



IPOTENTIAL NEWSFEED

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SWEET CANDY MADNESS

The US Patent and Trademark Office (UPTO) has recently approved the trademark application of mobile gaming giant King.com's for "Candy" filed a year ago in February 2013. Without hesitation, King.com has already approached rival game developers who has used the word "candy" in their work and is politely encouraging them to stop surfing on the success of its addictive and highly lucrative game, "Candy Crush".

Candy Crush as announced by King.com in November 2013 has been downloaded more than 500 million times across the various platforms on which the game is available on. The game was Apple's single-most downloaded free app in 2013. As the company is a private one, no exact numbers on how much Candy Crush is earning through in-app purchases are available but estimates goes as high as USD\$1 million a day!

As it goes in today's app and game ecosystem it is a safe assumption that many game developers out there are more than willing to latch on to the sweet success King.com has achieved with Candy Crush and scrape off some of the market with games that do sound similar to the hit application. As an emerging market itself, the mobile app stores like the iOS app store and Google Play are open to many 'enterprising bottom feeders' to take advantage of this.

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Following its success in trademarking “Candy”, King.com has filed an application to have the word “Saga” trademarked and is in opposition of another game developer, Stoic Studio’s recently released game “The Banner Saga”. In its Notice of Opposition filed at the UPTO, it is read “The Banner Saga Mark is confusing and deceptively similar to Opposer’s previously used Saga Marks. The use and registration of Applicant of the mark The Banner Saga for the Applicant’s goods is likely to cause confusion or to cause mistake or deception in the trade, and among purchasers and potential purchasers, with Opposer’s Saga Marks, again resulting in damage to Opposer”.

The very fact that The Banner Saga is a turn-based strategy game featuring Vikings for the PC platform and that Candy Crush Sage is a casual but addictive mobile game, this move by King.com doesn’t seem to make sense to the general community and game developers the world over. The difference in game type and style between the two are like that between apples and oranges, making many wonder what can the people at King.com be thinking of.

This trademark action has so angered many game developers that some have banded together and plan to protest it by producing lots of different games with the word “candy” in their titles. This protest has been called Candy Jam. Right now, more than 100 games has been produced and are listed on the Candy Jam website with some games bearing names like “Candy Fight Saga” and “Candy Growth”.

Candy Jam has accused King.com of being a “bully” and that the Candy and Saga issue is no longer one about protecting one’s IP but rather an issue of “freedom and creativity”. What is ironic here is that Candy Crush recognized as being is nothing more than a reskinned version of Popcap’s “Bejeweled” games that was also popular at one time.

However given that in the game app industry, popular and commercially lucrative titles like Candy Crush do not come so often so we can expect to see more action from King.com to crush out the competition and keep the ‘candy’ close to home.

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