

## Client Advisory

November 2002

# China to Make .CN Domain Names Available for Open Registration

Most countries have been assigned a top-level domain, e.g., *.US* (United States), *.CA* (Canada) and *.DE* (Germany), with registration that functions outside of the direct supervision of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the international governing body that oversees and resolves all disputes over names with *.com*, *.net*, *.org*, *.biz*, *.info*, and *.name* suffixes. China plans to make its top-level domain, *.CN*, available for open registration on December 31, 2002.

The Chinese policy to this point has been to restrict availability of the *.CN* suffix to companies with Chinese ownership or a physical business presence in China, and it has been difficult for businesses not meeting these qualifications to obtain such registrations. As a result, only 130,000 *.CN* domain names have been registered, leaving a multitude of *.CN* domain names available for registration.

The domain name registrars offering these new *.CN* domain name registrations have stated that the new domain name registrations would give companies the ability to reach the mass population of Chinese consumers. The recent addition of China to the World Trade Organization is being touted by these registrars as a sign that the Internet market in that country should become increasingly attractive to businesses.

The domain registration fee is approximately \$100 for the first two years of registration, and, unlike other recently opened domain registries, there will be no Sunrise Period during which current trademark holders would have an exclusive opportunity to register domain names relating to their trademarks or service marks.

### We Can Help

Please contact one of the attorneys listed below or any of the attorneys in our Intellectual Property Practice if you have any questions or are interested in applying for a *.CN* domain name registration.

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