

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION**

Rakuten Group, Inc. v. Hasting H  
Case No. D2024-1803

### **1. The Parties**

The Complainant is Rakuten Group, Inc., Japan, represented by Greenberg Traurig, LLP, United States of America.

The Respondent is Hasting H, United States of America (“United States”).

### **2. The Domain Name and Registrar**

The disputed domain name <rakshopblack.com> is registered with PDR Ltd. d/b/a PublicDomainRegistry.com (the “Registrar”).

### **3. Procedural History**

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on April 29, 2024. On April 30, 2024, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On May 1, 2024, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response confirming that the Respondent is listed as the registrant and providing the contact details.

The Center verified that the Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Policy” or “UDRP”), the Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Rules”), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Supplemental Rules”).

In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2 and 4, the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on May 8, 2024. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was May 28, 2024. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on June 6, 2024.

The Center appointed Edoardo Fano as the sole panelist in this matter on June 11, 2024. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panel has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence, as required by the Center to ensure compliance with the Rules, paragraph 7.

The Panel has not received any requests from the Complainant or the Respondent regarding further submissions, waivers or extensions of deadlines, and the Panel has not found it necessary to request any further information from the Parties.

Having reviewed the communication records in the case file provided by the Center, the Panel finds that the Center has discharged its responsibility under the Rules, paragraph 2(a), “to employ reasonably available means calculated to achieve actual notice to [the] Respondent”. Therefore, the Panel shall issue its Decision based upon the Complaint, the Policy, the Rules and the Supplemental Rules and without the benefit of a response from the Respondent.

The language of the proceeding is English, being the language of the Registration Agreement, as per paragraph 11(a) of the Rules.

#### **4. Factual Background**

The Complainant is Rakuten Group, Inc., a Japanese company operating as a global innovation leader by offering more than 70 different services, including an online marketplace, portal and media services, a travel agency, online banking services, securities services, and credit cards. The Complainant owns several trademark registrations worldwide for RAKUTEN, among which include the following ones in the Respondent's country:

- United States Trademark Registration No. 6,604,750 for RAKUTEN and design, registered on January 4, 2022;
- United States Trademark Registration No. 6,610,523 for RAKUTEN, registered on January 11, 2022;
- United States Trademark Registration No. 6,886,764 for RAKUTEN and design, registered on November 1, 2022.

The Complainant also operates on the Internet, its main website being “www.rakuten.com”.

The Complainant provided evidence in support of the above.

According to the Whois records, the disputed domain name was registered on February 17, 2024, and it directs to an inactive website. However, before the Complaint was filed the disputed domain name resolved to a website in which the Complainant's trademark and logo were reproduced, pretending to be a Complainant's official website.

#### **5. Parties' Contentions**

##### **A. Complainant**

The Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the disputed domain name.

Notably, the Complainant states that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to its trademark RAKUTEN, as the disputed domain name uses the first three letters of the Complainant's trademark with the addition of the generic terms “shop” and “black”.

Moreover, the Complainant asserts that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name since it has not been authorized by the Complainant to register the disputed domain name or to use its trademark within the disputed domain name, it is not commonly known by the disputed domain name and it is not making either a bona fide offering of goods or services or a legitimate

noncommercial or fair use of the disputed domain name. The disputed domain name was used for the purpose of impersonating the Complainant's website and defrauding consumers.

The Complainant submits that the Respondent has registered the disputed domain name in bad faith, since the Complainant's trademark RAKUTEN is distinctive and well known. Therefore, the Respondent targeted the Complainant's trademark at the time of registration of the disputed domain name and the Complainant contends that the use of the disputed domain name to impersonate the Complainant and attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to the Respondent's website, creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's trademark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the Respondent's website, qualifies as bad faith registration and use.

Finally, the Complainant asserts that the Respondent is engaged in a pattern of registering at least another abusive domain name registration against the same Complainant.

## **B. Respondent**

The Respondent has made no reply to the Complainant's contentions and is in default. In reference to paragraphs 5(f) and 14 of the Rules, no exceptional circumstances explaining the default have been put forward or are apparent from the record.

A respondent is not obliged to participate in a proceeding under the Policy, but if it fails to do so, reasonable facts asserted by a complainant may be taken as true, and appropriate inferences, in accordance with paragraph 14(b) of the Rules, may be drawn. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition ("[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)"), section 4.3.

## **6. Discussion and Findings**

Paragraph 4(a) of the Policy lists three elements, which the Complainant must satisfy in order to succeed:

- (i) the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights; and
- (ii) the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name; and
- (iii) the disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

### **A. Identical or Confusingly Similar**

It is well accepted that the first element functions primarily as a standing requirement. The standing (or threshold) test for confusing similarity involves a reasoned but relatively straightforward comparison between the Complainant's trademark and the disputed domain name. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.7.

Based on the available record, the Panel finds the Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trademark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.2.1.

The Panel notes that the disputed domain name reproduces the first three letters of the Complainant's trademark RAKUTEN. In some instances, panels have taken note of the content of the website associated with a domain name to confirm confusing similarity whereby it appears prima facie that the respondent seeks to target a trademark through the disputed domain name. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.15. Here, the Panel notes that before the Complaint was filed the disputed domain name resolved to a website in which the Complainant's trademark and logo were reproduced, pretending to be a Complainant's official website. Therefore, the Panel finds that the Respondent's targeting of the Complainant's trademark affirms the confusing similarity with the disputed domain name. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.7.

While the addition of other terms, here “shop” and “black”, may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of such terms does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.8.

It is also well accepted that a generic Top-Level Domain, in this case “.com”, is typically ignored when assessing the similarity between a trademark and a domain name. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.11.1. Based on the available record, the Panel finds the first element of the Policy has been established.

## **B. Rights or Legitimate Interests**

Paragraph 4(c) of the Policy provides a list of circumstances in which the Respondent may demonstrate rights or legitimate interests in a disputed domain name.

While the overall burden of proof in UDRP proceedings is on the complainant, panels have recognized that proving a respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in a domain name may result in the often impossible task of “proving a negative”, requiring information that is often primarily within the knowledge or control of the respondent. As such, where a complainant makes out a prima facie case that the respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests, the burden of production on this element shifts to the respondent to come forward with relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the domain name. If the respondent fails to come forward with such relevant evidence, the complainant is deemed to have satisfied the second element. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.1.

Having reviewed the record, the Panel finds the Complainant has established a prima facie case that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The Respondent has not rebutted the Complainant’s prima facie showing and has not come forward with any relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name such as those enumerated in the Policy or otherwise.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal activity, here impersonation/passing off, can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.13.1.

Based on the available record, the Panel finds the second element of the Policy has been established.

## **C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith**

The Panel notes that for the purposes of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy, paragraph 4(b) of the Policy establishes circumstances, in particular but without limitation, that if found by the Panel to be present, shall be evidence of the registration and use of a domain name in bad faith.

In the present case, regarding the registration in bad faith of the disputed domain name, the reputation of the Complainant’s trademark RAKUTEN is clearly established, and the Panel finds that the Respondent must have known of the Complainant, and deliberately registered the disputed domain name in bad faith, especially because in the website at the disputed domain name the Complainant’s trademark and logo were reproduced, pretending to be a Complainant’s official website.

The Panel further notes that the disputed domain name was also being used in bad faith since the Respondent was trying to attract Internet users to its website by creating likelihood of confusion with the Complainant’s trademark as to the disputed domain name’s source, sponsorship, affiliation or endorsement, an activity clearly detrimental to the Complainant’s business.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal activity, here impersonation/passing off, constitutes bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.4. Having reviewed the record, the Panel finds the Respondent’s registration and use of the disputed domain name constitutes bad faith under the Policy.

The above suggests to the Panel that the Respondent intentionally registered and was using the disputed domain name in order both to disrupt the Complainant's business, and to attract Internet users to its website in accordance with paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

As regards the current use of the disputed domain name, directing to and inactive website, Panels have found that the non-use of a domain name (including a blank or "coming soon" page) would not prevent a finding of bad faith under the doctrine of passive holding. Having reviewed the record, the Panel finds the non-use of the disputed domain name does not prevent a finding of bad faith in the circumstances of this proceeding. While panelists will look at the totality of the circumstances in each case, factors that have been considered relevant in applying the passive holding doctrine include: (i) the degree of distinctiveness or reputation of the complainant's mark, (ii) the failure of the respondent to submit a response or to provide any evidence of actual or contemplated good-faith use, (iii) the respondent's concealing its identity or use of false contact details (noted to be in breach of its registration agreement), and (iv) the implausibility of any good faith use to which the domain name may be put. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.3. Having reviewed the record, the Panel notes the distinctiveness and reputation of the Complainant's trademark, the previous use of the disputed domain name, and the failure of the Respondent to submit a response and finds that in the circumstances of this case the passive holding of the disputed domain name does not prevent a finding of bad faith under the Policy.

Moreover, the Panel finds that the pattern of conduct of the Respondent, in at least one other case of abusive domain name registration against the same Complainant, further supports a finding of bad faith.

Based on the available record, the Panel finds the third element of the Policy has been established.

## 7. Decision

For the foregoing reasons, in accordance with paragraphs 4(i) of the Policy and 15 of the Rules, the Panel orders that the disputed domain name, <rakshopblack.com>, be transferred to the Complainant.

*/Edoardo Fano/*

**Edoardo Fano**

Sole Panelist

Date: June 19, 2024