

## ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Williams-Sonoma, Inc. v. Junhao Luo  
Case No. D2025-1049

### 1. The Parties

The Complainant is Williams-Sonoma, Inc., United States of America (“United States”), represented by Hanson Bridgett LLP, United States.

The Respondent is Junhao Luo, Hong Kong, China.

### 2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <williams-sonomass.com> is registered with Domain International Services Limited (the “Registrar”).

### 3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed in English with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on March 13, 2025. On March 14, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On March 20, 2025, 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 (Domain International Services Limited) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on March 21, 2025, 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 amended Complaint in English on March 26, 2025.

On March 21, 2025, the Center informed the Parties in Chinese and English, that the language of the Registration Agreement for the disputed domain name is Chinese. On March 26, 2025, the Complainant requested English to be the language of the proceeding. The Respondent did not submit any comment on the Complainant’s submission.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amended 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 in English and Chinese of the Complaint, and the proceeding commenced on March 26, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was April 15, 2025. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on April 16, 2025.

The Center appointed Sebastian M.W. Hughes as the sole panelist in this matter on April 22, 2025. 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**

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

The Complainant is a United States company and one of the leading manufacturers and retailers of home goods, operating under the trade mark WILLIAMS SONOMA (the "Trade Mark") since 1956.

The Complainant is the owner of numerous registrations in several jurisdictions for the Trade Mark, including United States registration No. 2442099, with a registration date of April 10, 2001.

The Complainant operates its online business via its website at "www.williams-sonoma.com".

##### **B. Respondent**

The Respondent is reportedly an individual located in Hong Kong, China.

##### **C. The Disputed Domain Name**

The disputed domain name was registered on February 26, 2025.

##### **D. Use of the Disputed Domain Name**

The disputed domain name was previously resolved to an English language website, impersonating the Complainant's official website, featuring the Trade Mark, and apparently offering for sale branded home goods (the "Website").

At the date of this Decision, the disputed domain name is resolved to an English language error page.

#### **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 that the disputed domain name, consisting of the Trade Mark followed by the letters "ss", is confusingly similar to the Trade Mark; and that the Respondent has used the disputed domain name illegitimately in respect of the Website, in order to impersonate the Complainant.

##### **B. Respondent**

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

## **6. Discussion and Findings**

### **Language of the Proceeding**

The language of the Registration Agreement for the disputed domain name is Chinese. Pursuant to the Rules, paragraph 11(a), in the absence of an agreement between the parties, or unless specified otherwise in the registration agreement, the language of the administrative proceeding shall be the language of the registration agreement.

The Complaint was filed in English. The Complainant requested that the language of the proceeding be English for several reasons, including the fact that the Website is an English language website.

The Respondent did not make any specific submissions with respect to the language of the proceeding.

In exercising its discretion to use a language other than that of the registration agreement, the Panel has to exercise such discretion judicially in the spirit of fairness and justice to both parties, taking into account all relevant circumstances of the case, including matters such as the parties' ability to understand and use the proposed language, time and costs (see WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition ("[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)"), section 4.5.1).

Having considered all the matters above, the Panel determines under paragraph 11(a) of the Rules that the language of the proceeding shall be English.

### **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 trade mark and the disputed domain name. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trade mark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.2.1.

The entirety of the Trade Mark is reproduced within the disputed domain name. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Trade Mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.7.

Although the addition of other term (here, the letters "ss") may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of such term does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the Trade Mark for the purposes of the Policy.

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 proving 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.

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

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.

The Panel finds that the use of the Website demonstrates the Respondent's knowledge of the Complainant and its intention to create a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant and its Trade Mark, for its own commercial gain, which constitutes bad faith under paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy. Further, panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate or illegal activity (here, claimed impersonation/passing off, or other types of fraud) 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 Panel finds that the Complainant has established the third element of the Policy.

## **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 <williams-sonomass.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

*/Sebastian M.W. Hughes/*

**Sebastian M.W. Hughes**

Sole Panelist

Date: May 1, 2025