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# UN copyright agency reports sharp rise in cybersquatting disputes



1 April 2011 – Disputes over the practice of cybersquatting rose sharply last year, with nearly 2,700 cases filed for arbitration with the United Nations agency charged with protecting inventions, trademarks, industrial designs and copyright.

The number of arbitration and mediation cases filed represented a 28 per cent increase over the previous year, according to a **press release** issued yesterday by the UN World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

Cybersquatting general refers to the practice of registering, offering for sale or using a domain name with the aim of profiting from a trademark that belongs to someone else. It can also involve buying up domain names that use the names of existing businesses with the intention of selling the same names to those to those firms.

Parties filing cases with WIPO last year took advantage of user-friendly online facilities such as the paperless procedure initiated by the entity's Arbitration and Mediation Centre.

"The WIPO Centre is the leading provider of domain name dispute services and provides a rich range of resources for users and the general public," said Francis Gurry, the WIPO Director General.

"The just-released major update to the WIPO Overview is an excellent illustration of these resources and reflects the long experience of the WIPO Centre. The revised WIPO Overview distils panel findings in thousands of domain name cases filed with WIPO since its launch," he added.

The cases – which involved some 4,370 domain names – were decided by 327 panellists from 49 countries in 13 different languages, namely English, Spanish, French, Dutch, German, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Italian, Turkish, Romanian, Swedish, and Japanese. In 91 per cent of the cases, panels found evidence of cybersquatting, deciding in favour of complainants.

The top five areas of WIPO complainant activity were retail, banking and finance, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, Internet and information technology, and fashion. WIPO's 2010 caseload featured well-known names from business and public interest sectors, and most of those concerned registrations in the .com domain.

Arbitration requests related to country code domains rose to 15 per cent, while national registries designating WIPO to provide domain name dispute resolution services increased to 65 in 2010 from 62 in 2009.

Based in Geneva, the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Centre was established in 1994 to offer Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) options for the resolution of international commercial disputes between private parties.

Arbitration, mediation and expert determination procedures offered by the WIPO Centre are widely recognized as appropriate for technology, entertainment and other disputes involving intellectual property.

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