

In their own words

Trademark-related quotes, opinions and observations from around the globe

“This is going to be an exciting year for the global trademark community. Trademarks play such an important role in our lives. As shown in the 2013 Brand Report published by the World Intellectual Property Organization, consumers rely on trademarks to shop with confidence. Globalization and the Internet are enabling brands to reach more consumers in more places, and the need for legal protection of trademarks—for both brand owners and consumers—has never been greater. This year we will endeavor to enhance and expand our relationships with all stakeholders in IP, especially among governments and government agencies, trade associations, bar associations, and other external constituencies, so that the societal value of trademarks is understood far and wide.”

Mei-Lan Stark of Fox Entertainment Group takes up her position as 2014 president of the International Trademark Association and chair of its board of directors (January 2)

“Michelle Lee has proven herself to be a tremendous asset to the USPTO and the Department of Commerce. She has a great mix of skills and experiences to assume this leadership position during a time when the administration is deeply focused on strengthening the nation’s intellectual property system. And her years of working in the IP community, both in the private and public sectors, will support the key focus on innovation and the digital economy in the Commerce Department’s new ‘Open for Business’ policy agenda.”

US Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker announces that Michelle K Lee has taken up the role of deputy director of the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) and leader of the USPTO’s Silicon Valley satellite office (January 13)

“My immediate reaction to the news that Michelle Lee is to become deputy director of the USPTO on January 13 2014 was: why not director and why now? Lee, the former head of patents and patent strategy at Google, has been in charge of the USPTO’s satellite office in Silicon Valley since it was

established in 2012. She was also being mentioned as a candidate for the top job at the agency almost as soon as David Kappos announced that he was standing down last year. It’s not as if she has been hidden away waiting to be discovered: everyone has known about her for a very long time... What is interesting about the deputy job, though, is that while the post holder runs the office in the absence of a permanent director, she does not have to be approved by legislators. Had Lee been appointed director now or any time earlier, she would have had to have gone in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee, which would then have had to have decided whether to forward her nomination to the full Senate for a final vote of approval. It’s inconceivable that this was not fully known to everyone involved in the process of putting Lee in place. Thus, it is hard to escape the conclusion that a principal driving force behind making her deputy director and not director is that the Obama administration wanted to avoid legislative scrutiny of her appointment. If that is the case, the question then is why?”

Joff Wild, editor of *Intellectual Asset Management*, responds to news of Lee’s appointment (December 12)

“The campaign forms part of a larger awareness-raising initiative on transnational organised crime which UNODC launched in mid-2012. This looked at several elements, including illicit drugs, human trafficking, migrant smuggling, wildlife crime and counterfeiting. Since then, we have been expanding these individual aspects to go deeper into the issue, with counterfeiting the latest area to be covered. The new campaign will be publicised for the next four to six months in various forms, and we are receiving strong support from national and international television broadcasters, who are interested in airing the public service announcement – and with the power of social media, it is expected that this will be pushed out through to mid-2014.”

Alun Jones, chief of communication and advocacy at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, speaks to *World Trademark Review* ahead of the launch of its new anti-counterfeit campaign (January 14)

“We removed more than 350 million bad ads from our systems in 2013. To put that in perspective, if someone looked at each of these for one second, it would take them more than 10 years to see them all. This was a significant increase from approximately 220 million ads removed in 2012. This trend has been consistent in the last several years and we attribute it to several factors, including the growth of online advertising overall and constant improvement of our detection systems. The number of advertisers we disabled, however, dropped from over 850,000 in 2012 to more than 270,000 in 2013. In part, we attribute this decline to scammers – counterfeiters, for example – being thwarted by our safety screens and searching for less-secure targets.”

Mike Hochberg, director of ads engineering at Google, details the search engine giant’s takedown statistics for 2013 (January 17)

“By adding the word ‘dumb’, we are legally allowed to use the coveted Starbucks name and logo, as we will have fulfilled the minimal requirements to be considered a parody under US law... Many of you know me as a comedian, but this is no joke – this is a real business I plan to get rich from. But I need your support. Our flagship store is located at 1802 Hillhurst Avenue in Los Angeles, California. Come in and get a free coffee on me – just say Nathan sent you!”

After a weekend of speculation about the appearance of a ‘Dumb Starbucks’, using the coffee chain’s brand and store appearance, comedian and ‘Dumb Starbucks president’ Nathan Fielder expanded on the legitimacy of the business. Hours later the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health shut down the coffee shop for operating without a valid public health permit (February 10)