

Amazon opens Appstore for Android phones, tablets; Apple files suit (Update)

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The Seattle, Washington-based Amazon is offering free and paid programs for Android smartphones and tablet computers in its "Amazon Appstore for Android" at www.amazon.com/appstore .

In a lawsuit filed last week, Apple, which sells applications through its "App Store," urged a California court to bar Amazon from using a similar name.

Amazon's new Appstore gives the company a presence in the fast-growing market for applications for smartphones and tablet computers.

Google offers free and paid applications through its Android Market while Apple's App Store provides programs for its popular iPhones, iPods and iPad devices.

In the complaint filed against Amazon in US District Court for the northern district of California, Apple accused Amazon of "unauthorized use of Apple's App Store trademark."

Apple said it coined the term App Store with the July 2008 launch of the service and has spent "millions of dollars on print, television, and Internet advertising.

"The enormous public attention given the App Store service, and the success of the service, have cemented the public's identification of App Store as a trademark for Apple's service," Apple said.

It said the US Patent and Trademark Office had approved Apple's application to register App Store as a trademark -- a move opposed by Microsoft, which offers mobile applications for devices running its Windows Phone software.

The case is currently being heard by an appeals board.

Apple said it had contacted Amazon asking that it not use the name App Store but had received no substantive response.

The suit seeks unspecified damages and for the court to enjoin Amazon from using the phrase App Store.

Among the applications available in Amazon's new store are Angry

Birds, Pac-Man, Doodle Jump Deluxe, Evernote, WeatherBug Elite and Zagat to Go.

Amazon said it will offer customers a paid application for free every day.

"The Android platform's openness provides a great opportunity to reach new customers," Mikael Hed, the chief executive of Rovio, the maker of Angry Birds, said in a statement.

The Amazon Appstore can be reached through a Web browser or from Android smartphones or tablets using the Amazon Appstore application.

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