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Cybersquatting hits new heights
International - Hogan Lovells

Counterfeiting

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The [Arbitration and Mediation Centre](#) of the [World Intellectual Property Organisation](#) (WIPO) in Geneva has issued a [press release](#) revealing that cybersquatting cases in 2010 were up 28% on 2009. In 2010 brand owners filed 2,696 complaints with WIPO under the [Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy](#) (UDRP) or variations of it, as opposed to 2,107 cases in 2009.

In the corresponding press conference, WIPO Director General Francis Gurry was unable to give a definite explanation for such a significant increase, but surmised that it may be connected to the increase in the actual number of domain names registered year on year (there are currently almost 200 million domain names registered worldwide, and this number is increasing on a daily basis).

However, upon closer examination of the figures, the issues are perhaps not as straightforward. The 2,696 cases filed in 2010 related to a total of 4,370 domain names, but the 2,107 cases filed in 2009 related to a total of 4,688 domain names. In short, 318 fewer domain names were considered by panels in 2010 as opposed to 2009.

The statistics may thus demonstrate that in 2010 brand owners were happier to file cases covering fewer domain names, possibly as a result of WIPO's new online procedures which have made the filing process much simpler and easier.

Another interesting fact revealed by the WIPO press release was that the percentage of cases relating to country-code top-level domains rose to 15% of all cases in 2010, up from just 1% in 2000, and this percentage looks set to increase.

WIPO is only one of four providers accredited by the [Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers](#) to provide services in relation to the UDRP, the others being the [Asian Domain Name Dispute Resolution Centre](#) (with offices in Beijing, Hong Kong, Seoul and Kuala Lumpur), the [National Arbitration Forum](#) (in Minneapolis) and the [Czech Arbitration Court](#) (in Prague).

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