



A YouTube screen grab of the QQ sign-up page

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WeChat copyrights app notification sound in China

China's Tencent [has won an appeal](#) to trademark the notification beeping sound on its instant-messaging and social network services, making it the first company to be granted a sound trademark registration through a judicial proceeding in China.

Tencent took some time and had to get through obstacles to get this result. [It applied in May 2014](#) to trademark its beeping sound which consists of the tone "Di Di Di Di Di Di" when a message comes in on its "QQ" instant

messaging and social network app.

But the China Trademark Office (CTMO) at first found that the sound was not distinctive and rejected Tencent's trademark application. Then, in a review of the decision made on April 18, 2016, the Trademark Review and Adjudication Board (TRAB) upheld the CTMO's rejection on the basis that the sound was too simple, functional and indistinctive.

Tencent subsequently appealed to the Beijing IP Court seeking to overturn TRAB's decision.

The Beijing High People's Court [made the final decision](#) on China's first sound trademark case, ruling in favor of Tencent. The appeal court upheld the original decision and said that the signature "Di-Di-Di-Di-Di-Di" notification sound has been used by QQ for a long time and has obtained the status of being a distinguishing feature of the service provider.

Sounds were eligible to be trademarked after the Chinese Trademark Law of 2014. The opening tune of China Radio International was approved as the very first sound trademark. Other examples include the Nokia tune and McDonald's "I'm lovin' it" jingle. But Tencent's sound trademark was the first to be acquired through court proceedings in China

It can be a surprise to find out that certain sounds have been granted trademarks. For example, CBS has trademarked the iconic ticking of news program [60 Minutes' stopwatch](#). Star Wars villain Darth Vader's heavy breathing has been [trademarked by LucasFilm](#). Sports channel ESPN has also trademarked its "[DaDaDa DaDaDa](#)" jingle. Even Apple has trademarked [three sounds](#) made by its virtual assistant Siri.

What do you think of sound trademarks? Comment below or visit us at our [Facebook page](#).

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Contacts



Mark Laudi

Press Contact

Managing Partner

service@pitchmark.net

(+65) 6223 2249