

Business Review



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+ Protect your business from triple-X lookalikes

Your business may be threatened by adult industry doppelgangers starting next year — but there are options to thwart their amorously themed existence.

Doug McDonald, a Tampa-area attorney specializing in intellectual property, tells Coffee Talk that changes in rules policing Web addresses will make it possible to purchase domain names that are nearly identical to names that already exist. “This leaves firms at risk of misrepresentation on search engines,” says McDonald.

For example, customers searching by company name could get search results that appear to lead to the company’s web-

site — only one with a “.xxx” domain leads to an adult website.

ICN Registry, the firm that will begin selling domain names that end with .xxx in 2012, has offered reprieve to companies worried about inappropriate association online. A 52-day grace period — starting Sept. 7 — has been allotted to allow individuals and businesses outside of the adult industry to put a block the sale of URLs that bear their trademarked name for a \$199 fee.

But there are other routes firms can take to protect their name, says **Josh Green**, who works for the Tampa-based marketing firm **Local Directive**. He explains that businesses can purchase a .xxx domain name instead and “park” it or have it redirect to their official website. Parking involves allowing ICN to place advertisements on the Web address, but does not control for content. And redirection can still leave a curious customer anxious about trusting a company with a dubious Web address in addition to their official website. And of course, a lawsuit could be filed against the perpetrator if the name in question is trademarked.

Whichever route a firm decides to take, Green asserts that now is the time to take action.