

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Next Retail Limited v. 郭星 (guoxing)

Case No. D2026-2664

1. The Parties

Complainant is Next Retail Limited, United Kingdom ("UK"), represented by Markmonitor, UK.

Respondent is 郭星 (guoxing), China.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <friendlikethese.com> (the "Domain Name") is registered with DNSPod, Inc. (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed in English with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on June 18, 2026. On June 19, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the Domain Name. On June 22, 2026, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the Domain Name which differed from the named Respondent (Redacted for Privacy) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to Complainant on June 23, 2026, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. Complainant filed an amended Complaint in English on June 24, 2026.

On June 23, 2026, the Center informed the Parties in Chinese and English, that the language of the Registration Agreement for the Domain Name is Chinese. On June 24, 2026, Complainant confirmed its request that English be the language of the proceeding. Respondent did not submit any comment on 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 Respondent in English and Chinese of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on June 26, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was July 16, 2026. Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified Respondent's default on July 17, 2026.

The Center appointed Kimberley Chen Nobles as the sole panelist in this matter on July 22, 2026. 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

Complainant, a company incorporated under the laws of England and Wales, is a fashion retailer, which operates an extensive network of retail stores throughout the UK and Ireland, and also has an international online presence. Complainant offers a broad range of clothing, footwear, accessories, and homeware under a number of brands, and uses its FRIENDS LIKE THESE mark as a sub-brand of its womenswear offering. The FRIENDS LIKE THESE products are sold through the Complainant's principal UK website at "www.next.co.uk/shop/brand-friendslikethese-0", through Complainant's international websites, and in Complainant's physical retail stores under the FRIENDS LIKE THESE branding.

Complainant owns several registered trademarks for the FRIENDS LIKE THESE mark across various jurisdictions, including:

- European Union registered trademark number 018424967 for the FRIENDS LIKE THESE word mark, registered on July 7, 2021; and
- UK registered trademark number UK00003608673 for the FRIENDS LIKE THESE word mark, registered on July 23, 2021.

The Domain Name was registered on February 21, 2025, and resolves to a website with what appears to be substantially AI-generated content regarding women's fashion products, offered through "Buy On Amazon" affiliate links under the Amazon Services LLC Associates Program. The website prominently featured a banner with "Friend Like These" headings and refer to Complainant's FRIENDS LIKE THESE trademarks and fashion brand throughout the site. The footer of the website features a disclaimer identifying the website as part of the Amazon Services LLC Associates Program, an affiliate advertising program, which is designed to provide for websites to earn advertising fees by advertising and linking to the Amazon.com site.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the Domain Name.

Notably, Complainant contends that (i) the Domain Name is confusingly similar to Complainant's trademark; (ii) Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name; and (iii) Respondent registered and is using the Domain Name in bad faith.

In particular, Complainant contends that it has trademark registrations and rights for FRIENDS LIKE THESE and that Respondent registered and is using the Domain Name, with the intention to confuse Internet users looking for bona fide and well-known FRIENDS LIKE THESE products.

Complainant notes that it has no affiliation with Respondent, nor authorized Respondent to register or use a domain name which includes Complainant's trademark, and that Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the registration and use of the Domain Name. Rather, Complainant contends that Respondent has acted in bad faith in acquiring and setting up the Domain Name, when Respondent clearly knew of Complainant's rights. Specifically, Complainant asserts that Respondent is attempting to create confusion by using Complainant's trademark, to attract users looking for Complainant's products to Respondent's website, which is monetized through "Buy On Amazon" affiliate links under the Amazon Services LLC Associates Program.

B. Respondent

Respondent did not reply to Complainant's contentions.

6. Discussion and Findings

6.1. Preliminary Issue: Language of the Proceedings

The Rules, in paragraph 11(a), provide that unless otherwise agreed by the parties or specified otherwise in the registration agreement between the respondent and the registrar in relation to the disputed domain name, the language of the proceedings shall be the language of the registration agreement, subject to the authority of the panel to determine otherwise, having regard to the circumstances of the administrative proceedings.

In its Complaint and amended Complaint, Complainant submitted its request that the language of the proceeding should be English. According to the information received from the Registrar, the language of the Registration Agreement for the Domain Name is Chinese. Respondent did not submit any comment on Complainant's submission.

Complainant submits that the Domain Name is a typographical variant of its English mark; that the Domain Name had been registered in the English ".com" Top-Level Domain ("TLD"), instead of a Chinese ".cn." TLD; that the Domain Name has no meaning in the Chinese language and the website to which the Domain Name resolves hosts content in English. Complainant also notes that its and its representative's working language is English, and it would be burdensome and costly, if Complainant is required to translate the Complaint into Chinese.

In exercising its discretion to use a language other than that of the Registration Agreement for the Domain Name, 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.

The Panel accepts Complainant's submissions regarding the language of the proceeding. The Panel also notes that the Domain Name is formed using Latin characters, and resolves to a website in English. The Panel further notes that the Center notified the Parties in Chinese and English of the language of the proceeding as well as notified Respondent in Chinese and English of the formal commencement of the proceeding. Respondent chose not to comment on the language of the proceeding, nor did Respondent choose to file a Response in Chinese or English, and that under paragraph 11(a) of the Rules, the Panel may determine the language of the proceeding having taken into consideration the totality of the circumstances.

Having considered all the circumstances of this case, the Panel determines that English be the language of the proceeding.

6.2. Substantive Issues

Under paragraph 4(a) of the Policy, to succeed Complainant must satisfy the Panel that:

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

Section 4.3 of the WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions (“[WIPO Overview 3.1](#)”) states that failure to respond to the complainant’s contentions would not by itself mean that the complainant is deemed to have prevailed; a respondent’s default is not necessarily an admission that the complainant’s claims are true.

Thus, although in this case Respondent has failed to respond to the Complaint, the burden remains with Complainant to establish the three elements of paragraph 4(a) of the Policy by a preponderance of the evidence.

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

Complainant has provided evidence of its rights in the FRIENDS LIKE THESE trademarks, as noted above. Complainant has therefore proven that it has the requisite rights in the FRIENDS LIKE THESE trademarks. Complainant’s FRIENDS LIKE THESE trademarks will hereinafter be referred to in the singular, as “the FRIENDS LIKE THESE trademark”.

With Complainant’s rights in the FRIENDS LIKE THESE trademark established, the remaining question under the first element of the Policy is whether the Domain Name, typically disregarding the TLD in which it was registered (in this case, “.com”), is identical or confusingly similar to Complainant’s trademark. See, e.g., *B & H Foto & Electronics Corp. v. Domains by Proxy, Inc. / Joseph Gross*, WIPO Case No. [D2010-0842](#).

Here, the Domain Name is confusingly similar to Complainant’s FRIENDS LIKE THESE trademark. The FRIENDS LIKE THESE trademark is recognizable in the Domain Name.

The absence of an “s” after “friend” in the Domain Name does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the Domain Name and the FRIENDS LIKE THESE trademark. See section 1.9 of the [WIPO Overview 3.1](#).

Thus, the Panel finds that Complainant has satisfied the first element of the Policy.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

Under paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Policy, a complainant must make a prima facie showing that a respondent possesses no rights or legitimate interests in a disputed domain name. Once a complainant makes such a prima facie showing, the burden of production shifts to the respondent, though the burden of proof always remains on the complainant. If the respondent fails to come forward with relevant evidence showing rights or legitimate interests, the complainant will have sustained its burden under the second element of the UDRP. See section 2.1 of the [WIPO Overview 3.1](#).

From the record in this case, it is evident that Respondent was, and is, aware of Complainant and its FRIENDS LIKE THESE trademark and does not have any rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name. Complainant has confirmed that Respondent is not affiliated with Complainant, or otherwise authorized or licensed to use the FRIENDS LIKE THESE trademark or to seek registration of any domain name

incorporating the trademark. Respondent is also not known to be associated with the FRIENDS LIKE THESE trademark and there is no evidence showing that Respondent has been commonly known by the Domain Name.

The composition of the Domain Name is an attempt in typosquatting, whereby the Domain Name is intended to confuse Internet users into believing that the Domain Name belongs to Complainant. See e.g., *Debevoise & Plimpton LLP v. Keyword Marketing, Inc. / Web Advertising, Corp.*, WIPO Case No. [D2007-1679](#) (explaining “typosquatting” is “a form of cybersquatting in which a respondent registers and uses a domain name in order to take advantage of typographical errors made by Internet users seeking the complainant’s commercial website”). In the current case, the Domain Name’s inclusion of Complainant’s trademark in its entirety, with the absence of the letter “s” after “friend” in the Domain Name as discussed above, is clearly an attempt in typosquatting.

In addition, Respondent has not used the Domain Name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services or a legitimate noncommercial or fair use. The Panel notes, in accordance with section 4.8 of the [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), that the Domain Name redirects to a website consisting substantially what appears to be AI-generated content about women’s fashion, monetized through “Buy On Amazon” affiliate links under the Amazon Services LLC Associates Program, as discussed above. While the Domain Name is the misspelt version of Complainant’s trademark, the website prominently featured a banner with Complainant’s FRIENDS LIKE THESE trademark as headings and refer to Complainant’s FRIENDS LIKE THESE trademark throughout the site.

Accordingly, Complainant has provided evidence supporting its prima facie showing that Respondent lacks any rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name. Respondent has failed to produce countervailing evidence of any rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name. Thus, the Panel concludes that Respondent does not have any rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name and Complainant has met its burden under paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Policy.

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

The Panel finds that Respondent’s actions indicate that Respondent registered and is using the Domain Name in bad faith.

Paragraph 4(b) of the Policy provides a non-exhaustive list of circumstances indicating bad faith registration and use on the part of a respondent, namely:

“(i) circumstances indicating that you have registered or you have acquired the domain name primarily for the purpose of selling, renting, or otherwise transferring the domain name registration to the complainant who is the owner of the trademark or service mark or to a competitor of that complainant, for valuable consideration in excess of your documented out-of-pocket costs directly related to the domain name; or

(ii) you have registered the domain name in order to prevent the owner of the trademark or service mark from reflecting the mark in a corresponding domain name, provided that you have engaged in a pattern of such conduct; or

(iii) you have registered the domain name primarily for the purpose of disrupting the business of a competitor; or

(iv) by using the domain name, you have intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to your website or other online location, by creating a likelihood of confusion with the complainant’s mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of your website or location or of a product or service on your website or location.”

The Panel finds that Complainant has provided ample evidence to show that registration and use of the FRIENDS LIKE THESE trademark predate the registration of the Domain Name. Complainant is also well established and known; indeed, the record shows that Complainant's FRIENDS LIKE THESE trademark and related products are known and recognized for purposes of the Policy. Therefore, and also noting the use analysis below, Respondent was clearly aware of the FRIENDS LIKE THESE trademark when it registered the Domain Name.

The Panel therefore finds that Respondent's awareness of Complainant's trademark rights at the time of registration suggests bad faith. See *Red Bull GmbH v. Credit du Léman SA, Jean-Denis Deletraz*, WIPO Case No. [D2011-2209](#); *Nintendo of America Inc v. Marco Beijen, Beijen Consulting, Pokemon Fan Clubs Org., and Pokemon Fans Unite*, WIPO Case No. [D2001-1070](#); and *BellSouth Intellectual Property Corporation v. Serena, Axel*, WIPO Case No. [D2006-0007](#).

Moreover, the Domain Name's inclusion of Complainant's trademark in its entirety, with the absence of the letter "s" after "friend" in the Domain Name as discussed above, is clearly an attempt in typosquatting, whereby the Domain Name is intended to confuse Internet users into believing that the Domain Name belongs to Complainant. Such adoption of Complainant's trademark at the time of registration of the Domain Name is a common tactic for potential fraudulent schemes, where individuals seek to pass themselves off as companies or entities in the hopes of seeking an advantage, from current or potential clients of those companies or entities. See, e.g., *Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, LLP v. Jason Leonardo*, WIPO Case No. [D2025- 2989](#); *Latham & Watkins LLP v. Name Redacted*, WIPO Case No. [D2021-2877](#); and *Ropes & Gray LLP v. matthew rolland, ropes gray*, WIPO Case No. [D2023 0288](#).

In addition, Respondent's use of the Domain Name, as discussed above, is not in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services or a legitimate noncommercial or fair use. Respondent's website also prompts users to "[s]ubscribe and get [a] discount", by requesting users to send their email and sign up. In particular, the website further features a "Trending Products" section in which products are linked through "Buy On Amazon" buttons, along with Customer Reviews, Blogs & News, and FAQ sections.

UDRP panels have consistently held that a respondent's use of a domain name to trade off goodwill in a complainant's well-known trademark, as here, constitutes bad faith. See *Philip Morris Products S.A. v. homn mohmoodi*, WIPO Case No. [D2022-4158](#). Moreover, such use of the Domain Name may potentially result in tarnishing Complainant's reputation and goodwill.

Finally, the Panel also notes the failure of Respondent to submit a Response and considers such factor further supports Respondent's registration and use constitutes bad faith.

In the present circumstances, considering the reputation of the FRIENDS LIKE THESE trademark, and the composition and use of the Domain Name, the Panel finds that Respondent registered and is using the Domain Name in bad faith pursuant to paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

Therefore, the Panel finds that Complainant succeeds under the third element of paragraph 4(a) 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 Domain Name <friendlikethese.com> be transferred to Complainant.

/Kimberley Chen Nobles/

Kimberley Chen Nobles

Sole Panelist

Date: August 4, 2026