

# **Abstract**

## **Legal protection of domain names**

The main purpose of this thesis is to provide complex information about the topic of domain names. In the last fifteen years, domain names have become a very valuable estate, that can generate millions of dollars. The value of domain names have been a cause of various exploitations, namely speculative domain registrations of attractive domain names. These registrations are infringing third person rights, mostly trademark rights. The issue at hand with domain names seems to be the registration process. The first come, first serve principle that is associated with domain name registration can be a cause of various legal infringements.

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. The first three chapters are an introduction into the world of domain names, providing necessary information about what domain names are, what is their definition and how they are categorised. The subject of the fourth chapter are the main organisations that have the most influence on domain names, where historical context and a summary of their functions are provided. The next chapter describes the legal nature of domain names, whether a domain name can be viewed as a property right or a contract right. Further the chapter analyzes relations between domain names and other legal institutions, namely trademarks, names of legal entities and unfair competition and how can domain names be legally protected by these institutions. Chapter six gives us a look into illegal practises known as cybersquatting, describing each domain name registration deemed as speculative. Chapter seven concentrates on alternative dispute resolution of domain name disputes. The aim of this chapter is to provide information about each type of dispute resolution procedures and compare them to each other in order to find and outline the advantages and disadvantages of each procedure. The final chapter contemplates about the future of domain name protection and what changes can be made to prevent domain name disputes.

**Key words:** domain names, legal nature of domain names, domain name disputes