

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

WhatsApp LLC v. Shoaib Ahmed

Case No. D2025-4231

1. The Parties

The Complainant is WhatsApp LLC, United States of America (“United States”), represented by Hogan Lovells (Paris) LLP, France.

The Respondent is Shoaib Ahmed, Germany.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <whatsappplus.org> is registered with Hosting Concepts B.V. d/b/a Registrar.eu. (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on October 15, 2025. On October 15, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On October 16, 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 (Whois Privacy Protection Foundation) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on October 16, 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 on October 20, 2025.

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 of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on October 27, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was November 16, 2025. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on November 17, 2025.

The Center appointed Erica Aoki as the sole panelist in this matter on November 24, 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 is the provider of one of the world's most widely used mobile messaging applications. Founded in 2009 and acquired by Meta Platforms, Inc. (formerly Facebook, Inc.) in 2014, WhatsApp allows users worldwide to exchange messages for free via smartphones, including iPhone and Android devices. Its main website, available at "www.whatsapp.com", also provides access to the WhatsApp messaging platform.

Since its launch, WhatsApp has become one of the fastest growing and most widely used mobile applications in the world, with well over 2.8 billion monthly active users as of January 2024. WhatsApp has acquired considerable global reputation and goodwill, consistently ranking among the top 25 free mobile applications on Google Play and the Apple App Store and appearing on TechRadar's lists of leading Android applications. According to Data.ai, WhatsApp is also among the most downloaded applications for iOS devices worldwide.

Reflecting its global presence, the Complainant owns numerous domain names containing the WHATSAPP trademark under a wide range of generic and country-code Top-Level Domains ("TLDs"). The Complainant has also developed a strong online presence through its official social-media channels. Its official Facebook page has over 45 million followers, its official X (formerly Twitter) account has 5.6 million followers, and the Complainant also maintains official channels on YouTube and LinkedIn.

The Complainant owns multiple trademark registrations for WHATSAPP worldwide, including

- United States Trademark Registration No. 3939463 (registered April 5, 2011),
- European Union Trade Mark Registration No. 009986514 (registered October 25, 2011), and
- International Trademark Registration No. 1085539 (registered May 24, 2011).

The Complainant also owns figurative trademark registrations for its telephone logo, including

- International Trademark Registration No. 1109890 (registered on January 10, 2012),
- European Union Trade Mark Registration No. 10496602 (registered on May 18, 2012).

The disputed domain name was registered on July 29, 2024 and it resolves to a Spanish-language website titled "WhatsApp Plus," which offers for download an unauthorized modified APK version of the WhatsApp application, promoted as providing additional features not available in the official app.

The website includes step-by-step installation guides, instructions on avoiding account bans, and a comparison table contrasting "WhatsApp Official" with the modified version. It also promotes other unauthorized versions such as "WhatsApp iPhone (Fouad iOS)," "YO WhatsApp," and "FM WhatsApp."

The homepage describes "WhatsApp Plus" as a modified version of the official app offering enhanced privacy controls, customization options, larger file-sharing capabilities, and additional functionalities. The website acknowledges that the use of such modified applications violates WhatsApp's Terms of Service, may lead to temporary or permanent account blocking, and may expose users to security risks such as malware and data breaches. It also notes that these modified versions are not available on official app stores and must be downloaded from third-party sources, including the Respondent's website.

The Respondent's website features modified versions of the Complainant's figurative telephone logo, including as a favicon. The site contains disclaimer-style statements noting that WhatsApp Plus is not affiliated with WhatsApp Inc, Meta, or Instagram, but such statements are displayed at the bottom of the page.

On September 12, 2025, the Complainant's counsel submitted a Registrar registrant contact form seeking to reach the Respondent. No response was received.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

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

First, the Complainant asserts that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to its WHATSAPP trademark. The domain name wholly incorporates the WHATSAPP mark and merely adds the term "plus," which does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity. The Complainant notes that WHATSAPP remains clearly recognizable within the disputed domain name, consistent with WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition, ("[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)"), sections 1.7 and 1.8. Prior UDRP panels have likewise held that the addition of the term "plus" to the WHATSAPP mark does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity. The Complainant therefore submits that paragraph 4(a)(i) of the Policy is satisfied.

Second, the Complainant submits that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The Respondent is not affiliated with the Complainant and has never been authorized or licensed to use the WHATSAPP trademark in any form. According to the Complainant, there is no evidence that the Respondent is commonly known by the disputed domain name or has acquired any trademark rights in "whatsappplus" or any similar term.

The Complainant states that the disputed domain name resolves to a website offering unauthorized modified APK version of the WhatsApp application. The website reproduces the Complainant's trademark and modified versions of its figurative telephone logo, mimics its branding and color scheme, and provides installation guides and instructions to circumvent account bans. The Complainant argues that such conduct does not constitute a bona fide offering of goods or services or any legitimate noncommercial use.

Rather, it misleads Internet users into believing the website is operated, endorsed, or supported by the Complainant. The Respondent's use also violates WhatsApp's Terms of Service, further confirming the absence of any rights or legitimate interests under paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Policy.

Third, the Complainant argues that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. The WHATSAPP trademark is inherently distinctive and globally well known, and the Respondent could not credibly have been unaware of it when registering the domain name. The content of the Respondent's website – its repeated references to WhatsApp, its use of modified versions of the Complainant's logo – demonstrates that the Respondent intentionally targeted the Complainant's mark.

The Complainant submits that the Respondent uses the disputed domain name to attract Internet users for commercial gain by creating a likelihood of confusion with the WHATSAPP trademark as to the source, affiliation, sponsorship, or endorsement of the website. The distribution of unauthorized modified APK version disrupts the Complainant's business, and exposes users to security and privacy risks. Such conduct, the Complainant contends, constitutes clear evidence of bad faith registration and use under paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

B. Respondent

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

6. Discussion and Findings

Under paragraph 4(a) of the Policy, the Complainant must prove:

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

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

It is well established that the first element under the Policy functions primarily as a standing requirement ([WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.7).

The Complainant has demonstrated trademark rights in the WHATSAPP trademark through multiple registrations in various jurisdictions, including, *inter alia*, the United States, the European Union.

The disputed domain name incorporates the Complainant's WHATSAPP trademark in its entirety. The only addition is the term "plus", placed immediately after the WHATSAPP mark, together with the ".org" generic TLD ("gTLD").

Panels have consistently held that the addition of a generic, descriptive, or other term to a complainant's trademark does not prevent the finding of confusing similarity where the mark remains clearly recognizable within the domain name ([WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.8).

In this case, the WHATSAPP trademark is readily recognizable within the disputed domain name. The addition of the term "plus" does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity. The ".org" gTLD is a technical registration requirement and does not affect the assessment of confusing similarity.

Accordingly, the Panel finds that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Complainant's WHATSAPP trademark.

The first element of paragraph 4(a) of the Policy is established.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

Under paragraph 4(c) of the Policy, a respondent may demonstrate rights or legitimate interests in a domain name by showing, for example, a bona fide offering of goods or services, being commonly known by the domain name, or making a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of it. Once a complainant establishes a *prima facie* case that the respondent lacks such rights, the burden shifts to the respondent to produce evidence to the contrary ([WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.1).

In this case, the Complainant has established a clear *prima facie* case that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The Respondent is not affiliated with the Complainant, has never been authorized, licensed, or otherwise permitted to use the WHATSAPP trademark, and there is no evidence that the Respondent is commonly known by the disputed domain name.

The evidence shows that the disputed domain name resolves to a website purporting to offer for download an unauthorized modified APK version of the WhatsApp application. The website prominently reproduces the Complainant's WHATSAPP trademark, displays modified versions of the Complainant's telephone logo, including as a favicon. The website further includes instructions on how to download and use a modified version of WhatsApp, "WhatsApp Plus", and provides guidance on avoiding account bans.

Such conduct cannot constitute a bona fide offering of goods or services within the meaning of paragraph 4(c)(i) of the Policy. UDRP panels consistently hold that the use of the Complainant's mark to promote unauthorized, unlicensed, or modified versions of a Complainant's software cannot give rise to rights or legitimate interests.

The composition of the disputed domain name, WHATSAPP plus the descriptive term "plus", itself triggers a false impression of affiliation, as noted in [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.5.1, since where a domain name contains a complainant's mark combined with a term related to its goods or services, such construction may tend to suggest sponsorship or endorsement by the trademark owner. This is particularly true here, where the Respondent's website explicitly markets its product as a modified or enhanced version of WhatsApp. The presence of a disclaimer does not render the Respondent's activities bona fide under the Policy in the circumstances of this case.

There is no evidence that the Respondent is commonly known by the disputed domain name within the meaning of paragraph 4(c)(ii). The Respondent registered the domain name through a privacy service, has provided no indication of identity, and has not come forward with any explanation or evidence of legitimate use.

Nor is the Respondent making any legitimate noncommercial or fair use under paragraph 4(c)(iii). The use of the disputed domain name to distribute unauthorized and potentially harmful APK files, accompanied by the use of the Complainant's trademark and a variation of its logo, demonstrates an intent to mislead users rather than any legitimate purpose.

Accordingly, the Panel concludes that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name.

The second element of paragraph 4(a) of the Policy is established.

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

To satisfy the third element under paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy, the Complainant must demonstrate that the disputed domain name was both registered and is used in bad faith. Paragraph 4(b) of the Policy provides non-exhaustive examples of bad-faith conduct, including intentionally attempting to attract Internet users for commercial gain by creating a likelihood of confusion with the complainant's trademark.

The evidence clearly establishes that the Respondent both registered and is using the disputed domain name in bad faith.

The WHATSAPP trademark has been used extensively since 2009 and is unquestionably well known worldwide. The Complainant's trademark registrations, as well as the Complainant's extensive and longstanding commercial use of the WHATSAPP mark for its global messaging service since 2009, all predate the registration of the disputed domain name in July 2024.

By the time the Respondent registered the disputed domain name on July 29, 2024, the Complainant had amassed billions of active users globally, maintained strong online and social-media visibility, and held numerous trademark registrations across jurisdictions.

The widespread recognition of the WHATSAPP trademark has been repeatedly affirmed by prior UDRP panels.

Given this global reputation of the WHATSAPP trademark, the Respondent could not plausibly have been unaware of the Complainant's rights when registering the disputed domain name.

The Respondent's subsequent conduct confirms this knowledge: the disputed domain name resolves to a website titled "WhatsApp Plus" that explicitly references WhatsApp, compares the modified APK version with the official WhatsApp application, and features modified versions of the Complainant's figurative telephone logo (including as a favicon).

This demonstrates clear targeting of the Complainant and supports an inference of bad faith.

The Respondent's website purports to offer for download unauthorized and modified APK version of the WhatsApp application "WhatsApp Plus". It provides instructions on how to download and use this modified application and even guidance on how to avoid being banned for violating WhatsApp's Terms of Service.

Panels consistently hold that using the Complainant's mark to promote unauthorized or modified versions of that Complainant's software constitutes bad faith under paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy because it reflects the Respondent's intention to intentionally attract users by creating a false impression of association, or endorsement.

The Complainant also notes that such unauthorized APK versions expose users to significant security risks, including malware and data breaches, and disrupt the Complainant's business by diverting users away from the official WhatsApp application.

Although the Respondent's website contains certain disclaimer-like statements, they are not prominently displayed and do not cure the overall misleading impression created by the domain name and website design. As panels consistently recognize, disclaimers might not cure bad faith where the domain name itself impersonates or suggests affiliation with the complainant.

The Respondent's use of a privacy service and its failure to respond to the Complainant's notice sent via Registrar contact request form reinforce the inference of bad faith.

Accordingly, the Panel concludes that the Respondent registered and is using the disputed domain name in bad faith.

The third element of the Policy is 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 <whatsappplus.org> be transferred to the Complainant.

*/Erica Aoki/
Erica Aoki
Sole Panelist
Date: December 2, 2025*