Apple, Samsung trial highlights software patent issues

By RohitVandanapu
TECHNEWS WRITER

One of the most anticipated patent trials in the past few years, Samsung and Apple have been facing off against each other in a San Jose courtroom for weeks. The trial ended on Friday, August 24 with the nine-person jury unanimously finding Samsung guilty of willingly infringing upon Apple's patents, and asked Samsung to pay $1.5 billion of damages. Samsung did escape any successful allegations of patent infringement committed by its tablets, but on the smartphone front, they really were destroyed by Apple's allegations that Samsung copied critical features of the hugely popular iPhone. Here are some of the allegations Apple levied against Samsung:

The designs created by Samsung for their phones before the iPhone was launched were all different from the ones they created after the launch of the iPhone. Once the iPhone was successful in the market, Samsung made a paradigmatic shift focusing heavily on full-touch devices. Samsung tried to argue that their F700 model phone resembled the iPhone, but was designed before the iPhone. However, in order to side with Samsung regarding this patent, the court wanted to see that prior art, which is the term used to describe images of a device shown to the public before the launch of said device in a market, was displayed for the F700 before the announcement of the iPhone. It then came out that the F700 had no prior art shown to the public until after the iPhone had launched, and Apple hammered on this point.

Trade dress is the way a product is "branded" using its design elements, so that consumers know who makes particular product. Dilution is a fancy way of saying a product damages another product's famous brand because it looks very similar. The Samsung phones have made Apple iPhone less distinct, diluting them and blurring the distinctiveness between both the products. The phones include iPhone, iPhone 3G/S, iPhone 4. The trade dress features are as follows:

a) A rectangular product with four evenly rounded corners.

b) A flat, clear surface covering the front of the product.

c) A display screen under the surface.

d) When the device is on, a matrix of colorful square icons with evenly rounded corners within the display screen.

e) When the device is on, a bottom dock of colorful square icons with evenly rounded corners set off from the other icons in the display, that do not change as other pages of the user interface are viewed.

Trade dress is generally looked at on a holistic basis, and based on the Apple's trade dress; Galaxy S and Galaxy S2 are possibly in violation of copying the designs. Not only has Apple state that the iPhone's trade dress is being diluted, but they have stated that iPhone's trade dress is "not only protectable, but famous."

A design patent, by comparison, is a way to protect unique ornamental elements of a product.

Design Patents are the biggest part of Apple's case against Samsung's smartphones. Apple alleges two hardware design patents for the iPhone and one software GUI design pattern for the iPhone were infringed by Samsung.

The design patents infringed are:

Design patent D'677, which covers a phone with a rounded rectangular shape, edge-to-edge glass, a thin bezel, and a horizontal speaker.

Design patent D'087, which covers a phone with a home button, rounded corners, and a front edge border. This design depicts the shape of the iPhone.

Design patent D'305, which covers a software interface with a grid icon layout, and an icon dock at bottom. This design depicts the software UI of the iPhone.

These utility patents were also infringed:

Claim 19 of the '381 patent, which depicts the bounce-back or rubber-banding, includes Galaxy Tab 10.1, Droid Charge, Epic

Image courtesy of lxbn.lexblog.com

4G, Fascinate, Galaxy Ace, S2, Nexus S 4G.

Claim 8 of '915 patent, which depicts the distinguishing between one-finger scroll and two-finger zoom.

Claim 50 of '163 patent, which depicts the double-tap to zoom, includes many Samsung phones in this.

Samsung filed a countersuit against Apple that brought up questions about the UMTS standard and Apple's infringement of Samsung patents by using the UMTS standard, but the jury ruled completely in Apple's favor on this issue.

Samsung has already announced that they plan to appeal this decision, and it is unlikely that Apple will be interested in compromising in exchange for Samsung foregoing this appeal.

If the decisions of the court stand through the appeals process, Samsung will firstly need to remove all of the software functions from its phones that were found to infringe upon Apple's software patents.

Upon doing that, Samsung will secondly need to evaluate the future of the TouchWiz UI, the software overlay they use on their Android smartphones, and the general hardware design of its phones.

Something you'd like to get off your chest? Email opinion@technewsiit.com to submit a Letter to the Editor, or an opinon piece.

Reduced printing credits promotes sustainability, technology-based reading

By Hannah Larson
ASSISTANT EDITOR

As if printing your 13 page research paper right before class starts wasn't enough trouble, printing credits are about to get a whole lot stricter.

According to IIT Today, free printing credits are being cut in half from 500 to 250 each semester, with credits rolling over until the end of the summer term.

Though reducing student paper use is a great way to further our sustainability goals, IIT Today tried to make me feel guilty about printing copious amounts of reading materials. Listing off the stats on campus paper use like: 2.8 million sheets, which would be 121 feet shorter than the John Hancock building, administrators are taking us all on a guilt trip.

While that is a lot of paper, it's not out of the question for a university. It's ironic that we pride ourselves on being a technologically advanced school, yet still use so many hard copies. This means one of two things: that hard copies are much more important than electronic copies.

Hard copies can be critical to understanding a subject, especially for students who are being submersed in entirely new subjects. According to a New York Times article, ["Room for Debate: Does the Brain like E-Books?"] a panel of brain specialists all agree that utilizing electronics devices to read and remember information is incompetent to using hard copies. I agree with this whole-heartedly.

While electronic versions can be useful to copy problems from an e-textbook, reading 30 pages about the New Deal for my history class requires a little more concentration and it's always beneficial to actively read, i.e. taking notes, writing in the margin. I know there are plenty of applications and whatnot to actively read, electronically, but it's not the same.

The average American spends up to eight hours a day staring at a screen (cell phone, iPad, computer, television, et cetera) and it can be hell on your eyes. I spend the majority of my time on my computer laying out TechNews, on Facebook and Twitter, goofing off, listening to music, and reading blogs, so I've started to wear magnifiers to take the strain off of my old, failing eyes.

With these new printing rules, I'll have to start wearing them while reading hard copies for class. I just printed a 34-page reading, with four pages of reading on each piece of paper, back and front, black and white. My head is already spinning. This is not including the fact that when I opened my account, I had almost $22 in printing credits, now I'm down to $20.

This brings me to another point, I've added almost $30 worth of printing credits at my time at IIT, and I have a printer at home, but I use the campus printers to save money, and for the convenience.

I wouldn't be as upset over the printing credits if the printing stations were a little more accessible. In my perfect world, there would be remote printing stations in every academic building, (which would be a great thing to try to implement, are you reading this SGA senators? Votebox?) and I wouldn't be running to Galvin or the MTCC every time I needed to print something for class. But we're a distance from that.

I'm not trying to criticize our sustainability efforts, I'm just trying to be a good student!

Something you'd like to get off your chest? Email opinion@technewsiit.com to submit a Letter to the Editor, or an opinon piece.