

Patent suits filed against Facebook, Apple, Google

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Combo of two pictures show the logo for Microsoft at their office in Herndon, Virginia, and the entrance of Yahoo headquarters in Sunnyvale, California. A company owned by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen on Friday blasted Apple, Facebook, Google, YouTube, Yahoo! and others with a patent infringement lawsuit filed in a US court.

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Seattle-based Interval Licensing, an Allen company, accused 11 online commerce and Internet search firms with infringing patents on fundamental Web technologies Interval developed in the 1990s.

"Interval Research was an early, ground-breaking contributor to the development of the Internet economy," said Allen spokesman David Postman.

"This lawsuit is necessary to protect our investment in innovation."

Postman stressed that the technology at issue was created by Interval Research, a company founded by Allen and David Liddle in 1992, and not patents acquired from other firms.

The list of defendants in the lawsuit included AOL and Internet auction house [eBay](#) as well as online movie rental firm [Netflix](#) and retail chains Office Depot, OfficeMax, and Staples.

"We believe this suit is completely without merit and we will fight it vigorously," [Facebook](#) said in response to an AFP inquiry.

[Google](#) also slammed the lawsuit.

"This lawsuit against some of America's most innovative companies reflects an unfortunate trend of people trying to compete in the courtroom instead of the marketplace," a Google spokesman told AFP.

"Innovation -- not litigation -- is the way to bring to market the kinds of products and services that benefit millions of people around the world."

Microsoft, which Allen founded with Bill Gates in 1975, was not named in the suit.

Patents at issue involved using Web browsers to find information; alerting computer users to items of interest, and an "Attention Manager for occupying the peripheral attention of a person in the vicinity of a display device."

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