Google wins 'typosquatting' battle
Correspondents in San Francisco
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THE US' National Arbitration Forum (NAF) has ruled that Google has rights to the internet domain names googkle.com, ghoogle.com, gfoogle.com and gooogle.com.

The web search leader filed a complaint with the NAF 11 May, claiming legal rights to web addresses bearing a close resemblance to google.com, which it registered in late 1999.

Sergey Gridasov, of St. Petersburg, Russia, registered googkle.com, ghoogle.com, gfoogle.com and google.com between December 2000 and January 2001 through Computer Services Langenbach, which did business as Joker.com. He did not respond to charges made by Google.

Because Mr Gridasov failed to answer, the arbitrator was entitled to accept all reasonable allegations and inferences in the complaint from Google as true, unless the evidence was clearly contradictory.

The NAF arbitrator, Paul Dorf, found that Gridasov did not have legitimate rights to the web addresses, and the web addresses were confusingly similar to Google’s trademark rights to its own name.

Further, the arbitrator found that Mr Gridasov was using them in bad faith by presumably profiting from the use of domains.

Gridasov used his domain names to direct internet users to web sites that attempt to download viruses, Trojan horses and spyware to the users' computers. The domain names also carried links to various products unrelated to Google, the NAF said.

The NAF hears thousands of domain disputes each year under the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), in a dispute process that is an alternative to trademark lawsuits.