

Patent Suits Are Common In Smartphone and Tablet Industry

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There are so many law suits for patent infringement currently in play with respect to smartphone and tablet technology that it's difficult to keep track of everything that's happening. The action is occurring in both US and European courts and involves many players including Motorola Mobility (recently acquired by Google), Microsoft, Apple and Samsung.

A lawsuit between Microsoft and Motorola Mobility is [pending](#) in the International Trade Commission in Washington D.C. with a decision expected shortly, one that may be issued prior to publication of this article. Meanwhile, the same two parties are now [battling over patents](#) in a German court related to technology that allows computers to switch between languages in the same program. Germany is also the location of patent cases currently pending between Apple and Samsung.

The Microsoft cases generally revolve around the Company's claim that it owns patents relied upon by the Android operating system. If successful, Microsoft may be able to prevent further sales of Android phones in certain markets, unless the manufacturers license Microsoft technology, a result which would probably require Android manufacturers pay Microsoft a license fee for each handset sold.

Of course, Microsoft has its own competing software for smartphones, Windows Phone 7, so it's unclear whether its endgame is to earn licensee fees and permit Android to thrive or crush Android and force adoption of its own operating system.

As previously [reported](#), Google's purchase of Motorola Mobility was motivated in part by its desire to acquire wireless patents to protect its own efforts in the smartphone business. It was also seen as a defensive move, since Microsoft and Apple, Google's Android competitors, recently teamed up to buy thousands of patents from Nortel.

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