

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Equifax Inc. v. matthew iyke
Case No. D2024-1943

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Equifax Inc., United States of America ("United States" or "US"), represented by The GigaLaw Firm, Douglas M. Isenberg, Attorney at Law, LLC, United States.

The Respondent is matthew iyke, Nigeria.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <equifax-trade.com> is registered with NameSilo, LLC (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on May 9, 2024. On May 10, 2024, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On May 31, 2024, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the disputed domain name which differed from the named Respondent (Redacted for Privacy, PrivacyGuardian.org LLC) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on the same date providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting the Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. The Complainant filed an amendment to the Complaint on June 3, 2024.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amendment to 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 June 4, 2024. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was June 24, 2024. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on June 25, 2024.

The Center appointed Andrea Mondini as the sole panelist in this matter on June 28, 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.

4. Factual Background

The Complainant was founded in 1913 and its predecessor company dates back to 1899. The Complainant is headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia (US), is traded on the New York Stock Exchange, employs 11,000 people worldwide, and is a global provider of information solutions and human resources business process outsourcing services.

The Complainant holds the domain name <equifax.com> which hosts its main website and was created on February 21, 1995.

The Complainant owns numerous trademark registrations in several jurisdictions, including:

TRADEMARK	JURISDICTION	REGISTRATION NO.	REGISTRATION DATE	INTERNATIONAL CLASS
EQUIFAX	United States	1,027,544	December 16, 1975	36
EQUIFAX	United States	1,045,574	August 3, 1976	35

The Respondent did not file a Response.

The disputed domain name was registered on April 30, 2024.

According to the evidence submitted with the Complaint, the disputed domain name directs Internet users to a website for “Coinhouse” which describes itself as “a trading company ...to participate in exchange processes, for attracting and managing investment assets as well as making profits on the basis of volatility of bitcoins and increasing numbers of uses.” The Respondent has also configured Mail Exchange (“MX”) records for the disputed domain name, enabling the Respondent to send and receive emails with addresses that use the disputed domain name. A cybersecurity company identified the disputed domain name as “dangerous” because it is associated with phishing activities.

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 contends as follows:

The disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the EQUIFAX trademark in which the Complainant has rights, because it incorporates this trademark in its entirety, and the addition of the hyphen and the term “trade” is not sufficient to avoid confusing similarity.

The Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name. The Respondent has not been authorized by the Complainant to use this trademark, is not commonly known by the disputed domain name, and there is no evidence of the Respondent’s use, or demonstrable preparation to use, the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods and services. To the

contrary, a cybersecurity company identified the disputed domain name as “dangerous” because it is associated with phishing.

The disputed domain name was registered in bad faith because it is obvious that the Respondent had knowledge of both the Complainant and its well-known trademark EQUIFAX at the time it registered the disputed domain name.

The Respondent is using the disputed domain name in bad faith, because the use of a domain name for illegal activities such as phishing always constitutes use in bad faith. Moreover, although the Complainant is not a trading company and does not offer cryptocurrency services, as Respondent purports to do, the Respondent’s services, like the Complainant’s services, are generally in the financial services sector. Therefore, the Respondent has intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to a website, by creating a likelihood of confusion with the EQUIFAX trademark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the Respondent’s website, in violation of paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

B. Respondent

The Respondent did not reply to the Complainant’s contentions.

6. Discussion and Findings

According to paragraph 4(a) of the Policy, in order to succeed, a complainant must establish each of the following elements:

- (i) the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to the trademark or service mark in which the complainant has rights;
- (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 of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition, ([“WIPO Overview 3.0”](#)), section 1.7.

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 finds the entirety of the EQUIFAX trademark is reproduced within the disputed domain name.

Although the addition of other elements such as here a hyphen and the term “trade” may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds that in the present case the addition of this term 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.

The addition of the generic Top-Level Domain (“gTLD”) “.com” in the disputed domain name is a standard registration requirement and as such may be disregarded under the confusing similarity test under the Policy, paragraph 4(a)(i). See [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.11.1.

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.

Although the overall burden of proof in UDRP proceedings is on the complainant, panels have recognized that for a complainant to prove that a respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in a domain name may result in the difficult 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 (although the burden of proof always remains on the complainant). 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 available 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.

The Respondent is not making a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the disputed domain name. The disputed domain name resolves to a website purportedly offering services in competition with the Complainant. Moreover, prior panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal activities such as here for potential phishing 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.

Paragraph 4(b) of the Policy sets out a list of non-exhaustive circumstances that may indicate that a domain name was registered and used in bad faith, but other circumstances may be relevant in assessing whether a respondent’s registration and use of a domain name is in bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.2.1.

In the view of the Panel, noting that that the Complainant’s trademark predates the registration of the disputed domain name and considering that the Complainant’s trademark is well-known, it is inconceivable that the Respondent could have registered the disputed domain name without knowledge of the Complainant’s well-known trademark. In the circumstances of this case and based on the record, this is evidence of registration in bad faith.

Noting the use of the disputed domain name to resolve to a website offering competing services, the Panel finds that the Respondent has intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to a website, by creating a likelihood of confusion with the EQUIFAX trademark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the Respondent’s website.

The Complainant has shown that a cybersecurity company identified the disputed domain name as “dangerous” because it is associated with phishing activities. Prior panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal activity such as in the present case for phishing activities which would potentially

allow the collection of personal data from Internet users constitutes use in 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.

Based on the available record, the Panel finds that the Complainant has established the third element of the Policy with regard to the disputed domain name.

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 <equifax-trade.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Andrea Mondini/

Andrea Mondini

Sole Panelist

Date: July 12, 2024