

Nokia sues Apple over patents in iPhone, iPad (Update 2)

December 16 2010, By MATTI HUUHTANEN , Associated Press

(AP) -- Nokia Corp. is suing Apple Inc. in Britain, Germany and the Netherlands for allegedly infringing its patents with technology used in the iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch.

The complaints, filed in October through December, follow earlier lawsuits by Nokia claiming that a broad swath of Apple products violate its patents. Apple has earlier responded with its own infringement claims against Nokia.

The actions "add 13 further Nokia patents to the 24 already asserted against Apple in the U.S. International Trade Commission and the Delaware and Wisconsin Federal courts," the world's largest handset maker said Thursday.

In October 2009, Nokia filed its first patent infringement claim against Apple in Delaware.

Nokia spokesman Mark Durrant said he did not expect a quick result and that the first case likely would not go to court until late next year, probably in the Hague, Netherlands.

"We wanted to be sure that we don't just talk about these in dribs and drabs. There's obviously a lot of action going in some of these cases," Durrant said.

Lawsuits over patent rights are common in the wireless industry and can

take years to resolve.

"This is part and parcel of the patent wars in the industry where the market is really crowded. Nokia does have a pretty big patent portfolio and they want to keep that as strong as possible," said Neil Mawston at London-based Strategy Analytics. "It's happening with all the major companies, Samsung, RIM (Research in Motion) and Apple."

Apple declined on Thursday to comment on Nokia's latest move, but last week filed a countersuit claiming that the Finnish company was infringing 13 Apple patents.

"Other companies must compete with us by inventing their own technologies, not just by stealing ours," Apple spokesman Bruce Sewell said in a statement on Dec. 11.

Nokia's cases filed in the U.K. High Court on Dec. 3 include patents relating to touch user interface, on-device application stores and technology in signal noise suppression.

Other cases, filed at district courts in Dusseldorf and Mannheim in Germany, include patents over caller ID, user interface, antenna structures, chipsets and display illumination.

Nokia said at least two of the patents, including "using a wiping gesture on a touch screen to navigate content and enabling access to constantly changing services with an on-device app store," were filed more than 10 years before Apple's launch of the iPhone.

The legal disputes, which generally don't stop products reaching markets, come amid increasing competition in the fast-growing market for smart phones. Tech companies are scrambling to win over the growing number of consumers buying cell phones that come with e-mail, Web surfing and

scores of apps for checking the weather, updating Facebook and other tasks.

Nokia has been struggling against stiff competition in the smart phone sector from Apple's iPhone and RIM's Blackberry.

It has also delayed the rollout of its latest Symbian handset the E7, aimed at the corporate sector, until "early 2011," thus missing the lucrative end-of-year season.

"That's another chip off the Nokia block," Mawston said. "It suggests they are still struggling with software and hardware problems."

Earlier, Nokia's flagship touch-screen N8, that resembles an iPhone, was delayed by several months. Unveiled in April with deliveries expected in the summer, Nokia didn't start shipping it internationally until the end of September.

Nokia stock closed up slightly at euro7.50 (\$9.93) on the Helsinki Stock Exchange.

Despite the setbacks, Nokia is still the global leader in handsets, including in smart phones, selling 26.5 million smart phones in the third quarter - up 60 percent on a year earlier. Its closest rivals, Apple sold 14 million and RIM 12.5 million.

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