

Zite news app accused of copyright infringement

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"The Zite application is plainly unlawful," the 11 [media outlets](#) said in a "cease-and-desist" letter sent on Wednesday to Zite chief executive Ali Davar, a copy of which was obtained by AFP.

Vancouver-based Zite was launched on March 9 and claimed to have

120,000 downloads of the free application in its first week in Apple's App Store.

Zite offers a customized and personalized news experience, displaying stories based on the interests and behavior of a particular user.

Instead of directing a reader to a news organization's website, however, where they display online advertising, many of the stories appear on Zite reformatted in a pop-up window without ads.

In their letter, the news organizations said Zite "intentionally and pervasively infringes on our copyrights" by publishing reformatted copies of articles and photographs without permission.

"Your application takes the intellectual property of our companies, as well as the hard and sometimes dangerous work of tens of thousands of people," they said. "It deprives our websites of traffic and [advertising revenue](#)."

"By systematically reformatting, republishing and redistributing our original content on a mass commercial scale without our permission in your iPad application, Zite directly and adversely impacts our businesses," they said.

"Zite uses our content for commercial purposes in a manner that the law prohibits absent agreements with each of us," they said. "We demand that you immediately cease and desist all such infringing use of our intellectual property."

Zite CEO Davar addressed some of the criticisms raised in the letter in an email to AFP, saying "we don't look at this as an adversarial situation."



A staff member poses with the new iPad 2 at the Apple store in central London. The Washington Post, Dow Jones, Time Inc. and other news organizations have accused iPad news reader Zite of copyright infringement and told the Canadian startup to stop displaying their articles.

"If the formal cease and desist we received from the big publishing companies yesterday was a one line email from the world's smallest blogger, we would treat it exactly the same: we would switch the content from reading mode to Web view mode," he said.

"This is not our legal position, it's just our policy," he said. "Zite is eager to work with publishers in a way that benefits everyone -- most importantly end users."

Davar added that displaying articles in reading mode was a "design decision in order to give users a better reading experience."

Other signatories to the letter included USA Today publisher Gannett, Advance Publications Inc., the Associated Press, Getty Images, McClatchy Co., the National Geographic Society, the EW Scripps company and the Slate Group.

Zite is one of a number of news readers developed for Apple's iPad.

One that has attracted a lot of attention is Flipboard, which was launched in July with backing from co-founders of Twitter and Facebook.

Flipboard takes links to news stories posted on social networks and presents them in a magazine-like format on the popular tablet computer.

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