

*Mrs Kern gave her boss a doubtful look.  
He'd wanted to make some important changes*

«These Internet providers have got a cheek! We'll write them a real stinker of a letter», exclaimed Ralf Guldemann, Executive Director of Swiss-Overseas Travel to his assistant.

*to the homepage of this major travel company – but the provider that designed it was absolutely opposed to the idea. «Legally we're on shaky ground, Mr Guldemann,» said Mrs Kern.*

#### Who owns your homepage?

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There's a simple way to get an initial answer quickly: If your Internet service provider also designed the homepage, ask them whether they can give you your homepage data so that you can link this up to another provider. If you had your homepage created by an independent designer, ask whether he can give you the code so that you can make minor changes to the homepage yourself.

If your Internet service provider or homepage designer reacts hesitantly, the reason has to do with copyright law. Unless a computer program – and ultimately that's what a homepage

is – has been sold as part of a legally binding transaction, decisions on the scope of application remain the prerogative of the originator or designer. Uncertainty can be avoided only by a clear contractual settlement at the time the order is awarded to the designer or, if the homepage is already programmed, through a codicillary agreement regulating the rights to it. This is certainly a good idea if you want to order an update.

To sum up: If homepage updates were not covered in the design order, you should ask the designer of the homepage before modifying it. It may be advisable to negotiate a supplementary agreement.