

Zuckerberg: Contract for Facebook ownership 'fake'

June 3 2011, By CAROLYN THOMPSON , Associated Press



(AP) -- Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg says emails and a signed document that form the basis of a New York man's lawsuit claiming part ownership of the social networking phenomenon are fakes.

Zuckerberg's statements were included in papers filed Thursday by his attorneys in federal court in Buffalo. The attorneys want expedited access to the original materials, copies of which were filed with Paul Ceglia's lawsuit, and to examine Ceglia's computers and electronic media.

"The contract is a cut-and-paste job, the emails are complete fabrications and this entire lawsuit is a fraud," attorneys for Zuckerberg and his Palo Alto, Calif.-based company wrote. "Zuckerberg has now declared under oath that he did not sign the contract attached to Ceglia's complaint and

that he did not write or receive any of the purported emails."

Ceglia's lawsuit, first brought in 2010 and refiled in April, relies largely on a two-page "work for hire" contract bearing the names of both men.

Ceglia, of Wellsville in Allegany County, says he and Zuckerberg signed the contract after Zuckerberg, then a Harvard University student, responded to his Craigslist help-wanted ad for work on a street-mapping database he was creating. According to the [lawsuit](#), Ceglia paid Zuckerberg \$1,000 to work on the street-mapping project and gave him another \$1,000 after Zuckerberg told him about his Facebook idea, with the condition Ceglia would get half if it took off.

The emails document discussions about the arrangement, according to Ceglia.

One of Ceglia's attorneys, Dennis C. Vacco, said he welcomes the Facebook attorneys' request for expedited discovery but disagrees with their characterization of the documents.

"We're very happy to see that they agree with us in moving this process along as quickly as possible," Vacco said.

Facebook's latest filings include findings by forensics examiners hired to analyze Ceglia's submissions. One called the work-for-hire contract an "amateurish forgery."

"Those so-called expert opinions have been provided without examining the actual contract which is at issue in the case," Vacco responded.

Ceglia seeks a 50 percent share of Zuckerberg's interest in the company, which has more than 500 million users worldwide. In March, Forbes magazine estimated Zuckerberg's net worth at \$13.5 billion.

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Citation: Zuckerberg: Contract for Facebook ownership 'fake' (2011, June 3) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-06-zuckerberg-facebook-ownership-fake.html>

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