

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Webflow, Inc. v. Kingsley Emeka Chimezie
Case No. DIE2025-0004

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Webflow, Inc., United States of America, represented by Markmonitor, United States of America.

The Respondent is Kingsley Emeka Chimezie, Ireland, self-represented.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <webflow.ie> is registered with IE Domain Registry Limited ("IEDR").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on July 7, 2025, via email. On July 8, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to IEDR a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On July 9, 2025, IEDR 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 and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on July 10, 2025, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by IEDR, and inviting the Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint on July 11, 2025.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amended Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the .IE Dispute Resolution Policy (the "IEDR Policy"), the WIPO Dispute Resolution Rules of Procedure for .IE Domain Name Registrations (the "Rules"), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for .IE Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the "Supplemental Rules").

In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2.1 and 4.1, the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceeding commenced on July 23, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5.1, the due date for Response was August 21, 2025. The Response was filed on August 19, 2025.

The Center appointed Alistair Payne as the sole panelist in this matter on August 27, 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.

The Complainant made a Supplemental Filing on September 2, 2025, and the Respondent made a Supplemental Filing in response on September 5, 2025.

4. Factual Background

The Complainant based in San Francisco has since 2013 offered website build, management and optimization services as well as more than 7,000 free website templates and solutions as website building platforms for use, in particular, by professional website designers. It has more than 600 team members and more than 3.5 million users. The Complainant's WEBFLOW business has been recognised for five consecutive years by Forbes magazine and was first included in the Forbes Cloud 100 list of the top private cloud computing companies ("the Forbes List") in September 2020.

The Complainant owns various trade mark registrations worldwide for its WEBFLOW trade mark including European Union trade mark registration number 012489977 registered on March 31, 2017, and United States of America trade mark registration number 5312448 registered on October 17, 2017. It also owns the domain names <webflow.com>, <webflow.net>, <webflow.org>, and <webflow.io> and has done so for some years prior to its trade mark registrations.

The Respondent, based in Ireland, is a self-employed freelance website developer and website designer who offers its professional services online through "Kingsley Media Productions" to members of the public. Based on Whois records, the disputed domain name was registered on November 5, 2020. Up until the filing and service of this Complaint, the disputed domain name re-directed to the Respondent's domain name <kingsley.ie> at which the Respondent and Kingsley Media Productions promote their design and development services.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant submits that it owns registered trade mark rights for its WEBFLOW mark as set out above and therefore has a protected identifier under the terms of the IEDR Policy. It says that the disputed domain name wholly incorporates its protected identifier and that the disputed domain name is therefore identical to it in terms of paragraph 1.1.1 of the IEDR Policy.

The Complainant asserts that the Respondent is not affiliated with it and has not been authorised to use its WEBFLOW mark. It says that the Respondent has not demonstrated use or demonstrable preparations to make a bona fide offering of goods or services. It says that the Respondent is instead using the disputed domain name in a misleading or deceptive manner to re-direct Internet users to a website from which the Respondent offers services similar to the Complainant's, but without using any relevant disclaimer. The Complainant notes that the website at the disputed domain name was not hidden from public view by a hard cookie consent barrier as visitors simply had to hit "OK" when the cookie consent barrier came up as they had no alternative option other than not to proceed to the website at all. This conduct, says the Complainant, is not a bona fide use of the disputed domain name and is not a legitimate non-commercial or fair use.

As far as registration in bad faith is concerned the Complainant submits that the disputed domain name was registered on November 5, 2020, long after the registration of its trade mark for its distinctive WEBFLOW mark which covers Ireland and just after its WEBFLOW business was first included in the Forbes Cloud 100 list in September 2020. It says that as a professional self-employed developer and designer of websites who publicly offered his services online on various platforms, that the Respondent was, or at least should have

been, aware of the Complainant's well known website building platform at the time of registration of the disputed domain name because of the degree of renown attaching to the WEBFLOW mark and business by that time. It says that the Respondent most likely chose to register the disputed domain name in order to re-direct Internet users looking for the Complainant's business to the Respondent's page offering similar commercial web development and design services in order to unfairly take advantage of the goodwill attaching to the Complainant's mark and to prevent the Complainant from registering a corresponding domain name in the ".ie" domain name space. The Complainant notes that as implausible as it may be, even if the Respondent had not been aware of its business and mark at the date of registration of the disputed domain name, that a simple Google search using "webflow" would have revealed its webpage and many references to it on the first search page.

As far as use in bad faith is concerned, the Complainant's core contention is that the Respondent has used the disputed domain name to re-direct Internet users to a website at the domain name <kingsley.ie> at which a packages of services similar to the Complainant's are offered for amounts ranging from EUR 499 to EUR 1,800. The Complainant submits that this amounts to intentionally attempting to attract Internet users to a website or online location by creating confusion with a protected identifier in which the Complainant has rights in terms of paragraph 2.1.4 of the IEDR Policy or diluting the reputation of the Complainant's mark in terms of paragraph 2.1.5 of the IEDR Policy. Further, it says that the use of Mail Exchange ("MX") records and of a privacy service are further indicators of bad faith.

B. Respondent

The Respondent says that the disputed domain name has been owned by him since January 4, 2020. The Respondent says that he originally registered it with the intention of supporting personal and internal technical projects, including testing APIs, AI integrations, and local server flow – hence the descriptive name "webflow". The Respondent asserts that the disputed domain name is based on two common, generic words ("web" and "flow") and was selected independently of any reference to the Complainant's platform. The Respondent says that there has been no active website hosted at the disputed domain name while confirming that at one point, a re-direct was configured to his main site at the domain name <kingsley.ie>. The Respondent says that this page is a static landing page that has remained largely dormant since 2019 and which returns a 503 Service Unavailable status – meaning no content is visible to the public. The Respondent says that even when this website is live, it is intentionally minimal. The Respondent notes that the site includes a full-screen hard cookie consent gate that prevents access to any content unless the user explicitly accepts to enter the site and that the underlying content remains completely hidden until a user clicks "OK". The Respondent says that he implemented this to ensure that only genuinely interested users proceed to the website. The Respondent further notes that the content shown is extremely limited and was never designed or optimised to profit from traffic or visibility. The Respondent says that he was unaware that the re-direct was still active until the Respondent received notice of this claim at which point he removed it.

The Respondent says that he is not and has never been engaged in commercial activity using the disputed domain name. The Respondent notes that he is a self-employed developer with minimal public-facing projects and says that since 2020, he has only completed a small number of personal or freelance projects for friends and local contacts and that there has been no advertising, monetisation, brand confusion, or SEO targeting related to the Complainant. The Respondent alleges he has not profited or intended to profit from the Complainant's goodwill and says that he can provide financial records demonstrating that no revenue or traffic has ever been generated through the disputed domain name and that there is no email activity or lead generation associated with the disputed domain name.

The Respondent says that he has no history of domain name squatting, parking, or reselling and that every domain name that he owns is either for personal use, family, or for his legitimate business. The Respondent notes that it is standard practice for him to re-direct newly registered domain names to his main websites and notes that the re-direct in this case was an old forgotten set-up that he removed immediately after notification. The Respondent asserts that the disputed domain name does not attract traffic one would deem "high" or "profitable". The Respondent notes that in the last 30 days, the disputed domain name had only

855 unique visits – the lowest traffic of any of his domain names. The Respondent says he has never attempted to impersonate the Complainant or to market under the Complainant's WEBFLOW brand.

Further, the Respondent asserts that MX records is not necessarily indicative of phishing and that the use of a privacy shield is something he opted into automatically with the Registry and has not actively sought to conceal his conduct. The Respondent asserts that using the disputed domain name in a quiet non-commercial manner is not out of the ordinary or harmful and that the Complainant never approached him commercially in advance of filing this Complaint and that he should not be "steamrolled" after almost half a decade of quiet non-commercial use.

6. Discussion and Findings

The Panel exercises its discretion to admit the Supplemental Filings of the Complainant and of the Respondent to the proceedings on the basis that these filings address certain issues relevant to the case and not otherwise addressed in the main pleadings.

A. Identical or Misleadingly Similar to a protected identifier in which the Complainant has rights

Under the IEDR Policy, "protected identifiers" include "trade and service marks protected in the island of Ireland". The Complainant owns registered trade mark rights in the European Union for its WEBFLOW mark as set out above, being a protected identifier under the Policy. The disputed domain name wholly incorporates this protected identifier and has no other element before the country code Top-Level Domain element ".ie".

The Panel therefore finds that the disputed domain name is identical to the protected identifier and that the Complaint succeeds under paragraph 1.1.1 of the IEDR Policy.

B. Rights in Law or Legitimate Interests

The Complainant has asserted that the Respondent is not affiliated with it and has not been authorised to use its WEBFLOW mark. It has submitted that the Respondent has not demonstrated use or demonstrable preparations to make a bona fide offering of goods or services. It has also submitted that the Respondent is instead using the disputed domain name in a misleading or deceptive manner to re-direct Internet users to a website from which the Respondent offers services similar to the Complainant's, but without using any relevant disclaimer. The Complainant has noted that the website at the disputed domain name was not hidden from public view by a hard cookie consent barrier as visitors simply had to hit "OK" when the cookie consent barrier came up and had no alternative option, other than not proceeding to the website at all. The Complainant has asserted that this conduct is not a bona fide use of the disputed domain name and is not a legitimate non-commercial or fair use of the disputed domain name.

The Panel finds that the Complainant has made out a prima facie case that the Respondent has no rights in law or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name which has not been rebutted by the Respondent.

The Respondent admits that he is a website developer. The evidence of the Respondent's various business related social media pages advertising the services provided by him under the name "Kingsley Media Productions" suggest that the Respondent appears to be quite active in the area and was actively promoting his services contrary to the assertions in the Response. The domain name <kingsley.ie> is referenced on a number of those social media pages and it appears to the Panel as if it is being presented on those pages as the Respondent's main commercial website.

The disputed domain name was registered according to the Whois records on November 5, 2020 (and not on January 4, 2020, as maintained by the Respondent) around seven years after the Complaint commenced its WEBFLOW business and some months after the Complainant, which by then appears to have had an established reputation internationally under its WEBFLOW mark by that time, was first included in the Forbes

List in September 2020.

The Complainant's products and services are aimed, in particular, at freelance developers such as the Respondent. Considering that the Respondent appears to have been working as a freelance website developer at the date of registration of the disputed domain name and that the Complainant's WEBFLOW business was obviously so well reputed internationally by then that it was included in the Forbes List, it would seem very surprising indeed if the Respondent had not been aware of the WEBFLOW mark and business at that date.

It is instructive that nowhere in the Response or the Respondent's Supplemental Filing does the Respondent categorically assert that he was not aware of the Complainant's WEBFLOW mark and business at the date of disputed domain name registration. Further, although the Respondent asserts that he has never used the Complainant's mark commercially and that he has not profited or intended to profit from the Complainant's goodwill, in the Panel's view this assertion is not, at least in part, supported by the evidence. The evidence suggests and the Respondent has confirmed that, until notification of the Complaint, the disputed domain name re-directed to the website at the domain name <kingsley.ie>. Although there does appear to have been a hard cookie consent barrier in place, all an Internet user had to do was click "OK" to be admitted to the Respondent's website. Once there and based on the screen shots put in evidence by the Complainant, it becomes clear that the Respondent was offering commercial website design and developments services, even if the website is relatively static and undeveloped. Based on the Respondent's own evidence, even in the last 30 days his website re-directed 855 Internet users to his website at the domain name <kingsley.ie>. As the Respondent has himself confirmed, he has had no active business under the "webflow" name or mark or at the disputed domain name which suggests that even in the last month, 855 Internet users searching for the Complainant's website were confused into visiting the disputed domain name and being re-directed to the Respondent's website which promotes, albeit in a fairly static and minimalist manner, the competing services offered by the Respondent under the "Kingsley Media Productions" brand. The Panel infers that, as suggested by the "coming soon" banner at the top of the website, that the Respondent has, or at some point had, an intention to develop this website further for his own commercial purposes.

This conduct is clearly not bona fide or non-commercial and is inconsistent with the Respondent having rights in law or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name under paragraph 1.1.2 of the IEDR Policy. As a result, the Panel finds that the Respondent has not rebutted the prima facie case made out by the Complainant and that Complaint also succeeds under this element of the IEDR Policy.

C. Registered or Used in Bad Faith

Under paragraph 1.1.3 of the IEDR Policy the Complainant must demonstrate that the disputed domain name has been registered or used in bad faith.

As noted above, the disputed domain name was registered according to the Whois records on November 5, 2020 (and not on January 4, 2020 as maintained by the Respondent) seven years after the Complainant commenced its WEBFLOW business and some months after the Complainant, which by then appears to have had an established reputation internationally under its WEBFLOW mark, was first included in the Forbes List in September 2020.

As also noted above, the Complainant's products and services are aimed, in particular, at freelance developers such as the Respondent. Considering that the Respondent appears to have been working as a freelance website developer at the date of registration of the disputed domain name and that the Complainant's WEBFLOW business was obviously so well reputed internationally by then that it was included in the Forbes List, it would seem very surprising indeed if the Respondent based in Ireland had not been aware of the WEBFLOW business and mark at that date. The Panel therefore infers that it is more likely than not that the Respondent was aware of the Complainant's protected identifier at the date of registration of the disputed domain name and registered the disputed domain name with this knowledge.

Even if, for the sake of argument, the Panel were to accept the Respondent's assertion that he registered the disputed domain name in January 2020, the Panel considers it more likely than not that the Respondent would have been aware of the Complainant, its well-established mark, and its business at that time. The Complainant's WEBFLOW mark was already widely known by early 2020, particularly within the specific commercial sector in which both parties operate. Given the Respondent's profession, it is implausible that the Respondent would not have encountered or known of the Complainant's WEBFLOW business and mark when selecting and registering the disputed domain name. The Panel therefore finds that, regardless of the precise registration date, the Respondent's choice of domain name cannot reasonably be regarded as coincidental but instead indicates awareness of and an intent to take unfair advantage of the Complainant's mark.

Under paragraph 2.1.4 of the IEDR Policy there is evidence of registration or use of the disputed domain name in bad faith where the respondent has, through its use of the domain name, intentionally attempted to attract Internet users to a website or other online location by creating confusion with a protected identifier in which the complainant has rights.

It appears in this case and as described under Part B above, that the Respondent has used the disputed domain name containing the very well reputed WEBFLOW mark to intentionally re-direct Internet users to his website at the domain name <kingsley.ie> by confusing them into assuming that they would be diverted to the Complainant's website. As described under Part B above, once Internet users arrived at the Respondent's website it is apparent that they would see that the Respondent was offering similar or competing services under his Kingsley Media Productions brand. This conduct fulfills the requirements of paragraph 2.1.4 of the IEDR Policy and amounts to evidence of registration or use in bad faith.

Accordingly, the Panel finds that there is evidence both of registration and of use of the disputed domain name in bad faith and the Complaint succeeds under paragraph 1.1.3 of the IEDR Policy.

7. Decision

For all the foregoing reasons, in accordance with paragraphs 5 of the IEDR Policy and 14 of the Rules, the Panel orders that the disputed domain name <webflow.ie> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Alistair Payne/

Alistair Payne

Sole Panelist

Dated: September 16, 2025