

# Trademark "Scam" Solicitations Alert

When you file for U.S. trademark registration, you become listed on the U.S. Trademark Office records. Several companies search these records and then automatically send you "official looking" notices and "invoices" that may even appear to originate from a governmental agency. These notices will direct you to pay fees for registration, for watching for other marks similar to yours, for filing with domestic or international lists, directories, etc., or for registering domain names.

## **MANY OF THESE ARE SCAMS. BEWARE OF SUSPICIOUS TRADEMARK SOLICITATIONS.**

1. One company called the United States Trademark Protection Agency (USTPA) offers electronic trademark monitoring services. This is NOT a governmental agency and the U.S. Trademark Office (USPTO) site even showed a warning that the USTPA is NOT affiliated with the USPTO. We understand that this company has asserted that the USPTO recommends them.
2. Other companies direct you to pay to be listed in their worldwide trademark registration directories. These are not official filings and are not recognized by any countries or treaties. Their usefulness is limited and of no legal effect.
3. Other companies hire non-legal administrators to do trademark filings without proper supervision or training. These companies can prove very costly due to filing problems.
4. Some companies represent themselves as registrars or resellers of domain names for certain countries. This is most acute in China for .CN domain names. We recommend you visit the site for the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) for lists of accredited registrars before obtaining a .CN domain name. The identities of unapproved companies changes daily as these companies change their names. As of the date of the last revision of this Alert, we understand the following entities were listed as not approved: Beijing Inwis network Science and Technology Co., Ltd, Shanghai JinYue Internet Technology Co., Ltd, Shanghai sql Network Information & Technology Co., Ltd, SuZhou HuaYan Network Technology Co., Ltd, and Suzhu Prince Digital Technology Co., Ltd. This is a partial and incomplete list. We recommend you visit CNNIC.NET for more information.

Please do not be confused by these mailings or inquiries to you. If we represent you, the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office will not send mailings directly to you, they will be sent to us.

While some of these companies offer legitimate services, we recommend you seek advice from legal counsel before utilizing them. Some examples of these companies include the following:

- Globus Edition S.L. in Spain
- Trademark Renewal Service in Washington, D.C.
- Company of Economic Publications Ltd. in Austria
- The Marks KFT in Hungary
- United States Trademark Protection Agency in Seattle, Washington
- United States Trademark Maintenance Service Border Protection Service located in Houston, Texas
- Commercial Centre for Industry and Trade located in Switzerland
- CPI (Company for Publications and Information Anstalt) in Liechtenstein (a phantom company which says it works with The Publication of Brand Names of the International Economy - another phantom company)
- IDM International Data Medium AnsbH in Liechtenstein
- S.A.R.L. - *Societe pour Publications et Information* in Austria
- TMI Trademark Info Corporation located in Pearland, Texas
- ZDR - Datenregister GmbH in Germany
- IT&T AG in Switzerland
- Federated Institute for Patent & Trademark Registry in Coconut Creek, Florida
- Central Data Register of International Patents in Germany
- CPTD - Central Patent & Trademark Database in Austria
- European Institute for Economy and Commerce in Belgium
- INFOCom in Switzerland
- International Organization for Patent & Trademark Service in USA
- Register of International Patent Bulletin in Germany
- TM Collection KPT in Hungary

We encourage you not to make payments to them without first consulting us. If you have already done so, please give us a call. Remember all communications from the U.S. Trademark Office will come via our office only.

For information, please contact Kevin J. Collette at 206.654.2252