

New brand analysis method could help in cases such as Apple v Samsung

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The Apple iPhone and the Samsung Galaxy were compared in Charlie Ranscombe's research.

In April 2011 Apple alleged that Samsung had ‘slavishly copied’ their smartphones, and filed a lawsuit against the company on the grounds of infringing on Apple’s intellectual property.

Key to the research undertaken at the University of Bath, [Apple](#) claimed that Samsung’s products infringe on the grounds of ‘Trade Dress’. This means that Apple were claiming that the Samsung Galaxy phone was so similar to the iPhone consumers might become confused and assume it was an Apple product.

Charlie Ranscombe is carrying out the research as part of his PhD. He said: “The case Apple brought against Samsung is really interesting. It not only highlights the importance of product appearance in brand

recognition but also provided me with a case study in which I could test the brand recognition software I have developed.

“I carried out tests between ranges of smartphones, including all those made by Apple and Samsung, along with a competitor brand.”

Charlie’s method involved taking a number of images of each product from every angle and using these to trace the key measurements of each product’s features on a computer.

The measurements were then run through a piece of software Charlie has developed that will analyse the measurements of key features from each image and numerically describe similarities and differences.

Charlie said: “A couple of specific details on the smartphones came out as being incredibly similar. The proportions of some key features on the iPhone and the Samsung Galaxy came out as being numerically very alike, including the metal surround on both phones.”

Dr. Ben Hicks is supervising the research project. Dr. Hicks said: “In terms of litigation it is not possible from this study to state whether claims of copying are legitimate, but the outcomes do provide a great deal of insight in explicitly highlighting features that are highly similar or different and therefore this method could have real impact in assessing future legal cases such as that between Apple and [Samsung](#).”

In addition to potential use in litigious circumstances, the brand recognition technique being developed at the University of Bath is intended to be used as a tool in research and development departments to ensure consistency between products and clear brand recognition.

Provided by University of Bath

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