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BT 462535

INDRA ARBITRATION

34 COMPANY

V.

GODINATY GOSWAMI

DISPUTED DOMAIN NAME

- WWW. tegadeum. in

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INDRP ARBITRATION THE NATIONAL INTERNET EXCHANGE OF INDIA [NIXI]

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION SOLE ARBITRATOR: RODNEY D. RYDER

3M Company

٧.

Mr. Gopinath Goswami

ARBITRATION AWARD

Disputed Domain Name: www.tegaderm.in

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The Parties

The **Complainant** in this arbitration proceeding is 3M Company, a diversified technology company serving customers and communities worldwide with innovative products and services. 3M's products include adhesives, abrasives, laminates, passive fire protection, dental products, electronic materials, medical products, car-care products, electronic circuits, optical films, and more. Its principle office is at 220-9E-01 3M Centre, 2501 Hudson Road, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55144, USA.

The **Respondent** in this arbitration proceeding is Mr. Gopinath Goswami, located at LeBon Impex Private Limited, 401 Deepa Block, Chitra Avenue, 9 Choolaimedu High Road, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India, as per the details given by the Whois database maintained by the National Internet Exchange of India [NIXI].

The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed Domain name is www.tegaderm.in. The Registrar with which the disputed domain name is registered is GoDaddy.com, LLC (R101-AFIN) located at 14455 N Hayden Rd Suite 219, Scottsdale, Arizona 85260, United States and is an accredited Registrar who is authorized to register .IN domain names.

Procedural History [Arbitration Proceedings]

This arbitration proceeding is in accordance with the .IN Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy [INDRP], adopted by the National Internet Exchange of India ["NIXI"]. The INDRP Rules of Procedure [the Rules] were approved by NIXI on 28th June 2005 in accordance with the Indian Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. By registering the disputed domain name with the NIXI accredited Registrar, the Respondent agreed to the resolution of the disputes pursuant to the IN Dispute Resolution Policy and Rules framed there under.

According to the information provided by the National Internet Exchange of India ["NIXI"], the history of this proceeding is as follows:

In accordance with the Rules, 2(a) and 4(a), NIXI formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint, and appointed Rodney D. Ryder as the Sole Arbitrator for adjudicating upon the dispute in accordance with the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, and the Rules framed there under, .IN Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy and the Rules framed there under. The Arbitrator submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence, as required by NIXI.

The request for submission with a complete set of documents was dispatched to the Respondent by the National Internet Exchange of India [NIXI]. A reminder was sent on December 13, 2013 by the Arbitrator. The Respondent acknowledged the receipt of the reminder in his reply statement sent on December 30, 2013.

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Grounds for the administrative proceedings

- 1. The disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark in which the Complainant has statutory/common law rights.
- The Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name.
- 3. The disputed domain name has been registered or is/are being used in bad faith.

Background of the Complainant and its statutory and common law rights Adoption:

The complainant in this arbitration proceeding is 3M Company which has held the trademark "Tegaderm" for over 30 years. The 3M Company was founded in the year 1902 by Dr. Danley Budd, Henry Bryan, Hermon Cable, John Dwan and William McGonagle.

Statutory rights:

The Complainant contends that the trademark "Tegaderm" and other related formative marks have acquired global reputation, goodwill and are well known marks. The Complainant holds several domain name registrations incorporating the "Tegaderm" trademark around the world.

Respondent

The Respondent contends that the Brand name 'Tegaderm' is not considered as a brand names in India by the medical fraternity, but as a generic names only. He has also raised the doctrine of "Laches Defence" in his response.

Discussion and Findings

The Respondent does not have any relationship with the business of the Complainant or any legitimate interest in the mark/brand "Tegaderm". Moreover, the Complainant has neither given any license nor authorized the Respondent to use the Complainant's mark. It is a well-established principle that once a Complainant makes a prima facie case showing that a Respondent lacks rights to the domain name at issue; the Respondent must come forward with the proof that it has some legitimate interest in the domain name to rebut this presumption.

The Respondent in its reply, while not contending the validity of the trademark, contends that it bought the disputed domain name in good faith and that "Tegaderm" is considered as a generic term in India by the medical fraternity and therefore has lost its trademark status due to the generic nature acquired by the mark "Tegaderm".

The issues involved in the dispute

The Complainant in its complaint has invoked paragraph 4 of the INDRP, which reads:

"Types of Disputes -

Any Person who considers that a registered domain name conflicts with his legitimate rights or interests may file a Complaint to the .IN Registry on the following premises:

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- (i) the Respondent's domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a name, trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights;
- (ii) the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the domain name; and
- (iii) the Respondent's domain name has been registered or is being used in bad faith.

The Respondent is required to submit to a mandatory Arbitration proceeding in the event that a Complainant files a complaint to the .IN Registry, in compliance with this Policy and Rules thereunder."

According to paragraph 4 of the INDRP, there are 3 essential elements of a domain name dispute, which are being discussed hereunder in the light of the facts and circumstances of this case.

Parties Contentions

I. The Respondent's domain name is identical and confusingly similar to a name, trademark or service in which the Complainant has rights.

Complainant

The Complainant, based on various Indian and international trademark registrations across various classes owns the trademark "Tegaderm". Based on the use of the said trademark in India and other countries submitted that it is the sole proprietor of and has sole and exclusive rights to use the said trademark "Tegaderm".

The Complainant submits that as the disputed domain name is 'www.tegaderm.in', it is clearly identical/confusingly similar to the Complainant's trademark – "Tegaderm" in which the Complainant has exclusive rights and legitimate interest.

It has been proved by the Complainant that it has the intellectual property, particularly trademark rights, and other rights in the mark "Tegaderm" by submitting documents that are conclusive of the aforementioned fact. The mark has been highly publicized and advertised by the Complainant in both the electronic and print media; both in India and globally. The disputed domain name is confusingly similar to that of the Complainant's existing trademarks, services and domain names.

The disputed domain name registered by the Respondent is identical to the trademark of the Complainant. The complainant enjoys statutory and common law proprietary rights over the trademark 'Tegaderm' in India as well as globally and the public has come to identify the said trademark exclusively with the complainant and no one else. The Panel comes to a conclusion that when a domain name contains a trademark in its entirety, the domain name is identical or at least confusingly similar to the trademark. [Relevant Decisions: Lego Juris A/S v.



Robert Martin, INDRP/125, (February 14, 2010); G.A. Modefine S.A. v. Naveen Tiwari, INDRP/286, (February 20, 2009)]

According to the INDRP paragraph 3, it is the responsibility of the Respondent to find out before registration that the domain name he is going to register does not violate the rights of any proprietor/brand owner.

Paragraph 3 of the INDRP is reproduced below:

"The Respondent's Representations -

By applying to register a domain name, or by asking a Registrar to maintain or renew a domain name registration, the Respondent represents and warrants that:

- the statements that the Respondent made in the Respondent's Application Form for Registration of Domain Name are complete and accurate;
- to the Respondent's knowledge, the registration of the domain name will not infringe upon or otherwise violate the rights of any third party;
- the Respondent is not registering the domain name for an unlawful purpose; and
- the Respondent will not knowingly use the domain name in violation of any applicable laws or regulations.

It is the Respondent's responsibility to determine whether the Respondent's domain name registration infringes or violates someone else's rights."

Respondent

The Respondent contends that the use of the word "Tegaderm" in the disputed domain name www.tegaderm.in is honest and concurrent.

The Respondent further contends that it never intended to damage the goodwill of any third party. The Respondent further contends that the term "Tegaderm" is considered as a generic term in India by the medical fraternity.

II. The Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name

Complainant

The second element that the Complainant needs to prove and as is required by paragraph 4(ii) of the INDRP is that the Respondent has no legitimate right or interests in the disputed domain name.

Once, the Complainant makes a prima facie case showing that the Respondent does not have any rights or legitimate interest in the domain name, the evidentiary burden shifts to the Respondent to rebut the contention by providing evidence of its rights or interests in the domain name.

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The Respondent cannot have any right or legitimate interest in the disputed domain name because the disputed domain name incorporates the "Tegaderm" mark. The mark has become synonymous with the Complainant organization that has become well known owing exclusively to the Complainant's efforts. Therefore the mark "Tegaderm" has become the sole and exclusive property of the defendant for the classes it has been registered under.

The Respondent is not authorized by the Complainant to use the domain name. In the absence of any license or permission from the Complainant to use any of its trademarks or to apply for or use any domain name incorporating those trademarks, it is clear that no actual or contemplated bonafide or legitimate use of the domain name could be claimed by the Respondent [Relevant Decisions: Guerlain S.A. v. Peikang, D2000-0055 (WIPO March 21, 2000) and Charles Jourdan Holding AG v. AAIM, D2000-0403 (WIPO, June 27, 2000)]

Moreover, the disputed domain name was registered by the Respondent on February 14, 2012, which is a date much after the hosting of the website by the Complainant under the domain name www.tegaderm.com on February 3, 2000. By this time, the complainant had built considerable reputation in the mark "Tegaderm" and has been actively using the website www.tegaderm.com. The Complainant's rights in the trademark "Tegaderm" predates Respondent's registration of the disputed domain name incorporating that trademark, therefore the Respondent does not have rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name [Relevant Decisions: Case No: INDRP/096, June 27, 2009, Compagnie Gervais Danone v. Digitech Software Solutions]

Respondent is in no way affiliated with the Complainant. The Complainant has not authorized or licensed Respondent to use and register the "Tegaderm" trademark, nor seek registration of any domain name incorporating this trademark.

Further, the Respondent has registered and used the domain name to infringe Complainant's rights in the trademark and to trade off Complainant's goodwill. The disputed domain name has been used to redirect users to a website, which has the same textual content as that of the Complainant, in order to confuse the user. [Relevant Decision: Case No. INDRP/286 (INDRP December 16, 2011) Intesa Sanpaola S.p.A v. Amar Bose; Case No. INDRP/180 (INDRP January 16, 2011) Dart Industries Inc. v. Morada]

The Respondent is not and has not in the past commonly used the disputed domain Name. Respondent does not use the Trademarks to identify itself on its website or for any other legitimate purpose. Even if the Respondent has used the trade name, such an unauthorized use does not establish legitimate interest in the disputed domain name. [Relevant Decision: Case No. INDRP/082 (INDRP February 20, 2009 G.A. Modefine S.A. v. Naveen Tiwari]

Respondent

The Respondent contends that he has been working in the business of trading Surgical and Medical Devices in India for more than 20 years, currently running a business under the

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name and style of OnlineSurgicals.com and in India, "Tegaderm" is considered as a generic term by the medical fraternity.

III. The disputed domain name has been registered or is being used in bad faith.

Complainant

It has been contended by the Complainant that the Respondent has registered the disputed domain name in bad faith. The language of the INDRP paragraph 4(iii) is clear enough, and requires that either bad faith registration or use of bad faith has to be proved.

Paragraph 6 of the INDRP provides that the following circumstances are deemed to be evidence that a Respondent has registered and used a domain name in bad faith:

"Circumstances indicating that the Respondent has registered or has acquired the domain name primarily for the purpose of selling, renting, or otherwise transferring the domain name registration to the Complainant who is the owner of the trademark or service mark or to a competitor of the Complainant, for valuable consideration in excess of its documented out-of-pocket costs directly related to the domain name; or

the Respondent has registered the domain name in order to prevent the owner of the trademark or service mark from reflecting the mark in a corresponding domain name, provided that the Respondent has engaged in a pattern of such conduct; or

by using the domain name, the Respondent has intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to its Website or other on-line location, by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation or endorsement of its Website or location or of a product or service on its Website or location."

From the circumstances of the case and from the evidences put before the Panel by the Complainant, the Panel is of the opinion that the Respondent had no previous connection with the disputed domain name and any use of the disputed domain name by the Respondent, would result in confusion and deception of the trade, consumers and public, who would assume a connection or association between the Complainant and the Respondent. It must also be noted that the registration of the domain name www.tegaderm.com on 14th February, 2008, by the Complainant was a constructive notice to the Respondent on the Complainant's rights in the Tegaderm mark and domain name. Thus, the adoption of an identical trademark/domain name [www.tegaderm.in] by the Respondent is in bad faith.

It is also a well settled principle that the registration of a domain name that incorporates a well-known mark by an entity that has no relationship to the mark is evidence of bad faith. [Relevant Decision: The Ritz Carlton Hotel Company LLC v. Nelton! Brands Inc., INDRP/250 (December 30, 2011)]

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The Respondent's registration of the domain name meets the bad faith elements set forth in the INDRP. Since the trademarks of the Complainant are so distinctive and famous that the Respondent is imputed to have had actual knowledge of the trademarks prior to registering the disputed domain name. There cannot be any doubt from the evidences put before the Panel that the Complainant's marks are well known and that the Respondent was aware of the Complainant and its trademark. Therefore the Panel comes to the conclusion that the registration is in bad faith by registering the disputed domain name with actual knowledge of the Complainant's trademark. The Respondent acted in bad faith by breaching its service agreement with the registrar because the Respondent registered a domain name that infringes upon the Intellectual Property rights of another entity, which in the present scenario is the Complainant. [Relevant Decision: Ray Marks Co. LLC v. Rachel Ray Techniques Pvt. Ltd., INDRP/215 (July 9th 2011); Kenneth Cole Production Inc. v. Viswas Infomedia, INDRP/93 (April 10, 2009)]

Respondent

The Respondent contends that he did not register the domain name in bad faith. The domain name "www.tegaderm.in" is used for a legitimate purpose of search engine optimization (SEO).

Decision

The following circumstances are material to the issue in the present case:

- the Complainants' trademark has a strong reputation and is widely known on a global basis;
- the Respondent has provided no evidence whatsoever of any actual or contemplated good faith use of the disputed Domain Name;
- taking into account the nature of the disputed domain name and in particular the .in extension alongside the Complainant's mark, which would inevitably associate the disputed domain name closely with the Complainant's group of domains in the minds of consumers, all plausible actual or contemplated active use of the disputed Domain Name by the Respondent is and would be illegitimate. Use by the Respondent as such would amount to passing off, an infringement of consumer protection legislation, or an infringement of the Complainant's rights under trademark law.

At the outset, the panel would like to focus on the submissions filed by the Respondent whereby it contended that

- a) There has been a delay [laches] in filing the complaint.
- b) That "Tegaderm" is considered as a generic term in India by the medical fraternity and therefore has lost its trademark status.

This panel has come to a conclusion that mere passage of time does not give the Respondent rights or legitimate interests it would not otherwise have. It has to earn its right to the domain name by using it legitimately. A mere delay in filing of complaint before the INDRP or any other dispute resolution body does not lead to a forfeiture of its rights that it would

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otherwise have which has been upheld by a plethora of case law before this panel and various other cases. If the three requirements under the policy have been met for declaring that the Respondent has no right in the Disputed Domain Name, it has been previously held that it would be unnecessary to go into the question of laches for deciding whether the domain name registration is valid or not, [Relevant Decision: ADOS GmbH v. Therefore Corporation GmbH Case No. WIPO D2010-1535]

Laches is established when two conditions are fulfilled. First, there must first be unreasonable delay in the commencement of proceedings; second, in all the circumstances the consequences of delay must render the grant of relief unjust. When there is no finding that Complainant did delay unreasonably after first becoming aware in of Respondent's registration of the disputed domain name and further, if there is no evidence Respondent has been prejudiced by delay, the Complainant is not barred from relief [Relevant Decisions: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem v. Alberta Hot Rods Case No. D2002-0616; Tom Cruise v. Network Operations Center / Alberta Hot Rods Case No. D2006-0560; Avaya Inc. v. Holdcom Claim Number: FA080600121054; American Broadcasting Companies, Inc. v. Rosa Edwards Claim Number: FA0501000399593]. Also there is no limitation period in the INDRP Policy. Decisions under the similar UNDRP policy have uniformly and categorically rejected applying the equitable doctrine of laches in administrative proceedings [Relevant Decisions: Car Advisory Network, Inc. v. Journal Community Publishing Group, Inc. Case No. D2008-0717; HRB Royalty, Inc. v. Asif Vadaria Case No. D2007-1658; Disney Enterprises, Inc. v. Dayanand Kamble Claim Number: FA0702000918556 Drown Corp. v. Premier Wine & Spirits Claim Number: FA0512000616805]. If the requirements of a valid complaint under the INDRP Policy are established, the Policy does not provide any defence of laches. This goes with the basic objective of the Policy of providing an expeditious and relatively inexpensive procedure for the determination of disputes relating to egregious misuse of domain names. The availability of defences such as laches could result in significant delay and expense. The remedies under the Policy are injunctive rather than compensatory in nature, and the focus is on avoiding confusion in the future as to the source of communications, goods, or services. Also delay in bringing a claim does not generally act as a waiver of the right to do so [Relevant Decisions: Tom Cruise v. Network Operations Center / Alberta Hot Rods Case No. D2006-0560; Avaya Inc. v. Holdcom Claim Number: FA0806001210545].

Indian Trademark Law on Laches

Midas Hygiene Industries (P) ltd v. Sudhir Bhatia [2004 (28) PTC 121(SC)] – the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India held that in the case of infringement either of trademark or of copyright, normally an injunction must follow mere delay is not sufficient to defeat the grant of injunction in such cases .The grant of injunction also becomes necessary if it prima facie appears that the adoption of the mark was in itself dishonest.

Sun Pharmaceuticals Ltd. v. Wyeth Holdings Corporation Ltd [2005(30) PTC 14(Bom)]; the Hon'ble High Court of Bombay ruled that delay is immaterial unless it is shown that there is definite proof of acquiescence of the plaintiff. Moreover even if there is an inordinate delay on the part of the plaintiff in taking action against the defendant the relief of injunction is not to be

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denied. Inordinate delay or laches may defeat the claim of damages or rendition of accounts but the relief of injunction should not be refused.

In Syncom Formulations v. SAS Pharmaceuticals [2004 PTC 632(Del)], it was held that the accepted position in law is that delay or laches in approaching a court for an injunction in case of passing off (remedy in case of unregistered mark) is not fatal- at best the plaintiff might not be entitled to relief of damages or rendition of accounts but the relief of injunction should not be refused, even in case of honest concurrent user.

As to the second submission by the respondent that "That 'Tegaderm' is considered as a generic term in India by the medical fraternity and therefore has lost its trademark status" holds no merit. For the respondent to prove that 'Tegaderm' has become a generic word, he has to prove that it has become the common name in the trade for a product or service for which is registered. [Relevant Decision: Hormel Foods Corp. v. Antilles Landscape Investment NV [2005] RPC (28) 657, 700 (para. 167); Bjornekulla Fruktindustrier Aktiebolag v. Pocodia Food Aktiebolag, Case C – 371/02 [2004] ECR I – 5791, [2005] 3 CMLR (16) 429]. In other words the trademark must have been revoked on the grounds of it being generic. The complainant has proved that it still holds the trademark registration for the mark 'Tegaderm', whereas on the other hand the Respondent has failed to evidence any of his submissions. Also it is pertinent to note that trade mark owners, by aggressive policing, can ensure traders continue to appreciate the trademark significance of signs, even though consumers have come to see them as generic.

The panel comes to the conclusion that the Respondent failed to comply with Para 3 of the INDRP, which requires that it is the responsibility of the Respondent to ensure before the registration of the impugned domain name by him that the domain name registration does not infringe or violate someone else's rights. The Respondent should have exercised reasonable efforts to ensure there was no encroachment on any third party rights. [Relevant Decisions: Salmi Oy v. PACWEBS WIPO Case No. D2009-0040; Graco Children's Products Inc. v. Oakwood Services Inc. WIPO Case No. D2009-0813; Artemides Holdings Pty Ltd v. Gregory Ricks, WIPO Case No. D2008-1254; Ville de Paris v. Jeff Walter, WIPO Case No. D2009-1278].

It is Registrant's/Respondent's duty under para. 3 of the .IN Dispute Resolution Policy to warrant and prove to the contrary that:

- (a) "the Registrant/Respondent has accurately and completely made the Application Form for registration of the domain name;
- (b) to the Registrant's knowledge, the registration of the domain name will not infringe upon or otherwise violate the rights of any third party;
- (c) the Registrant is not registering the domain name for an unlawful purpose; and
- (d) the Registrant will not knowingly use the domain name in violation of any applicable laws or regulations.



It is the Registrant's responsibility to determine whether the Registrant's domain name registration infringes or violates someone else's rights."

The Complainant has given sufficient evidence to prove extensive global trademark rights on the disputed domain name. Further, the Respondent's adoption and registration of the disputed domain name is dishonest and malafide. Further, in the present dispute, the Respondent in its reply has failed to provide any material evidence and/or any decision of any panel that would favour his case.

The panel also finds that the Respondent ought to have known about the brand "Tegaderm" of the Complainant as the Complainant has been using this brand for more than thirty [30] years and the Respondent has been in the same field as submitted in his reply for a period of twenty [20] years. This constitutes Bad faith in the eyes of this panel [Relevant Decisions: SembCorp Industries Limited v. Hu Huan Xin, D2001-1092; The Nasdaq Stock Market, Inc. v. H. Pouran, D2002-0770; Caesars World, Inc. v. Forum LLC., D2005-0517; Maori Television Service v. Damien Sampat, D2005-0524]

The Panel finds that Respondent has, used the disputed domain Name in a manner that constitutes bad faith. In particular, using Complainant's copyrighted content on the disputed domain name's website as provided by the Complainant as evidence and generating confusion in the eyes of the public. [Relevant Decision: SelectHealth, Inc. v. James E Risinger II WIPO D2012-2275]

While the overall burden of proof rests with the Complainant, panels have recognized that this could result in the often impossible task of proving a negative, requiring information that is often primarily within the knowledge of the Respondent. Therefore a Complainant is required to make out a prima facie case that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests. Once such prima facie case is made, Respondent carries the burden of demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the domain name.

Thus it is clear that the Respondent is using the disputed domain name in bad faith and has registered the domain name in order to prevent the owner of the trademark or service mark from reflecting the mark in a corresponding domain name. [Relevant decisions: Lego Juris AS v. Robert Martin INDRP/125; Societe Air France v. DNS Admin INDRP/075; Kelemata SPA v. Mr Bassarab Dungaciu WIPO D2003-0849; Croatia Airlines d.d. v. Modern Empire Internet Ltd. WIPO D2003-0455; Uniroyal Engineered Products , Inc. v. Nauga Network Services WIPO D2000-0503; Microsoft Corporation v. Chun Man Kam INDRP/119; D2012-0466 WIPO Luigi Lavazza S.p.A. v. Noori net; D2008-1474 WIPO Serta Inc. v. Charles Dawson; Netflix, Inc. v. Sharma, INDRP/216 (INDRP July 1, 2011); Guerlain S.A. v. Peikang, D2000-0055 (WIPO March 21, 2000]; Univ of Houston Sys, v. Salvia Corp., FA 637920(Nat. Arb. Forum March 21st 2006); Red Hat, Inc. v. Haecke, FA 726010 (Nat. Arb. Forum July 24th 2006; Lockheed Martin Corporation v. Steely Black, INDRP/183 (January 5, 2011); Equifax Inc. v. The Admin, INDRP/163 (November 23,



2010);, Revlon Consumer Products Corporation of New York v. Ye Genrong, et al, D2010-1586 WIPO November 22, 2010]

The Respondent's registration and use of the domain name [www.tegaderm.in] is abusive and in bad faith. The Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the domain name. In accordance with Policy and Rules, the Panel directs that the disputed domain name [www.tegaderm.in] be transferred from the Respondent to the Complainant; with a request to NIXI to monitor the transfer.

Rodney D. Ryder Sole Arbitrator

Date: January 7, 2014