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Etoy vs. eToys: Who will be the next Goliath?

Now that eToys has announced that it's going out of business on April 6, you might expect etoy to be jumping for joy. After all, the Swiss pranksters spent over \$100,000 just trying to defend themselves from the Amazon-funded retailer, which sued more than a year ago for control of the etoy.com domain name. But alas, one slain Goliath, etoy fears, will only make room for another.

"To think we're trampling on their grave is naive," says Zai, a member of the group, speaking from Zurich. "Someone will buy the name. And that someone will probably be bigger and tougher than eToys."

The group -- which started using the name in 1994, before eToys sprung onto the Web -- first started to fear for its nemesis' life back in November, when eToys gave up on negotiations over how to share the domain. "It was the moment that they realized what their numbers were," Zai says. "They realized they weren't going to make it." Now, Zai fears that when the creditors come calling, looking for something to sell, the first thing they'll aim for is the domain name.

"Since it's the only thing that's worth anything," Zai says, "someone will sell toys under this URL next November and December. It's simply too famous."

Still, don't expect etoy to back down. Zai and his cohorts made a name for themselves by mobilizing the Web in support of the etoy cause. This David may be small, but etoy is nimble, experienced in the ways of war, and determined to keep slinging stones.

"We will fight with everything we can to make sure that those who are trying to maximize profits will not make things worse for us," Zai says. It doesn't matter who it is, eToys or someone else."

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