

# Apple scores hit on HTC in US patent case

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The [International Trade Commission](#) on Monday gave Apple part of what it wanted in a "limited exclusion order" directing that [HTC](#) stop bringing offending smartphones into the United States effective on April 19, 2012.

Taiwan-based HTC expected to be able to adapt the Android-powered [handsets](#) to sidestep the trouble with the single patent before the deadline.

The move was likely to come at the cost of removing some features smartphone users enjoy and came as part of an ongoing campaign by Apple to cobble the momentum of smartphones powered by Google's Android software.

The patent affects functions such as touching a smartphone screen to follow a Web link or call a phone number displayed on a page.

The decision was deemed final and sent for review by the staff of US President Barack Obama, who was unlikely to overrule it.

The final order came with the commission reversing a prior decision and ruling in favor of HTC on [patented technology](#) that would have been harder to design out of handsets.



This file photo shows a Motorola Mobility Holdings Inc. Xoom tablet. Motorola Mobility's trove of patents was a key reason that Google bought the company this year for \$12.5 billion in cash.

Technology giants have taken to routinely pounding one another with patent lawsuits. Apple has accused HTC and other [smartphone](#) makers

using Google's Android mobile operating system of infringing on Apple-held patents.

HTC in October ramped up its patent war with Apple with ammunition provided by California-based [Google](#), the force behind Android [mobile software](#).

Google transferred to HTC a set of patents that the company used to amend intellectual property infringement complaints against [iPhone](#) maker Apple in the United States.

Microsoft has also accused Android phones of using its patented technology, with litigation or licensing deals between companies being the selection of outcomes.

HTC in October was dealt a setback in its [patent infringement](#) claim against Apple, after an initial ruling by a US trade authority sided with the California-based tech giant.

A judge at the Washington-based ITC made an "initial determination" that Apple had committed "no violation" of patent law.

HTC, which stands for High Tech Computer Corp., is Taiwan's leading mobile phone manufacturer and a major producer of Android smartphones.

Android has been growing in size as a target, with more than half of the smartphones sold around the world in the third quarter of this year powered by the Google software, according to industry tracker Gartner.

Motorola Mobility's trove of patents was a key reason that Google bought the company this year for \$12.5 billion in cash.

"Our acquisition of Motorola will increase competition by strengthening Google's patent portfolio, which will enable us to better protect Android from anti-competitive threats from Microsoft, Apple and other companies," Google chief executive Larry Page said when the Motorola Mobility buy was announced.

Motorola Mobility chief executive Sanjay Jha told financial analysts the US maker of smartphones and touchscreen tablet computers has over 17,000 issued patents and another 7,500 pending.

## **Taiwan's HTC hails US Apple patent ruling**

Taiwan's leading smartphone maker HTC Tuesday hailed a victory following a "better-than-expected" US ruling that it had partially infringed a patent owned by the US technology giant Apple.

The US International Trade Commission on Monday ordered HTC to stop importing by April 19 smartphones in to the United States that used certain patents by Apple.

However, the commission said HTC had violated just one of the several patents claimed by Apple in a complaint filed by US firm in March last year.

The decision reversed a previous ruling that HTC had broken multiple claims of two separate patents.

"This decision is a win for HTC... We are very pleased with the determination and we respect it," the company said in a statement.

The news was welcomed by investors, with HTC shares closing up by their seven percent daily limit at Tw\$476.0 in Taipei trading.

HTC described the patent it had broken as a "small user interface experience" and it would "completely remove it from all of our phones soon", meaning it was unlikely to affect the firm's sales in the United States too much.

"The outcome of the final ruling is better than the market had expected, as most of the affected items were old models the company put on the market last year," said Mars Hsu of Grand Cathay Securities.

"Besides, I believe HTC has sufficient time to make adjustments on its design and marketing strategy before April 19."

HTC touts its own brand of smartphones and also makes handsets for a number of leading US companies, including Google's Nexus One.

Patent lawsuits are a regular occurrence among technology giants. Apple is currently being sued by Finland's Nokia for patent infringement, and has fired back a countersuit against the mobile phone giant.

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