Judge tosses patent suits against Facebook, Apple, Google

December 13 2010

A US judge has tossed out a patent infringement lawsuit filed against Apple, Facebook, Google, Yahoo! and other firms by a company owned by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, pictured in 2006.

A US judge has tossed out a patent infringement lawsuit filed against Apple, Facebook, Google, Yahoo! and other firms by a company owned by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen.

A US district court judge in the state of Washington ruled that the suit failed to specify devices or products violating patents at issue in the case.

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

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.

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."

Interval Research was founded by Allen and David Liddle in 1992.

A spokesman for Allen dismissed the ruling as a procedural matter and said that an amended complaint will be filed addressing the judge's concern.

(c) 2010 AFP