

# New York Law Journal



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## NEWS

# Deloitte Accused of Ripping Off Tax Client Zora Labs' AI Trademark

“The case exemplifies the brand protection challenges companies face with competitors increasingly citing their AI capabilities for marketing purposes,” said Matthew D. Kohel, a partner at Saul Ewing who is not involved in the matter.

June 12, 2025 at 03:23 PM

🕒 3 minute read

Litigation



By Michael A. Mora

## What You Need to Know

- Deloitte faces a trademark lawsuit after allegedly infringing on the trademark of its client, Zora Labs LLC.
- The case underscores rising IP tensions between emerging companies and legacy firms in AI expansion.
- Plaintiffs seek a restraining order, alleging customer confusion and reputational harm.

Deloitte Consulting LLP is facing a lawsuit in New York federal court after its new “digital workforce” AI platform allegedly infringed on the digital asset exchange Zora Labs LLC’s “Zora” trademark.

Merri C. Moken, a partner in New York at Brown Rudnick who represents the plaintiff, Zora Labs, said in a statement that the company takes great care in developing and protecting its intellectual property, including the Zora trademark, which was established well before Deloitte Consulting's use of the same mark.



Merri Moken, partner at Brown Rudnick

“Zora is a client of Deloitte Tax, and was disappointed to see Deloitte Consulting adopt Zora's mark without permission,” Moken said. “After making multiple attempts to resolve this matter amicably, Zora was ultimately left with no choice but to seek a restraining order to prevent further infringement and harm. We are confident the court will restrain Deloitte and find Deloitte liable.”

Jonathan Gandal is the managing director of reputation at Deloitte.

“This filing is meritless and we intend to defend ourselves vigorously,” Gandal said in a statement.

Zora Labs operates a web3 platform in which users can create, buy, sell, curate and view social media content on the blockchain. Zora-created AI has been provided to consumers to create non-fungible tokens, among other things. Numerous record-breaking NFT transactions have been assembled and sold on its platform, such as the Doge NFT for \$4 million.

And in addition to Zora Labs’ large social media following, the plaintiff alleged in the complaint that the mark has become a distinctive indicator of its brand of goods and services and has a favorable reputation among members of the purchasing public. However, Zora Labs alleged that Deloitte capitalized on the Zora Labs brand with the “Zora AI” product.

On March 18, 2023, Deloitte issued a press release announcing the launch of an AI platform it called “Zora AI” in connection with artificial intelligence-related services. Zora Labs alleged that Zora.ai is identical to the plaintiff’s domain, Zora.co. However, Deloitte failed to file a trademark application for Zora.

Users accessing Deloitte's webpage "include and continue to include" people searching for Zora Labs' goods and services, according to the complaint. In response to a demand letter to rebrand Zora AI sent in March, Deloitte's assistant general counsel declined to do so, it said. Meanwhile, Zora Labs cited additional instances in which Deloitte engaged in allegedly similar conduct.

Now, the case is pending before U.S. District Judge Arun Subramanian of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.

Matthew D. Kohel, a partner at Saul Ewing who advises companies on the use of AI and specializes in intellectual property litigation, said that the allegations highlight how quickly a company's brand, built carefully in a tech-based niche, can become a target when larger players jump into new technologies.

"While the headlines have focused on the continued wave of copyright infringement cases against LLM providers, the alleged past incident with cognitive scale suggests there may be a new trend where business relationships could be leveraged to misuse a smaller innovator's trademarks and brand to gain customers in the growing AI marketplace," Kohel said.

Kohel explained that the cognitive scale references a technology company specializing in augmented intelligence software that helps businesses solve complex problems at scale.

He added: "Allegations like these demonstrate the need to have a robust IP protection, monitoring and enforcement strategy."

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