several nations have warned that the rapid expansion of domain names from the current 22 to 1,400 next year could create an opportunity for greater criminal activity in the Internet system because the culprits would be hard to find.

Allegations concerning companies with a known history of providing services to spammers and other Internet abusers controlling susceptible domains like ".doctor," ".school," and ".financial" continue to mount. Mr. Weslow pointed out that "If the allegations....turn out to be true, these 300 top-level domains could be the Wild West for fraud and abuse."

However, officials from the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)—which is overseeing the issuance of these Web addresses—said that safeguards have put into place to prevent companies with a history of abuse from obtaining and misusing new domains. They further note that new top-level domains will be more secure because applicants are subject to background checks

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