

Patent cases worth billions

Billions of dollars are being tied up in international patent infringement claims with Oracle claiming \$1,16-billion from Google, and Samsung and Apple fighting over alleged patent infringements by both companies. International lawyers are probably laughing all the way to their ever-increasing bank accounts.

The battle between Oracle and Google arises from alleged infringements of the Java technology used on Android operating systems. Oracle's original claim against Google was for \$6,1-billion but this has now been reduced to \$1,16-billion.

Oracle claims that the Android operating system infringed the Java patents it holds having acquired Sun Microsystems and that Google had infringed its copyright as well. The trial has been set down for 31 October.

Meanwhile, Apple and Samsung are locked in a battle over smartphone and tablet technology that has delayed the launching of Samsung's Galaxy tablet. Apple claims that three of its patents have been infringed by this device.

However, Apple buys the chips that it uses in the iPad tablet from Samsung and Samsung supplied chips valued at \$5,7-billion to Apple last year. Now Apple is switching to Toshiba to supply chips, further denting Samsung's revenue.

Analysts claim that Apple is using the courts to help in cement the lead that iPad has built up in the tablet market. A significant court hearing in the US will open next month, although hearings in Australia between the two companies are underway and another case is being held in Germany where Samsung has appealed against the ban on its Galaxy models.

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