

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Age International, Inc. dba Blanton Distilling Company v. 李志翔 (li zhi xiang)
Case No. D2025-2723

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Age International, Inc. dba Blanton Distilling Company, United States of America ("United States"), represented by Leason Ellis LLP, United States.

The Respondent is 李志翔 (li zhi xiang), China.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <blantonspicks.com> is registered with Xin Net Technology Corp (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed in English with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on July 10, 2025. On July 10, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On July 11, 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 (UNKNOWN REGISTRANT) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on July 18, 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 amendment to the Complaint in English on July 23, 2025.

On July 18, 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 July 23, 2025, the Complainant confirmed its request that English 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 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 in English and Chinese of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on July 25, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was August 14, 2025. The Respondent sent an email communication to the Center on July 19, 2025 indicating that he would give up the disputed domain name. On July 21, 2025, the Center sent an email to the Parties regarding possible settlement. The Complainant requested the Center to continue with the proceeding on July 23, 2025. On August 18, 2025, the Center informed the Parties that it would proceed with panel appointment.

The Center appointed Karen Fong as the sole panelist in this matter on August 21, 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

The Complainant, a company based in the United States, is the owner of the bourbon brand, BLANTON'S. The brand has been in use in relation to bourbon whiskey since 1984. The Complainant has won numerous industry awards for its bourbon. The Complainant owns registrations for BLANTON'S in numerous jurisdictions including the following:

- United States Trade Mark Registration No. 1699319 for BLANTON'S registered on July 7, 1992;
- China Trade Mark Registration No. 713781 for BLANTON registered on November 7, 1994; and
- China Trade Mark Registration No. 53733137 for BLANTON'S registered on August 7, 2022;

(individually and collectively referred to as the "Trade Mark").

The Complainant owns the domain names <blantonsbourbon.com> and <blantonsbourbonshop.com> which direct to the Complainant's official websites which provide the history of the BLANTON'S brand and offer for retail the products and merchandise bearing the Trade Mark.

The Respondent, who appears to be based in China, registered the disputed domain name on June 26, 2025. The disputed domain name was connected to a website which prominently displayed the Trade Mark in the Complainant's stylized form, mimicked the Complainant's own website including using its copyright images and content (the "Website"). The Website is currently inactive following the Complainant contacting the Registrar and filing an infringement report with PayPal.

On July 19, 2025, following the Center's communication regarding the registrant information and the language of the proceeding, the Respondent sent an email to the Center stating that he wished to "give up this domain." The Complainant subsequently had to withdraw its initial request to suspend the proceeding to explore settlement, as attempts to contact the Respondent were unsuccessful as the emails to his address were returned as undeliverable.

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 is confusingly similar to the Trade Mark, that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests with respect to the disputed domain name, and that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith.

B. Respondent

The Respondent did not officially reply to the Complainant's contentions save for the email mentioned in Sections 3 and 4 above.

6. Discussion and Findings

6.1 Preliminary Issue: 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 as the Website when it was active was entirely in English and the Complainant is a famous American company and the BLANTON'S brand originated in the United States.

The Respondent has not challenged the Complainant's language request and in fact has failed to file an official response in either English or Chinese despite being duly notified by the Center in both English and Chinese of the language of the proceeding and of the commencement of the proceeding. His unofficial email response was sent in English indicating that he is conversant with the language.

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.

6.2 Substantive Issues

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.

Based on the available record, the Panel finds 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 Panel finds the entirety of the Trade Mark is reproduced within the disputed domain name. The absence of an apostrophe is immaterial, as punctuation marks cannot be included in domain names. 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.

While the addition of the term "picks" after the Trade Mark may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of the word does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the Trade Mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.8.

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.

Moreover, the nature of the disputed domain name, adding the term “picks” coupled with the use of the disputed domain name discussed above including a copy of the Complainant’s information and history under the “Our Story” page on the Website, affirms the Respondent’s intention of taking unfair advantage of the likelihood of confusion between the disputed domain name and the Complainant as to the origin or affiliation of the Website.

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, the Panel notes that the Respondent must have been aware of the Trade Mark when he registered the disputed domain name given the reputation of the Trade Mark and the use of the Complainant’s stylized Trade Mark, images and content on the Website. It is therefore implausible that the Respondent was unaware of the Complainant when he registered the disputed domain name.

In the [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.2.2 states as follows:

“Noting the near instantaneous and global reach of the Internet and search engines, and particularly in circumstances where the complainant’s mark is widely known (including in its sector) or highly specific and a respondent cannot credibly claim to have been unaware of the mark (particularly in the case of domainers), panels have been prepared to infer that the respondent knew, or have found that the respondent should have known, that its registration would be identical or confusingly similar to a complainant’s mark. Further factors including the nature of the domain name, the chosen top-level domain, any use of the domain name, or any respondent pattern, may obviate a respondent’s claim not to have been aware of the complainant’s mark.”

The fact that there is a clear absence of rights or legitimate interests coupled with the Respondent's choice of the disputed domain name without any explanation is also a significant factor to consider (as stated in [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.2.1). The disputed domain name falls into the category stated above and the Panel finds that registration is in bad faith.

The disputed domain name is also being used in bad faith. The unauthorised use of the images and content from the Complainant's websites and the Trade Mark in stylized form are clear indications of use for potentially illegal activity.

The Website prominently displayed the Trade Mark, without any disclaimer disclosing (the lack of) relationship between the Parties. The content of the Website was calculated to give the impression it has been authorized by or connected to the Complainant when this is not the case. The Website was set up to deliberately mislead Internet users into believing that it is connected to, authorised by, or affiliated with the Complainant. From the above, the Panel concludes that the Respondent has intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, by misleading Internet users into believing that the Respondent's Website was, and the services offered on it were those of or authorised or endorsed by the Complainant.

It is highly likely that Internet users when typing the disputed domain name into their browser or finding it through a search engine would have been looking for a site operated by the Complainant rather than the Respondent. The disputed domain name is likely to confuse Internet users trying to find the Complainant's official website. Such confusion will inevitably result due to the fact that the disputed domain name comprises the Trade Mark in its entirety.

The fact that the disputed domain name is now inactive does not prevent a finding of bad faith given that the distinctiveness of the Trade Mark, the composition of the disputed domain name and the lack of a formal response from the Respondent.

The Panel therefore finds that the disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith under paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

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 <blantonspicks.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Karen Fong/

Karen Fong

Sole Panelist

Date: September 2, 2025