

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/news/19833/russian-businessman-trademarks-winking-emoticon>

## Russian trademarks winking emoticon

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by Amy-Mae Elliott published on 12 December 2008

A Russian businessman has trademarked the emoticon used to mean a wink in text messages and email.

Thankfully though, Oleg Teterin, president of the mobile advertising company Superfone, has said that he won't track down individual users and demand payment. But, that's not going to be the case for businesses:

"I want to highlight that this is only directed at corporations, companies that are trying to make a profit without the permission of the trademark holder", Teterin said.

It seems that companies will be able to pay Teterin to use the mark if they want to: "Legal use will be possible after buying an annual license from us. It won't cost that much - tens of thousands of dollars".

It's unlikely any legal action from Teterin would stand up to scrutiny - outside Russia anyway - as the sign has been in widespread usage for a long time.