INTA preview: what should you attend?

INTA’s 137th Annual Meeting kicks off in San Diego on 2 May. Ahead of intellectual property’s biggest event, here is a look at the sessions that you might want to attend over the course of the week.

MARK DUGDALE REPORTS

The International Trademark Association’s (INTA) CEO, president and annual meeting project team will officially open the conference on 3 May. Etienne Sanz de Acedo, who has been in the job since April 2013, will join 2015 president and Adobe Systems associate general counsel Scott Evans in welcoming attendees, while annual meeting project team co-chairs Joshua Burke of General Mills and Mario Soerensen Garcia of Soerensen Garcia Advogados Associados will outline what to look out for in the conference agenda, and how they put it all together.

The internet of things to do

Monday (4 May) has a treat in store for attendees in the form of a discussion about trademark rights in a mobile world. Debate around how the internet and IP can co-exist appears to have moved on, with experts now focusing on how they interact. Moderator Larry McFarland of Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton will lead the discussion, which features an all-star line-up of speakers representing social media, mobile games and online marketplaces.

Facebook’s Christian Dowell, Zynga’s Frank Goldberg and Airbnb’s Jennifer Lam will be McFarland’s in-house speakers. They will be supported by Kilpatrick Townsend’s Dennis Wilson in their discussion based on the major shift of people operating their work and day-to-day life from the PC to their mobile devices.

The speakers will discuss trademark rights as they apply to the digital mobile space, and will touch on app store marketplaces and related US Digital Millennium Copyright Act issues.

Also focusing on the mobile world is a discussion scheduled for Monday. It will feature Google trademark counsel Gavin Charleston as moderator, as well as speakers Stephen Jodie Coates of Twitter, Sung-Nam Kim of South Korean firm Kim & Chang, Andrea Sander of Microsoft, and Cornelia Schmitt of Grünecker, an IP firm based in Germany.

They will focus on how the concepts of nominative and descriptive fair use are affected by mobile apps and websites, where space limitations and other constraints may bear on how marks and terms are used.

Two panels scheduled for Tuesday (5 May) will also have an online focus, with BakerHostelty lawyers Heather McDonald and Gerald Ferguson tackling reputation preservation after a cyber security breach.

Brand reputation is as easy to lose as it is hard to gain, so the panel will consider how best to restore a reputation following a major cyber security attack. Cyber security has featured heavily in the news over the past year, particularly when Sony Pictures Entertainment was the subject of a hack that led to the theft of employee records, unreleased movie scripts, and even email exchanges between Hollywood actors and studio bigwigs. Intel’s Ruby Zefo will provide an in-house perspective during the discussion at the annual meeting, while Jason Maloni of Levick will be on-hand to offer public relations insight.

Telecommunications have been thrust into the limelight in the past few years, with many possessing world famous brands that also find themselves at the heart of divisive IP debates. Verizon associate general counsel Sarah Deutsch will lead a discussion covering issues such as global infringement challenges, concerns about new gTLDs, and relationships with registries and registrars.

Speakers Katie Brennan of Norvell IP, David Cho of AT&T Services and Elisa Cooper of MarkMonitor are scheduled to join Deutsch in the conversation.

The legal bit

As ever, the annual meeting agenda features a range of panels that will focus on particular aspects of trademark law and practice. Ones to watch include a discussion on parody, which will be held on the Monday. Speakers will take a theoretical look at the law in a variety of jurisdictions, to assess when a parody is infringement, and when it is a fair trademark use.

Later in the week, on Wednesday (6 May), the annual review of US federal case law and Trademark Trial and Appeal Board (TTAB) developments will be held, with Theodore Davis of Kilpatrick Townsend and John Welch of Lando & Anastasi lending their expertise.

Of particular interest to attendees will be the US Supreme Court’s two major trademark rulings issued this year, including one that gave more weight to TTAB decisions on the likelihood of confusion.

Attendees looking for a dose of law outside of the US will be treated to regional discussions throughout the week, covering the EU, Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. At the time of writing, 1,749 registrants of the annual meeting hail from the Asia Pacific, 2,499 registrants from Europe, 1,060 registrants from Latin America, and 370 registrants from the Middle East and Africa, so expect these discussions to fill quickly. Of course, the North American contingent, whose membership stands at 3,432 registrants, will no doubt play a part in these discussions, too.

IPPro The Internet and IPPro Life Sciences are exhibiting at the INTA Annual Meeting in San Diego in May. Visit booth 2317 to pick up your free copies of the latest issues, which feature all of the latest intellectual property news, views and people moves.

If you would like to set up a meeting to discuss the publications in more detail, email associate publisher Carlos Northon at: carlosnorthon@ipprotheinternet.com