

AT&T sues Verizon in Ga. over 'map for that' ads

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(AP) -- AT&T Inc. is suing Verizon Wireless over its competitor's "There's a Map for That" commercials, saying in a lawsuit filed Tuesday that the ads are misleading and amount to deceptive trade practices.

AT&T filed the suit in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia and is asking for a temporary restraining order and a permanent injunction to stop the ads. The company requests an immediate hearing and said AT&T has "suffered and continues to suffer irreparable harm" as a result of the commercials.

Verizon's ads show maps of the United States with areas highlighted to depict where third generation - or "3G" - network coverage - which allows users to access data faster - is available. The maps use red for Verizon and blue for AT&T to show where each company offers 3G coverage. Areas where 3G is not available are left blank.

In one ad, the narrator says, "If you want to know why your 3G coverage works so well on Verizon Wireless, there's a map for that," and a map of the country nearly covered with red dots is shown. The narrator later says "If you want to know why some people have spotty G3 coverage, there's a map for that, too" and a map of the country with some blue areas and a lot of blank space is shown to ostensibly show AT&T's 3G coverage.

AT&T says those maps are misleading because there is still regular coverage in areas where "3G" service is not offered.

Verizon modified the ads after AT&T complained about them saying its customers were "out of touch" where 3G coverage was unavailable. Those words were taken out and Verizon included a tag line saying "Voice & data services available outside 3G coverage areas" at the end of the ads.

Verizon spokeswoman Nancy Stark said the ads are an extension of Verizon's long-standing network reliability "Can you hear me now?" campaign and the changes that were made are sufficient.

"As to the merits of the suit, there aren't any," she said Tuesday. "The ads are clearly labeled 3G coverage and they also clearly state that voice and data service is available outside the 3G coverage area."

The Verizon commercials mock Apple's popular "There's an App for That" spots touting the thousands of applications that can be used on the iPhone. AT&T provides coverage for the iPhone.

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