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Right to Copy

Is Yahoo! India guilty of lifting content from other sites?

It has been a rough couple of months for George Zacharias, the recently appointed Managing Director for online giant Yahoo's India operations. First, he was dragged to court by home-grown rival Sify over a case of data theft; more recently, Yahoo's local language operations have come under sustained fire from the blogging community for allegedly lifting content from other sites and publishing it on their Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil and Hindi portals. The matter got even more heated when more bloggers joined the chorus of protests, this time stating that Yahoo! had uploaded water-marked (and therefore copyright-protected) food pictures on their local language portals.



Yahoo's Zacharias:
Blurring picture

Yahoo! quickly issued a public clarification, blaming Webdunia, its content provider, for the snafu. "The content on Yahoo! India's language portal is provided by Webdunia, under the express representation that it has the necessary rights and authorisation for the content," says a Yahoo! India representative. Just when the tension seemed to be ebbing, more bloggers joined the chorus, this time claiming that Hindi poems by Ramdarsh Misra were copied without permission of the author. "According to Yahoo!, the content for their local language portals is provided by Webdunia. Yahoo! republishes the content assuming that Webdunia has obtained permission from the concerned parties. But that's clearly not happening and both the companies are profiting from the other's content," asserts Amit Aggarwal, a professional blogger in a post on Digital Inspiration. Adds Singari Indira, who runs an Indian food blog called Mahanandi: "We think the buck starts with Webdunia but Yahoo! is ultimately responsible, since the evidence is on the Yahoo! domain and on its portals." Inji Penu, who writes on Ginger and Mango says: "Indian bloggers think it is high time Yahoo! put a halt to this plain and simple stealing that is happening in the name of content development"

Legal experts, too, side with bloggers such as Indira, citing Sections 2 and 13 of the Copyright Act and Section 79 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 to hold the online giant responsible for this faux pas. "Yahoo! is definitely on the wrong side of the law since content that is posted on a blog is seen as original and copyright-protected by the owner. At the same time, Yahoo! could also be liable as a network service provider in this case," says Pawan Duggal, Managing Partner at Pawan Duggal Associates and a specialist in technology and intellectual property law.

While Zacharias refuses to bow to pressure from bloggers to take more severe action, two key executives at Yahoo! India, Ajay Nambiar, the Portal's head of Content and Niyati Sen Gupta, Head of Entertainment, have quit. While company officials confirm their departure, they deny it has anything to do with the ongoing content fiasco. "Yahoo! respects the blogging community and the etiquette followed by bloggers. We regret any inconvenience caused by the inadvertent posting of the recipe without attribution. Yahoo! India is concerned about the sentiments of the blogging community as we completely endorse the values of blogging on the internet," says a company rep. "The punishment for copyright violation is harsh, so companies may tread

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Mobile Security

Today, it is all about information and how the right information is sent to the right people at the right time and right place. Uncertainty about how to secure mobile phones in the face of increasing threats is slowing individual adoption of mobile applications. There are many facets of mobile security, including network intrusion, mobile viruses, spam and mobile phishing. Analysts expect big telecom companies to develop security solutions on various security platforms.

Rough Ride

These are competitive times for the Indian aviation industry. As salaries zoom, players are scrambling to find profits. Even the state-owned Indian is now seeking young airhostesses to take on the competition. It is planning to introduce a voluntary retirement scheme for airhostesses above 40 years. On an average, they draw a salary of Rs 5 lakh a year. The salaries of pilots, too, are soaring. According to industry estimates, the country needs over 3,000 pilots over the next five years.

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carefully," adds Duggal, who will litigate on six cases of alleged copyright violation over the next few months.

-Rahul Sachitanand

Prudential Vs Prudential

Both have India insurance joint ventures.

When DLF announced its joint venture with Prudential Financial Inc. earlier this year for life insurance, there was a rider at the bottom of the press release. "Prudential Financial Inc. of the United States is not affiliated with Prudential Plc which is headquartered in the United Kingdom."

Meet the other Prudential in financial services, a 130-year-old company that's a giant in its own right with \$616 billion (Rs 27,10,400 crore) in assets under management and \$2.1 trillion (Rs 92,40,000 crore) of life insurance in force worldwide (the 150-year-old Prudential Plc had £237.5 billion or Rs 20,18,750 crore in assets under management as on June 30, 2006). Interestingly, Prudential Financial did draw inspiration for its name from the UK company when founder John Fairfield Dryden visited that country in the 1870s.

In India, of course, the UK Prudential is present as a joint venture with ICICI Bank and the joint venture is the largest private sector insurer in India. That, along with the 15-odd other players in the life insurance market, doesn't faze Timothy E. Feige, Co-President, Prudential International Insurance Co. "When we entered Japan 20 years ago, almost 95 per cent of all families owned insurance. But we came in with a differentiated approach and today we are the second-largest foreign life insurance group in Japan," says Feige who was in India recently. The partnership with real estate company DLF came about after almost a year of negotiations. "We talked to around 10 different players of very diverse nature, but DLF was very compatible with us," says Feige. Watch out for the Prudential vs Prudential battle.



Prudential's Feige:
Money matters

-Shalini S. Dagar



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