

Extension announced for '.xxx' sunrise

Brand owners are being given an extra 20 days to opt into the ICM Registry Sunrise B trademark protection programme for the '.xxx' top-level domain (TLD). Originally scheduled to last for 30 days, the sunrise will now run for a total of 50 days from September 7, finishing on October 28.

For a one-off fee of up to \$300, brand owners can block an eligible trademark term in the '.xxx' space.

The scheme essentially prevents their trademarks or terms from being registered as an '.xxx' domain, resolving instead to a notice to the effect that the name is not available for registration. In addition, the ICM Registry name will appear in the Whois database.

This levy is set against a potential charge of up to \$1,500 to access ICM's rapid takedown service and dispute resolution policy in the event that a protected term is registered and misused in the new domain.

ICM chief executive Stuart Lawley (pictured) said: "We wanted to take an innovative approach to the launch of '.xxx'

and show best practice at all stages, including investing in a global awareness campaign. ICM Registry believes in consumer choice, and while we believe that '.xxx' will satisfy the needs of the sponsored community, we recognise there is also an audience who would like to opt out and safeguard their intellectual property prior to the domain going live."

Fred Felman, chief marketing officer at MarkMonitor, says that ICM had been "creative" in its approach to brand protection, but notes that the burden remains on brand owners to protect their rights: "Sadly there are very few ideal venues for brands in the online world, so the burden of brand protection falls solidly on the brand owner themselves almost everywhere in the Internet, including '.xxx'."

Requisite trademark rights validation is being offered by start-up Trademark Fact Check to safeguard against errors – which ICM says cannot be rectified after submission.

A statement issued by the firm, comprising former



Stuart Lawley, chief executive, ICM Registry

Thomson Reuters and NetNames executives, said that it will utilise automated fact-checking technology mirroring the validation checks performed for the '.xxx' sunrise: "It determines eligibility and detects conflicts between government trademark offices and '.xxx' sunrise applications before fees are incurred."

As WTR went to press, UK web host Easyspace said that

interest in '.xxx' domains showed just one in five potential registrants from the sponsored community.

The remaining 80% – based on the few hundred potential clients who had expressed interest – sought to protect established brands only.

To break even, ICM chief executive Stuart Lawley said that the organisation needs 10,000 Sunrise B sign-ups.