



Mikogo Press Release

Mannheim City Threatens to Sue Co-founder of Mikogo for Twitter Name

The German City of Mannheim has threatened to sue a local businessman due to the inclusion of "mannheim" in the citizen's personal Twitter account. The legal battle raises important issues regarding the repercussions of social media use as it questions the very rights of an individual social media user.

Mannheim, GERMANY January 21, 2010 - Legal representatives for the German City of Mannheim have threatened legal action against city resident and Mikogo co-founder Mark Zondler for registering a Twitter account which includes the Mannheim city name. The local citizen must either give up the Twitter account or be sued by the City of Mannheim. As one lone citizen stands defiant against his own city, the result is a David vs. Goliath situation that raises interesting questions concerning social media - a medium that is still a legal grey-zone.

Twitter, a popular social networking sensation, allows anyone to quickly register an account via their website and use their service for free to post "tweets" on the user's personal Twitter page. The service is now highly used amongst private users and business people who can send tweets to friends and colleagues about anything and everything.

In 2007, Mr. Zondler registered a Twitter account <http://twitter.com/mannheim> as Mannheim is the city of his company, BeamYourScreen. Fast forward to today, and he has received a cease and desist order threatening him to give up the Twitter account. The order referenced certain Baden-Württemberg State laws that claim to prohibit such use of the "Mannheim" name. The City of Mannheim is now prepared to file a law suit against Mr. Zondler and take him to court, unless he signs their papers by a specified date in February 2010.

The City of Mannheim went as far as saying that if Mr. Zondler attempts to take any other action not specified in the cease and desist order, the city would be forced to take immediate legal steps against him. However instead of allowing the City of Mannheim to bully him away from his personal use of social media, Mr. Zondler has made the situation very public via his company website and at present refuses to give up the Twitter account.

The potential lawsuit against Mr. Zondler is a blurry legal area due to the nature of social media and it could in fact raise problems for many Internet users who have used the name of a famous city or place in their personal social media accounts. "There are many registered Twitter accounts, email addresses, websites, etc that use city names," says Mr. Zondler. "There are even people with Mannheim as a surname. Does this mean all such people can be sued? This is an example of a larger corporation picking on the smaller guy because they think they can get away with it. But social media is a different ball game, and enough is enough."

The debate continues and the cease and desist letter is available online:
<http://www.mikogo.com/2010/01/21/mannheim-city-suing-join-twitter/>

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About Mikogo

Mikogo (<http://www.mikogo.com>) incorporates innovative screen sharing technology to provide an easy-to-use free online meeting solution, welcoming everyone to high-quality online collaboration (<http://www.mikogo.com/guide/online-collaboration/>). The popular software tool is now supplying its cost free solution in over 180 countries, primarily private users, freelancers and small businesses. Launched in 2007, Mikogo is provided by the renowned provider of web collaboration solutions, BeamYourScreen, whose product range consists of software solutions for online meetings, online presentations, and remote support. At present, more than 2000 corporate customers in over 40 countries worldwide are using the BeamYourScreen technology and benefiting from significantly reduced travel time and travel expenses.