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TOP INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAWYERS

Ian C. Ballon

FIRM Greenberg Traurig LLP	CITY East Palo Alto and Los Angeles	SPECIALTY Technology litigation
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Ballon writes, teaches and litigates at a frantic pace. His annual update to his “E-Commerce and Internet Law: Treatise with Forms” published in January.

“It keeps getting bigger, but it’s really not my fault,” Ballon said. “The courts and Congress keep adding material. It’s challenging to keep up. I’d like to scale back, because I have a very busy litigation practice.”

He is a principal shareholder and co-chair of Greenberg Traurig LLP’s global intellectual property and technology practice group. A specialty is cases dealing in the secondary liability of platforms, such as client eBay Inc. Other clients include Rightside Group Ltd., eNom LLC, artist Richard Prince, Bulova Corp. and Citizen Watch Co., Glassdoor Inc., The Pokemon Co. Inc., Chegg Inc., Yahoo Inc., Amazon.com Inc., CafePress Inc., and Crunch San Diego LLC.

When Domain Vault LLC sued Rightside in a contract dispute over allegations that Rightside’s subsidiary Name.com withheld domain names purchased by Domain Vault, Ballon’s task was to



move the case into arbitration.

He spent a year in multiple briefings and two hearings seeking to persuade U.S. District Judge Jane J. Boyle of Dallas that Domain Vault’s strategy of suing a parent company to avoid the terms of a subsidiary’s contract was faulty.

“Where there’s a dispute, a domain reg-

ister has the right to freeze the names. Here, thousands of domain names were involved,” Ballon said. “Domain Vault tried to circumvent the arbitration clause by suing the parent. We argued that under the principle of equitable estoppel [a doctrine designed to prevent inconsistency in court rulings], they couldn’t do that.”

The judge agreed with Ballon in February.

“She saw it our way,” he said. “It’s helpful precedent in discouraging plaintiffs from suing the parent to try to avoid subordinates’ contract language.” *Domain Vault LLC v. Rightside Group Ltd.*, 17-CV00789 (N.D. Tex., filed March 20, 2017).

Ballon is co-director of Stanford Law School’s Center for E-Commerce, where he is set to host its 15th annual Best Practices Conference in June.

“We talk about trends in the law,” he said. “It’s a great opportunity for networking. In fact, due to feedback from earlier years, we put in longer breaks between sessions so that participants can have more time for conversations in the halls.”

— John Roemer