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CADNA's London Forum: Curbing International Domain Name Abuses

Jonathan Zittrain of Oxford University Delivers Keynote

WASHINGTON, June 10, 2008 - This past Thursday, the Coalition Against Domain Name Abuse (CADNA) held its London Online Brand Abuses and Internet Governance Education Forum. Broad in its geographical scope, the forum welcomed companies from the US, UK, Belgium, Netherlands and Switzerland, with half of the attendees representing Global 500 companies. These attendees came together because of concerns over issues such as online brand dilution and the often-ineffective governance of ICANN. This was the first of two international Online Brand Abuses & Internet Governance Education Forums to be hosted by CADNA, both aimed at creating a global network of brand owners in order to share the latest in proactive, reactive and preventative domain name strategies.

Today there are over 1.4 billion Internet users, and online advertising is projected to grow to over \$80 billion in the next 3 years. The Internet makes it easy for brands to move into new markets, but unfortunately criminals enjoy the same perks- inexpensive and easy access to services and consumers. This forum brought together brands from across the globe to share collective knowledge, experiences and strategies for combating brand infringement, harmful diversion, phishing and other online abuses such as counterfeiting. With the high margins posted by online criminals—many cybersquatted domains that are simply used to post sponsored advertisements produce \$10,000 per year and cost just \$10 to maintain—it is clear that this form of online abuse needs attention. CADNA forums open avenues for communication and cooperation between brand owners so that they can have a collective voice with which to effectively protest these practices.

The keynote speaker at this CADNA-hosted event was Dr. Jonathan Zittrain, Chair in Internet Governance and Regulation at Oxford University, principal of the Oxford Internet Institute and a Berkman Visiting Professor for Entrepreneurial Legal Studies at Harvard Law School, where he co-founded Harvard Law School's Berkman Center for Internet & Society. Dr. Zittrain's presentation reviewed the evolution of the Internet from an open, simple, and informal environment to a structured corporation. He argued that this evolution came about because of entrepreneurial, technical and regulatory opportunities that the Internet provided, and was dictated by the individuals at the helm of ICANN, who often took decisive positions on a piecemeal basis, without a holistic understanding of the Internet landscape that they were creating.

Also among the speakers was Martin Sutton, a representative for prominent CADNA member HSBC. HSBC represents the type of global company that can contribute to and benefit from an international coalition aimed at raising awareness and combating online abuse. "The Internet is young, and online abuse will continue to occur," said Sutton. "It is key to have an effective strategy and policy, as well as the type of industry collaboration that CADNA offers, in order to protect brands and consumers." Member representatives of Bacardi & Company Limited and DIRECTV, Inc. also shared their views on domain name system challenges and solutions.

CADNA's education forums are hosted to provide brand owners with the knowledge they need to take full advantage of the name space and reduce brand abuses. The second international forum will be held in Paris on June 25, and will continue the discussion on the importance of an international business coalition and the possibilities of cooperative enforcement options for brand owners. Featured speakers at the Paris Forum will include Frederick Mostert of Richemont, David Roache-Turner of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and Sylvain Hirsch of Paris-based IP Twins.

The Coalition Against Domain Name Abuse ("CADNA") is a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization dedicated to ending the systemic domain name abuses that plague the Internet today. Its members include the following global corporations: American International Group, Inc.; Bacardi & Company Limited; Compagnie Financière Richemont SA; Dell Inc.; DIRECTV, Inc.; Eli Lilly and Company; Hilton Hotels Corporation; HSBC Holdings plc; Marriott International, Inc.; Verizon Communications Inc.; and Wyndham Worldwide Corporation. For more information, please visit www.cadna.org.

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