

' .hk' domain name registry launches ' .hk' Watch Hong Kong - Hogan Lovells LLP

Domain names

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The [Hong Kong Internet Registration Corporation Limited](#) (HKIRC), the ' .hk' domain name registry, has announced the launch of ' .hk' Watch.

The ' .hk' Watch service will be a domain name monitoring service that is solely dedicated to the ' .hk' domain name space. It aims to protect brand owners and their brands from abusive domain name registrations in the ' .hk' domain name space.

According to HKIRC, ' .hk' Watch will alert brand owners to newly registered domain names which could "potentially confuse or mislead" internet users, resulting in consumer confusion, loss of business or criminal activities such as phishing attacks. By receiving an alert from the watch service, brand owners will be able to swiftly assess the threat of the domain name and take appropriate action.

HKIRC also hopes that the launch of this service will reduce the number of infringing domain name registrations, as potential cybersquatters will be deterred from registering infringing domain names due to the ongoing monitoring provided by ' .hk' Watch.

The new service is designed to be of use to IP rights holders and existing ' .hk' domain name registrants. The CEO of HKIRC, Jonathan Shea, has been quoted as saying that "over the past few years, concerns about infringement using domain names has been on the rise, as more and more global brands have discovered that their domain names have been registered for malicious activities". He added that "brand infringers or cybersquatters use the brand names maliciously or even mimic a reputable company's domain name, creating confusion for the public. In return, this impacts a company's brand reputation, business and customer loyalty."

HKIRC clearly views ' .hk' domain name brand protection as a serious issue and aims for ' .hk' Watch to be at least one of the first steps in providing domain name and brand owners a way to protect their online intellectual property in the ' .hk' domain name space. It will be interesting to see what impact ' .hk' Watch has in the fight against brand and trademark infringement and whether this, in turn, leads to an increase or a decrease in domain name disputes.

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